Unsettling the Archive: Intervention and Parody in Contemporary Indigenous Photography

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the photographic production of contemporary North American Indigenous artists who address historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism in their work. It is, I argue, a result of photography's employment in the service of nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonial powers, and the problematic, yet persistent, notion of photographic indexicality – with its consequent implications of objectivity or impartiality – that the medium is particularly suited to this type of interrogative artistic practice. My analysis is structured around three central claims, addressing the representational, historical and ethical dimensions of both the individual works of art under discussion and of photography itself: (1) a pervasive state of catastrophe in North America is disclosed in the work of contemporary Indigenous artists who use photography to expose the roots of current crises in the history of colonization; (2) by engaging with the medium's fraught history and associations with indexicality and evidentiary authority, these artists expose photography itself to be experiencing an ethical crisis; and (3) the artistic interrogation of photography's unstable ethics necessitates a form of unsettled spectatorship dependent upon viewers' thoughtful and durational engagement, which can be extended to both historical and contemporary images. Examining the work of Wendy Red Star, Ken Gonzales-Day, Meryl McMaster, Chris Bose, Kent Monkman and Da-ka-xeen Mehner, I describe two primary aesthetic strategies by which these artists confront and interact with historical photographs. These are: *archival intervention* – involving the direct alteration of historical material – and *satire, mimicry* or *masquerade.* In all cases these works challenge expectations and cast a critical eye on established narratives and conditions of crisis. I therefore argue that these aesthetic strategies should be recognized as both assertions of self-determination and sovereign presence and as attempts to unsettle representation by exposing and overcoming the troubling associations and central tenets of photography's history and theorization.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse prend pour objet la production photographique d'artistes autochtones nord-américains qui traitent dans leurs œuvres du colonialisme des colons, que celui-ci soit historique ou en cours. La photographie en tant que média se prête tout particulièrement à ce type de pratique artistique et à ses interrogations : d'une part, à cause du rôle qu'a joué la photographie dans la mise en place des pouvoirs coloniaux tout au long des 19e et du 20e siècles et, d'autre part, à cause de la conception problématique mais persistante de l'indexicalité de la photographie (avec ses implications constantes d'objectivité ou d'impartialité). Je construis mon analyse autour de trois arguments centraux qui concernent les dimensions représentationnelles, historiques et éthiques des œuvres d'art que j'examine ainsi que la photographie elle-même : (1) en Amérique du Nord on observe un état diffus de catastrophe dans les œuvres des artistes autochtones contemporains qui utilisent la photographie pour mettre en lumière les racines des crises accompagnant l'histoire de la colonisation ; (2) en prenant en compte l'histoire chargée du média et ses associations avec l'indexicalité et l'autorité de la preuve, ces artistes montrent que c'est la photographie elle-même qui passe par une crise éthique ; enfin (3) l'interrogation artistique de l'éthique mouvante de la photographie entraîne nécessairement une posture spectatorielle déstabilisée qui dépend de l'investissement réfléxif des spectateurs dans le temps et peut être étendu autant aux images historiques qu'aux images contemporaines. En examinant le travail de Wendy Red Star, Ken Gonzales-Day, Meryl McMaster, Chris Bose, Kent Monkman et Da-ka-xeen Mehner, je mets en relief deux stratégies esthétiques essentielles que développent ces artistes afin de se confronter à et d'interagir avec des photographies historiques. Il s'agit de *l'intervention archivistique* (impliquant l'altération directe du matériel historique) et de l'usage de la *satire*, du *mimétisme* ou de la *mascarade*. Dans tous ces exemples, il apparaît que les œuvres en question déjouent les attentes et permettent de jeter un regard critique sur les récits établis et les conditions de crise. C'est pourquoi je soutiens que ces stratégies esthétiques doivent être reconnues en tant qu'affirmations d'autodétermination et de souveraineté, en même temps qu'elles sont des tentatives de destabilization de la représentation, parce qu'elles mettent au jour et surmontent les associations troublantes et les principes essentiels de l'histoire de la photographie et de sa theorization.

PREFACE

A series of photographic portraits taken in 1880 by American government-employed photographer Charles Milton Bell depicts five Apsáalooke chiefs who had traveled to Washington D.C. to negotiate territorial rights and the building of the Pacific Railroad which was slated to cut across their ancestral hunting grounds. In addition to group portraits, Bell photographed each chief individually, at a few different angles, dressed in full regalia and seated on a chair against a plain white background [Figure 0.1-0.3]. Without the inclusion of additional props or painted backdrops, there is little to detract attention from the men themselves. In fact, the photographs lack a number of clichéd devices common in studio portraits of Indigenous people taken by non-Indigenous photographers (including Bell) at the time: there is no attempt to mask the indoor setting and imply the sitter's immersion in the wilderness; the lighting has not been manipulated to heighten the photographs' pathos; and the men's clothing is contemporary and culturally specific, incorporating elements of post-contact design typically avoided in commercial or ethnographic images. The photographs are, rather, striking for their clarity and simplicity and, as a result, the individuality of each man's face, dress and personal style stands out in the otherwise austere setting. While Bell's reliance on frontal and profile poses in the portraits bares significant resemblance to the use of photography in support of white supremacist pseudo sciences, such as phrenology, the images are not dissimilar from portraits of white American or European politicians. However, due to the political context of the era in which they were made and dominant perceptions of non-Indigenous audiences, both historically and in the present, it is arguably the sitters' cultural and racial difference from white settler society that became their defining feature and that explains their enduring popularity and continued circulation. While a contemporaneous photograph of an American politician would have entered the historical record as a portrait of *that specific person*, these photographs entered both the historical record and the commercial market as photographs of *Indians*.[1] Indeed, as American historian Richard White has argued, portraits of Indigenous people – even well known or

[1] A note about terminology: When the word "Indian" appears in this thesis, it is used to evoke the racialized construct or stereotype, and is not intended as a reference to actual Indigenous people. When writing about specific individuals, I typically use the name of their particular nation. When speaking more broadly, I opt most often for "Indigenous." As terminology has evolved so much over the years, a number of other terms do appear throughout the thesis, usually in quotations from other authors' works, or to avoid excessive repetition. Therefore, the terms Aboriginal, Native, First Nations, and Native American are occasionally also used.

recognizable figures – tended to turn the individuals into archetypal "Indians." Reduced to recognizable symbols of otherness in the eyes of non-Indigenous spectators, he argues that, "complicated human beings vanished into representations."[2]

The practice of photographing Indigenous delegates visiting the United States capital began as early as 1852, following the signing of the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, and had itself grown out of an even older tradition of producing painted portraits, established by the British a century prior.[3] While these types of photographic events should be differentiated from the undertakings of ethnographic photographers, infamously endeavouring to record the final images of a supposedly vanishing race, Bell's portraits have ultimately served similar purposes.[4] Even today, they are commonly reproduced without the names or nations of the sitters, and are circulated and exhibited in a variety of contexts, quite distinct from that in which they were originally produced. As has been the case for other famous Indigenous figures, such as Sitting Bull or Geronimo, the faces of the Apsáalooke delegates, have appeared on everything from coffee cups to designer wear, not necessarily in homage to the individuals' legacy, but on account of their iconic "Indian" appearance.

In fact, it was such an encounter with one of Bell's portraits on the label for Honest Tea's "First Nation Organic Peppermint Herbal Tea" [Figure 0.4] at a Whole Foods grocery store that inspired Apsáalooke artist Wendy Red Star's 2014 series, *Peelatchiwaaxpáash/Medicine Crow (Raven) & the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation* [Figures 0.5-0.10].[5] The tea label features a photograph of Medicine Crow, a celebrated warrior, community leader and healer, as well as a pivotal figure in the fight for Indigenous territorial rights in the late nineteenth century. An important player in Apsáalooke political history, Chief Medicine Crow is reduced by the tea company to the face of a product marketed to middle-class Americans seeking a healthy upscale beverage option.[6] It is clear from this type of appropriative marketing that the original context in

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[2] Richard White, "The West is Rarely What it Seems," *Faces of the Frontier: Photographic Portraits from the American West, 1845-1924.* Ed. Frank H. Goodyear III (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009): 23.

[3] Nigel Russell, "Process and Pictures: The Beginnings of Photography and of Photographing American Indians," *Spirit Capture* (Washington, London: Smithsonian Institution Press, in association with the National Museum of the American Indian, 1998): 124; Herman J. Viola, *Diplomats in Buckskins: A History of Indian Delegations in Washington City* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995):15.

[4] It is important to note that in addition to portraits of visiting delegates, Bell also produced much more stereotypical and highly mediated ethnographic images of Indigenous people.

[5] "Interview with Wendy Red Star," *Broken Boxes* Podcast, Episode 19 (November 9, 2014): http://www.brokenboxespodcast.com/podcast/2014/11/5/episode-19-interview-with-wendy-red-star. Accessed October 2, 2018.

[6] "Our Mission," https://www.honesttea.com/about-us/our-mission/. Accessed October 2, 2018.

which Medicine Crow's portrait was made – as the visual record of a sovereign nation's chosen ambassador engaged in critical territorial negotiations – is overshadowed by the image's iconicity. Relying on the clichéd alignment of Indigeneity and naturalism, like so many companies before, Honest Tea borrowed an arbitrary Indian archetype – with the added benefit of a name that worked to embolden the commodity's health claims – to authenticate its product and imbue it with some degree of cultural credibility.[7] However, in an interpretation indicative of settler-colonial presumptuousness, anthropologist Maureen Trudelle Schwarz argues that, instead of an example of self-serving market appropriation, Honest Tea's use of the image "lends authenticity to a Native Nation that calls itself 'Children of the Long-Beaked Bird' (more commonly known today as the Crow Nation)."[8] The statement is as confounding as it is offensive – as if the Apsáalooke nation has long been in need of precisely this type of market-driven recognition to legitimize its claims to nationhood. Schwarz's reading of the situation is particularly perplexing considering the image used by the tea company was generated under at least the pretense of Apsáalooke and American sovereign recognition. Equally unfounded and unexplained, Schwarz goes on to argue that the inclusion of Bell's portrait on the labels, "transforms Medicine Crow from the proverbial essentialized Other discussed in Edward Said's canonical work on *Orientalism* to a real person because he is provided with a name and an individualized history."[9] Of course, even if his (Americanized) name is included on the packaging – or at least on the company's website – Peelatchiwáaxpash's "personalized history" is, in fact, undermined, if not wholly erased, by the act of commercial appropriation. It is unlikely that the decorated warrior and chief traveled 2000 miles from the Apsáalooke reservation in Montana to Washington, D.C. to become the ambassador of peppermint tea.

Struck by the repeated appropriation of Medicine Crow and other historical figures' likenesses for commercial purposes – a practice that functions to override and dehumanize their

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[7] On its website, Honest Tea describes First Nation Organic Peppermint Tea as produced "in partnership with a woman-owned company on the Crow Reservation" without listing the "woman" *or* the "company." https://www.honesttea.com/about-us/timeline/. In fact, Maureen Trudelle Schwarz explains, in a somewhat conflicted celebration of the collaboration, that the partnership between Honest Tea and Theresa Sends-Part-Home's company I'tchik Herb, was established after Sends-Part-Home learned of the product and contacted the First Nations Development Institute to initiate a process of mediation with Honest Tea. As Schwarz reports, the establishment of a business partnership followed "a protracted and often-grueling process of finding a way to bring the tea to market in a manner that makes I'tchik and by extension, the Crow Nation, full partners in the product," entitled to royalties for every First Nation Tea product sold. *Fighting Colonialism with Hegemonic Culture: Native American Appropriation of Indian Stereotypes* (Albany: State University of New York Press): 120-121.

[8] Schwarz, *Fighting Colonialism with Hegemonic Culture,* 120.

[9] Ibid., 119.

individuality – Red Star began a process of re-contextualizing and re-animating Bell's portraits by literally writing the sitters' history and individuality back into the images. After extensive archival and community-based research on the 1880 delegation and each chief's individual history, Red Star printed enlarged, high-quality reproductions of Bell's portraits – two of each delegate – and marked them up with red pen, as if correcting a student's poorly completed homework. She drew lines overtop of each image, tracing certain details of the sitters' regalia and adding commentary on everything from the symbolism of particular materials or accessories to anecdotes and information about the chiefs' personal and professional lives, as well as her own thoughts and reflections. The resulting twelve images tell the stories of five distinct men, at different stages of life, united by a common commitment to advocate for their sovereignty, culture and community.

Red Star's commentary paints a colourful picture of each man. On some images she lists the names of their parents, wives or children – in others, their contemporary descendants. From her two annotated images of Peelatchiwáaxpash/Medicine Crow [Figures 0.5 & 0.6], spectators learn that the leader was an accomplished warrior, honoured for his feats, as well as a visionary who foresaw the coming of trains, airplanes and colonial housing before even traveling to the United States capital. Her notes reveal that he was just 31 years old when the portraits were made and that he passed away 40 years later – an event marked by the notation, "Happy Hunting Grounds 1920." As is the case in all the portraits, close attention is paid to the details, material and iconography of Peelatchiwáaxpash's regalia, purposefully carted along on the journey and selected for his self-presentation in the portrait: his conch shell earrings and brass rings – a mix of old and new materials; ermine sewn into his shirt and leggings as a marker of successes in battle; and his hair extensions, "made from people in mourning," kept in place with pitch from pine trees. Red Star notes the specific design of his moccasins and points out that his two hair bows – each in commemoration of having slit an enemy's throat – had already fallen out of fashion at the time the portrait was taken. They are, in fact, not worn by any of the other delegates. Viewers can only speculate as to the decision-making process that resulted in Peelatchiwáaxpash choosing to wear them for the portrait, as other details in the images suggest it is unlikely, in this case, that the choice was photographer's.

In some of her images, Red Star has drawn speech bubbles extending from the sitters' mouths in which their names are written in Apsáalooke as a re-assertion of their linguistic and cultural identity. These names are also included in the titles, followed by their more widely

known, loose American translations. Additionally, some of Red Star's notes are written in the first person, as if the sitters are speaking for themselves. These range from biographical information and actual quotes to witty or sarcastic remarks, composed by the artist. In a frontal portrait of *Bia Eélisaash/Large Stomach Woman (Pregnant Woman)/Two Belly* [Figure 0.8], depicting the chief in a floral embroidered jacket, apparently inspired by European military wear, his hair hanging loose, and a look on his face that is at once both complex and expressionless, appears the phrase: "I can kick your Ass with these eyes." Other comments include imagined musings of the delegates' impressions or opinions of their American counterparts or the circumstances of settlement more broadly.

In a number of ways, Red Star's commentary collapses time, including information about the chiefs' lives before and after their trip to Washington, and their impact on subsequent generations. One of her two images of *Deaxitchish/Pretty Eagle* [Figure 0.9] lists the details of an 1885 Crow census, identifying one of his 19 wives and the children they shared; the other notes that he is "Piegan clan father to Wendy Red Star" [Figure 0.10]. The first of these two images is heavily marked up and the variety of information is somewhat jarring. While the details about his family are written to one side of his face – and, above this, remarks about his height, battle honours and deliberately fashioned cowlick – dense prose on the other side recounts the posthumous theft, sale and storage of his body, along with the remains of 60 other members of his community. Written as if in Déaxichish's own words, the notes state, "My body sold to a collector for $500 and kept for 72 years at the American Museum of Natural History, My people brought my remains back to Crow Country on June 4, 1994." Here, the plunder and mishandling of Indigenous culture and property extends from imagery and artifacts to human remains, revealing the devastating scope of colonial plunder, dispossession and misappropriation. The breadth of information provided in Red Star's annotations, provides well-rounded descriptions of the Apsáalooke delegates. But, above all, they imply a degree of control over their photographic representation that is rarely accounted for. Although Red Star zeroes in on the appropriative and uninformed misuse of the images, as well as the silences within the photographs themselves, she also strategically selected images that cannot easily be subsumed into the one-dimensional narrative of ethnographic exploitation. Rather, these are collaborative portraits of esteemed ambassadors, presenting themselves as proud and self-secure representatives of a sovereign nation.

Red Star's series is thoughtful, provocative and amusing, and is in fact exemplary of the artistic production – the historical interrogation, political concerns and aesthetic strategies – with which this dissertation is concerned. *Peelatchiwaaxpáash/Medicine Crow (Raven) & the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation* discloses the unstable nature of photographic representation: its embedment in settler colonial structures, its mobility and malleability, and the camera's capacity to obscure as much as it exposes. Red Star seizes on the enduring popularity of iconic Indian images, but intervenes in established narratives to uncover a wealth of alternative information. Re-contextualizing and remobilizing the archival images, she diverts from common understandings of the purely exploitative nature of colonial photographic encounters and the assumed powerlessness of Indigenous sitters. Without avoiding information about the inequities and oppressions faced by Indigenous nations and individuals during the period in which the original portraits were made, Red Star re-assigns agency to the Apsáalooke delegates by capitalizing on a subset of colonial photography that is often overlooked, in which Indigenous people entered into the exchange with knowledge, foresight and evident authority over their representation. As such, she solicits spectators to reconsider what is initially presented in the images and what is typically told about the period of their production.

Perhaps most revelatory, her work illuminates the extent to which, regardless of the circumstances in which they were taken, photographs can take on a life of their own and can be appropriated and deployed for a variety of different purposes, from the marketing of consumer goods to the interrogation of established narratives. Like Red Star, each of the artists discussed in this thesis, interact with historical photographs, either engaging in acts of direct archival intervention or through processes of satire, mimicry and masquerade. And in every case, their work reveals as much about the medium of photography – its history, its ethics and its interpretation – as about the images themselves. Therefore, whereas this dissertation is largely concerned with the work of Indigenous artists and the politics of representation in Canada and the United States, at the core of my research is a re-evaluation of photography's ethics, so crucial to consider at this pivotal point of conceptual and technological transformation in the medium's development.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the photographic production of contemporary North American Indigenous artists who address historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism in their work. My analysis responds to a significant commonality in these works of art: in each case, photography is both embraced as a profound medium with which to confront history and interrogated for its practical and conceptual alignment with colonial expansion, exploitation and control. It is, I argue, a result of photography's employment in the service of nineteenth and twentieth century colonial governments, and the problematic, yet persistent, notion of photographic indexicality – with its consequent implications of objectivity or impartiality – that the medium is particularly suited to the type of interrogative artistic practice examined in this project. As most of these artists belong to the first generation of Indigenous children not to be forcibly removed from their communities and incarcerated in residential schools, since their establishment in the late-nineteenth century, they are in an unprecedented position to reflect on the historical and intergenerational effects of that system and other harmful colonial practices.[10] While this type of critique or confrontation is evident across a range of artistic media, this dissertation is concerned specifically with the politics of photography. The primary question guiding this thesis is as follows: How are contemporary Indigenous artists *photographically* confronting the historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism in North America? And, by extension, what are the political, ethical and conceptual implications of such artistic practice for the medium of photography itself? In response to these questions, my analysis is structured around three central claims, addressing the representational, historical and ethical dimensions of the individual works of art under discussion, and of photographic media more broadly.

The first of these claims is that photography is employed by the artists under discussion to articulate the link between the history of colonization and the contemporary conditions facing Indigenous communities throughout North America. This argument is based on the central premise that, while certainly positive, the increasing recognition and condemnation of historical injustices enacted against Indigenous peoples remains insufficient without awareness of their

[10] Of course, this needs to be qualified: although the process of phasing out the Residential School System began in 1970 with most schools being closed or transferred to First Nations' control by 1986, the last federally funded school closed as recently as 1996.

enduring legacy and perpetuation in the present.[11] Displaying this continuity, the works of art examined in this project function to disclose (and even materially act out) a current state of catastrophe that settler society rarely or adequately acknowledges, but in which the continent's Indigenous populations remain mired.

My use of the term "catastrophe" here needs to be explained because I divert from the typical definition of catastrophe as a sudden event that overturns or interrupts ordinary life. Rather, I follow photography theorist and curator Ariella Azoulay's assertion that in the contemporary age, "catastrophe has altered its form, turning from a sudden event… into a perpetually impending state" that easily and often goes unrecognized or unattended.[12] Her analysis specifically concerns the living conditions of women and Palestinians in Israel as "existence on the threshold of catastrophe… a chronic and prolonged situation that doesn't interrupt routine."[13] Azoulay argues that this form of catastrophic existence is not reducible to the Palestinian context, but in fact assails communities all over the world. She also argues that, "lacking any spectacular means of interrupting its routinization," this type of catastrophe is often unperceived by those not directly affected, as well as those enlisted to partake in it, and therefore "can be sustained for a long time without necessarily producing any warning signs, except for those stamped on the bodies of its victims."[14] Throughout my investigation, I draw on Azoulay's

[11] For example, awareness of the atrocities committed in the Residential Schools has increased significantly since the Canadian government issued an official apology to survivors in 2008 and the research findings and testimonials of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), operating between 2010 and 2014, have been made public. Numerous scholars, artists, activists and politicians have, however, warned of a risk of resigning the structure and effects of such a recent history to the past without adequately acknowledging its enduring impact on former students and their families, or recognizing the ways that aspects of that system are perpetuated in Indigenous child welfare and education policies today. In the executive summary of its final report, the TRC describes the way in which the dissolution of the Residential School System coincided with the "Sixties Scoop" during which thousands of Indigenous children were apprehended by child welfare services and placed in non-Indigenous homes across the country with no effort made toward ensuring cultural preservation or transmission (186). The authors argue that the intergenerational effects of the Residential School System, resulting in generations of Indigenous peoples being institutionalized and subjected to systemic violence and neglect, has led to a parenting crisis in Canada. And, what is more, instead of tackling the root causes or providing adequate aid to Indigenous families and communities, children are still routinely removed from their homes and suffering in a chronically under-funded and over-crowded foster care system. The TRC report asserts, "Canada's child-welfare system has simply continued the assimilation that the residential school system started." *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, *Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., June 2, 2015): 186. http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Exec_Summary_2015_06_25_web_o.pdf. See also: Chelsea Vowel, "The Level Playing Field Myth," *âpihtawikosisân* July 9, 2014, http://apihtawikosisan.com/2014/07/the-level-playing-field-myth/.

[12] Ariella Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008), 289.

[13] Ibid., 28.

[14] Ibid., 207. Expanding on her original definition of modern catastrophe in a 2013 journal article, "Potential History: Thinking through Violence," Azoulay argues that catastrophe of this kind typically involves the perpetration of oppression by one population over another – often official citizens over refugees, immigrants,

reconceptualization of catastrophe – which she elsewhere terms "regime-made disaster" – extending the notion to account for the conditions facing Indigenous peoples in North America who, after enduring centuries of eradicative and assimilationist policies, remain diasporic toward their dispossessed ancestral territories and subject to the dictates of outdated colonial legislation.[15]

Indeed, referring to the ongoing imposition of settler colonialism in countries like Canada and the United States, Patrick Wolfe evokes an endemic and enduring crisis that he terms "structural genocide."[16] The designation is predicated on an understanding of colonization as an ongoing process of subjugation and elimination, both "as complex social formation and as continuity through time."[17] Wolfe suggests that the fundamental difference between settler colonialism and other non-colonial genocides is, in fact, its "sustained duration."[18] He argues, that any understanding of settler-colonialism and the "logic of elimination" according to which it is organized, needs to account for this durational dimension, stating, "settler colonizers come to stay: invasion is a structure not an event."[19] Sharing much with Azoulay's assertion of catastrophe as a process or prolonged state, Wolfe's durational interpretation of settler colonialism is of fundamental value to my own argument.

Following my initial hypothesis that contemporary Indigenous artists are using photography to draw links between current crises and historical trauma, disclosing or describing a state of contemporary catastrophe permeating North America, my second claim is that, as a result of these artists' appropriative and antagonistic uses of the medium, their work demonstrates that photography itself is also in crisis. The notion of a photographic crisis has, in fact, repeatedly been suggested since the introduction of digital media as a result of the

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Indigenous populations or religious or ethnic minorities. However, the normalization of oppression and inequality "makes itself invisible to the population of citizens who are mobilized to partake in it, especially because it is not perceived as a disaster; they do not perceive themselves as those who inflict such a disaster or are responsible for its outcome." *Critical Inquiry* 39.3 (Spring 2013): 550.

[15] Azoulay, "Potential History," 550. The most obvious example of a policy implemented in support of regime-made disaster in Canada is the 1876 Indian Act, which names the federal government the sole authority over the management and control of First Nations reserves, Indigenous education and the granting or denying of Indigenous status, and is still the defining legislative document governing the lives, rights and identities of Indigenous peoples in Canada. In America, Indigenous status is still determined by a federally controlled blood quantum system, based on the American government's historic census information.

[16] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (December 2006): 403.

[17] Ibid., 390.

[18] Ibid., 400.

[19] Ibid., 388.

fundamental shifts in how – and by whom – photographs are produced, circulated and consumed. Responding to the significant transformation of the medium in recent decades, photo theorist Jay Prosser has argued that photography is experiencing an "existential crisis."[20] My own analysis of photography's recent transmutation primarily concerns the medium's often-ambivalent ethics. By way of contextualizing the contemporary works included in this project, I undertake an in-depth analysis of photography's practical and conceptual uses by nineteenth and twentieth century colonial institutions. Specifically, I examine the coeval production of two types of images taken by primarily non-Indigenous photographers that together dominate this photographic history. These are ethnographic portraits of Indigenous people, produced for both anthropological and commercial purposes, and promotional photographs published as propaganda for Canada's Residential School System and America's Indian Boarding Schools. These parallel photographic practices and their extensive reproduction and re-circulation have functioned to construct and consolidate an image of Indigenous peoples as fundamentally "other" to Euro-North American settler society, cementing stereotypes that remain prevalent in art, advertising and popular culture. What is more, the concurrent production of these two types of images – the first driven by a desire to document and preserve all remaining traces of cultures believed to be on the verge of collapse, and the second celebrating attempts to eradicate Indigeneity – is demonstrative of the contradictory logic of the colonial project. This history, combined with an additional consideration of photography's responsibility for imaging – and, in some cases, aestheticizing – atrocities and disastrous events for journalistic, propagandistic or humanitarian purposes, reveals the perpetually shifting politics and ethical ambiguity of photographic media. Engaging with current scholarship regarding photography's changing nature, and considering the way the medium's fraught history and theorization is addressed and interrogated by contemporary artists, I thus argue that in addition to its existential concerns, photography today faces something of a crisis of conscience.

Throughout my analysis I describe two primary (and sometimes overlapping) aesthetic strategies employed by artists, including Ken Gonzales-Day, Meryl McMaster, Chris Bose, Kent Monkman, Da-ka-xeen Mehner and Wendy Red Star, who each address photography's unstable ethics and disclose a state of contemporary catastrophe in North America. All of these artists engage with historical images through either direct *archival intervention* – editing and updating

[20] Jay Prosser, "Introduction," *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, Eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2012), 13.

historical images and found footage – or through processes of *satire, mimicry* or *masquerade*. Directly confronting the historical employment of photography in the service of the colonial project and the persistent and problematic assertions of photographic indexicality and evidentiary authority, I argue, these aesthetic strategies should be recognized as attempts to unsettle representation by exposing, interacting with and overcoming the troubling associations and central tenets of photography's history and theorization.

As anticolonial strategies of aesthetic unsettlement, I suggest that these works of art exhibit a form of "visual sovereignty," as defined by Michelle Raheja.[21] Concentrating on Indigenous film production, Raheja posits visual sovereignty as a creative act of self-representation that both acknowledges and undermines the persistent power of ethnographic stereotypes of Indigenous peoples, concurrently asserting community-based strength and resilience.[22] She argues that this strategy occurs when artists "revisit, contribute to, borrow from, critique, and reconfigure ethnographic film conventions, at the same time operating within and stretching the boundaries created by these conventions."[23] My own analysis extends Raheja's model of visual sovereignty to encompass the work of artists who engage with the history and theory of photography to both address and transcend its problematic connotations, reclaiming and reactivating the medium for particular political purposes. Photography, as it is approached and employed by these artists, takes on the ambivalent character of Plato's *pharmakon*, particularly as it is figured in the respective linguistic and technological theories of Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler. Like the paradoxical *pharmakon* of writing, photography can function as both a memory aid and a mechanism for forgetfulness – the photograph replacing the memory with a reminder.[24] Indeed,

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[21] Raheja, Michelle, "Reading Nanook's Smile: Visual Sovereignty, Indigenous Revisions of Ethnography, and *Atanarjuat (The Fast Runner)", American Quarterly* 59.4 (December 2007): 1159-1185. My argument here is also indebted to Maori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith's 1999 book, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, in which she argues for the decolonization of research and epistemology through the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge and pedagogy and various "decolonial strategies," such as, for example, the reclaiming and reframing of ethnographic or other colonial imagery and information. While Tuhiwai Smith's argument has been invaluable to my own research, I have attempted, for the most part, to avoid use of the term "decolonial" in this dissertation as a conscious effort to avoid abstracting or domesticating what many Indigenous scholars and activists argue needs to be a decidedly active and concrete process of land repatriation. See, for example, Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1.1 (2012): 1-40.

[22] Raheja, "Reading Nanook's Smile," 1161. Art historian Heather Igloliorte also articulates a notion of art as cultural resilience in "The Inuit of Our Imagination," *Inuit Modern: The Samuel and Esther Sarick Collection*, Ed. Gerald McMaster, (Toronto: Art Gallery of Ontario; Vancouver: Douglas &McIntyre, 2010), 41-47.

[23] Raheja, "Reading Nanook's Smile," 1161.

[24] Jacques Derrida. "Plato's Pharmacy," *Dissemination* (trans. Barbara Johnson. London: The Athlone Press, 1981), 103.

there is a similar suggestion at the core of Ulrich Baer's alignment of photography and trauma, in which he argues that both articulate a "disorder of memory and time."[25] Beyond these theoretical connections, the irreducibility of the *pharmakon* to a simple binary opposition bears much weight for the employment of photography by contemporary Indigenous artists who both embrace and attempt to overcome the historical power and central tenets of the medium. Photography here represents both the remedy and the poison, with the equal capacity to heal as to cause harm. In the hands of the artists discussed in this project, photography is called into crisis; it is both implicated in and used to expose historical and contemporary conditions of catastrophe facing Indigenous communities in North America.

Following the work of Ariella Azoulay and Sharon Sliwinski, I approach both historical and contemporary photographs as politically charged affective "events" with significant, yet shifting, intimations.[26] My argument's third claim is thus an ethical assertion, reflecting the ways in which the history of colonization and its ongoing effects are addressed in contemporary art, and concerns the politics of spectatorship surrounding these works. My analysis here engages with the philosophy of responsibility and justice, drawing on the work of Jacques Derrida, Ariella Azoulay and Dylan Robinson, who each express the ethical imperative of collective and inter-generational responsibility to combat the mounting social and political problems plaguing contemporary societies. Connecting such theories to the spectatorship of contemporary art, I argue that approaching these works as expressions of visual sovereignty and opportunities for aesthetic unsettlement, necessitates the development of thoughtful and durational spectatorial strategies that can ultimately be extended to both historical and contemporary photographs. My discussion is here informed by the work of Azoulay, Sliwinski, Prosser and Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, each of whom, in different ways, advocate a mode of inter-temporal and meditative engagement with politically charged images in order to make a conscious move "from response to responsibility."[27]

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[25] Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 8-9.

[26] Azoulay argues that photography constitutes a collective event – "an infinite series of encounters" encompassing the photographer, the camera, the photographed subject and all subsequent spectators. The event of photography remains always intertwined with the social, civil and political circumstances amongst which it occurs. Azoulay, *Civil Imagination: A Political Ontology of Photography*, (London and New York: Verso, 2012): 26-27. Sliwinski, in turn, advocates for the recognition of photography as a "situation" that includes the event of the photograph's production, its subsequent circulation and spectatorship. See "Seven Theses on the Photographic Situation," *The Photographic Situation: Investigating the work of photographs in the public sphere*, August 3, 2012, http://thephotographicsituation.wordpress.com/2012/08/03/seven-theses-on-the-photographic-situation/.

[27] *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, Eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2012), 15.

In sum, this project revolves around the question of how contemporary Indigenous artists are photographically confronting the history and enduring legacy of settler colonialism and the implications of their work for a re-theorization of photography. Responding to these questions, my three claims – addressing the representational, historical, and ethical dimensions of the works of art under discussion – are as follows: (1) a pervasive state of catastrophe in North America is disclosed in the work of contemporary artists who engage with photographic media in order to expose the direct connection between current crises and the history of colonization; (2) by engaging with photography's fraught history and persistently problematic associations with indexicality and evidentiary authority, these artists expose the medium itself to be experiencing an ethical crisis; and (3) this type of artistic interrogation of photography's complex ethics and aesthetics necessitates a form of unsettled spectatorship dependent upon the viewer's thoughtful and durational engagement. At the core of my research is a re-evaluation of the political and ethical implications of photography's practical use and conceptual theorization. By examining the work of primarily Indigenous artists who both employ photographic media and address its significant role in settler colonialism, my project contributes to current scholarship surrounding photography's shifting ethics, aesthetics and ontology in the digital age. Before elaborating on the corpus of images included in this analysis, it is therefore important to outline some of the key themes and issues that tend to dominate current photography theory in order to situate my research in the field and address the hypotheses guiding this project.

Literature Review

The following literature review begins with an examination of the increasingly articulated assertion that photography is currently in crisis as a result of the introduction and advancement of digital media and its unequivocal impact on the production, perception and circulation of photographs. Engaging with current scholarship on this topic, I concentrate my analysis on changing conceptions of photographic indexicality – a notion that has become nearly synonymous with claims of objectivity or impartiality – and underscore the ethical implications of the concept, both historically and contemporarily. Indeed, there can be no understanding of the aesthetic procedures at work in the contemporary photographs examined in this project without some sense of how central the concept of indexicality has been to the theorization of the medium. Due to this dissertation's primary focus on the work of contemporary artists who interact directly with historical images, a significant portion of the literature review concerns the

role of photography in colonial history. The legacy of this history and the surviving photographic record is of paramount importance to the examination and analysis of the contemporary works considered in this project. The purpose of this literature review is twofold: (1) to establish why photography figures so heavily in the work of Indigenous artists who enact anticolonial aesthetic strategies to disclose a current state of catastrophe in North America; and (2) to determine the potential contribution of their work to the necessary re-interpretation and re-evaluation of photography at this crucial moment in the medium's development.

This review is broadly divided into three sections. In the first, I consider the key points made in discussions of photography's apparent crisis, focusing on the ontological shift from analogue to digital media and the effects of this transformation upon the concept of indexicality. From this discussion, I move to a historical analysis of how photography – and its truth claims – functioned in the service of colonialism, focusing primarily on its uses in the discourses of anthropology and ethnography and its propagandistic employment for the promotion of the Residential School System. Of course, the power of these photographs, both historically and in the present, is a direct result of the medium's presumed indexicality and objectivity. Building on the discussion of photography's theorization and its implication in historical injustices, the final section of this review concerns the ethics of photography. Examining the capacity of photographic media to straddle diverse disciplines and work in the service of often-opposing powers or positions, I focus here on photography's lengthy history of "picturing atrocity," and the ethical issues raised by the controversial practice.

1. Indexicality and the Crisis of Photography

In the introductory essay for the 2012 anthology *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, Jay Prosser asserts, "The entanglement of photography in atrocity is one of the reasons photography is 'in crisis.'"[28] Beyond what appears to be a straightforward ethical assertion, Prosser's statement alludes also to the changing nature of photographic media in the shift from analogue to digital. He argues that there is, in fact, "a crisis in *both* photography *and* atrocity," implying that changes in the medium are inevitably accompanied by changes in the viewing public's experience and perception of atrocious events.[29] Whereas photography has long been the preeminent means of capturing and communicating the occurrence of human rights abuses and

[28] Prosser, "Introduction," 9.
[29] Ibid., 12. Emphasis added.

disastrous events to both local and distant spectators, the still photographic image has largely been replaced by more immediate, interactive and transmodal technologies that involve or implicate the viewer in radically different ways.[30] In today's global media environment, Prosser asserts, "[t]he 'image-world' of the single, analogue photograph taken by the photojournalist is giving way to the image flow of digital video, authored by the amateur."[31] The production, dissemination, storage and spectatorship of images has been fundamentally changed by the ease and accessibility of so-called "post-photographic" networks and technologies, whereby images and information accessed online can be corrected, updated or altered at a speed previously unavailable to traditional news outlets and print media. Faced with its wholesale transformation or replacement, Prosser suggests that photography today is experiencing nothing less than an "existential crisis."[32]

The notion of photography's crisis or impending obsolescence is not specific to the medium's role in the documentation of atrocity. The introduction and advancement of digital media has had undeniable effects on the production, circulation, storage and spectatorship of photography and these changes are relevant for nearly every discipline within which the medium operates, including art, popular culture, science, journalism and law. The assertion that photography is in crisis, typically concerns the following issues: the transition from a light-based chemical process grounded in the physical world to the computer generation or numerical compositing of digital images; the capacity to produce realistic-looking representations without the presence of a pre-existing referent; the increased capacity for – and ease of – image alteration or fabrication; the replacement of professional photographers and publishers with amateur image makers; the ability to endlessly replicate and transmit digital images online without their degradation; and the temporal shift from the "decisive moment" of the photographic capture to the elasticity of an eternal digital present. As a result of these changes, contemporary theory has been forced to confront traditional conceptions of photographic ethics, aesthetics and ontology, effectively deracinating definitions that have persisted throughout the medium's history. In an apt assessment of the current situation, Fred Richtin asserts, "Photography, as we have known it, is both ending and enlarging."[33] Inspiring paranoia, nostalgic lament and utopian optimism,

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[30] Prosser, "Introduction," 7. Prosser defines "transmodal" as "no longer in a single mode or medium… images fused with words, sounds and motion on the Internet, cameras, on phones."
[31] Ibid., 13.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Fred Ritchin, *After Photography* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 15.

much recent discussion surrounding this technological transformation has concerned whether digital imaging can in fact be considered photography at all or if it represents the emergence of an entirely new medium.

In *The Reconfigured Eye: Photographic Truth in the Digital Era,* W.J. Mitchell argues that we have actually entered a "post-photographic era,"[34] asserting that "although a digital image may look just like a photograph… it actually differs as profoundly from a traditional photograph as does a photograph from a painting."[35] Mitchell argues that the camera's initial capture of a scene has been rendered irrelevant now that digital images can be collaged or composited in the absence of a "real" referent.[36] He claims that even when there is an initial or original photograph to speak of, it functions as little more than a draft or preliminary script for future modification:

> "A digital image may be part scanned photograph, part computer-synthesized shaded perspective… fabricated from found files, disk litter, the detritus of cyberspace… Digital imagers give meaning and value to computational readymades by appropriation, transformation, reprocessing, and recombination; we have entered the age of electrobricollage."[37]

At the core of Mitchell's argument is a basic anxiety over what he perceives to be the impossibility of regulating or controlling the deployment of digital media and how this will effect traditional concepts of photographic originality, authenticity and truth. He asserts, "This condition demands, with increasing urgency, a fundamental critical reappraisal of the uses to which we put graphic artifacts, the values we therefore assign them, and the ethical principles that guide our transactions with them."[38] The crux of Mitchell's argument – and so many like it – is, therefore, that undermining the presumed indexicality and evidentiary authority attributed to analogue photographs, digital images and their producers simply cannot be trusted to tell the truth. Indeed, he argues that, in contrast to photography, "the essential characteristic of digital information is that it *can* be manipulated easily and very rapidly."[39] Richtin makes similar

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[34] Mitchell, William J., *The Reconfigured Eye: Visual Truth in the Post-Photographic Era* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1994), 225.
[35] Ibid., 4.
[36] Ibid., 164.
[37] Ibid., 7.
[38] Ibid., 223.
[39] Ibid., 7.

claims, arguing that as awareness of the increased ease, accessibility and efficiency of digital manipulation has become so common, viewers tend to confront contemporary photographs with a blend of skepticism and complacency: having become so aware of the potential for image alteration, it is almost expected and even accepted that a contemporary photograph will have undergone at least some measure of modification.[40] With this in mind, Richtin questions whether the entire notion of photography's evidentiary function needs now to be replaced, expanded or altogether abandoned.[41]

Photography has been discussed and defined in relation to its presumed objectivity, indexicality and documentary capacity since its inception. In fact, in her essay, "Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions about Documentary Photography," Abigail Solomon-Godeau reveals that the term "documentary" is actually a relatively recent addition to the photographic lexicon, not regularly employed until nearly a century after the medium's invention, and that before that point, the idea of "documentary photography" would have seemed utterly redundant.[42] She argues that outside of self-proclaimed attempts at experimental art production, in its earliest days, "photography was understood as innately and inescapably performing a documentary function."[43] The presumed privilege of the camera to provide unbiased evidence of historical events is most often attributed to the assumption that the taking of a photograph is "essentially an act of non-intervention."[44] Indeed, similar to Roland Barthes' contention that, when faced with a photograph, one "can never deny that *the thing has been there,*"[45] Susan Sontag famously remarked, "While a painting… is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation."[46] Of course the introduction of digital media and increasing insight into the various processes of image enhancement or alteration encompassed in the production of *both* analogue *and* digital photographs have destabilized faith in the truth claims of contemporary photography. Writing in

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[40] Ritchin, *After Photography,* 31. Similarly referring to a contradiction in the public's perception of photographic honesty, Abigail Solomon-Godeau refers to the fact that while photographs remain admissible as evidence in court, "universal belief in the camera's truth has been belied by everything from outright trumperies to the poreless faces of *Vogue* models." "Who Is Speaking Thus? Some Questions about Documentary Photography," *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 169.
[41] Ritchin, *After Photography,* 19.
[42] Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus?" 169-170.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Sontag, Susan, *On Photography* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1977), 11.
[45] Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 76. Emphasis in original.
[46] Sontag, *On Photography,* 154.

1991, Solomon-Godeau argued that society had largely abandoned the concept that photographs are unmediated and objective records of reality, suggesting we "now take for granted that the camera produces representations – iconic signs – translating them into the pictorial."[47]

In his essay, "What's the Point of an Index? Or, Faking Photographs," film theorist Tom Gunning confronts the common assertion that digitization has had "a devastating effect on the truth claim of photography," an assumption that, he argues, implies "the digital and the indexical are opposed terms."[48] By way of determining the source of this false belief, Gunning argues that we need to question both "the nature of the truth claim, and the adequacy of indexicality to account for it."[49] Gunning locates the central problematic of contemporary photographic theory in the continued adherence to Charles Pierce's semiotic system and the assertion that the index is the proper sign type of the photograph.[50] Since at least the publication of Rosalind Krauss's 1977, "Notes on the Index" the photograph has been – like a fossil or a fingerprint – repeatedly referred to as bearing a causal relationship to its referent, thus implying an element of objectivity that is rarely afforded images of other kinds.[51] Following Peirce's system, Krauss defines the index as "that type of sign which arises as the physical manifestation of a cause, of which traces, imprints and clues are examples," and argues that "[t]his quality of transfer or trace gives to the photograph its undeniable veracity."[52] However, Gunning identifies a number of errors and inconsistencies in the argument, which he attributes to a common confusion of photography's indexicality with its iconicity, leading to a corruption of the entire notion to accommodate the false assumption that an indexical image must resemble its referent.[53] Somewhat tautologically, the opposition between analogue and digital photography, and the assumption that the latter lacks the inherent indexicality of the former, has only exacerbated this confusion between icon and index. Whereas in analogue photographs, the camera captures light reflecting off an object and

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[47] Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus?" 169.

[48] Gunning, Tom, "What's the Point of an Index? Or, Faking Photographs," *Still Moving: Between Cinema and Photography*, Eds. Karen Beckman and Jean Ma, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), 27, 24.

[49] Ibid., 24. Gunning elaborates on his deliberate use of the term "truth *claim*" in order to emphasize that a photograph's presumed objectivity or honesty is not a result of any property inherent to the medium, but is purely a claim projected upon it. John Tagg in *The Burden of Representation* makes a similar assertion: "That a photograph can come to stand as *evidence*… rests not on a natural or existential fact, but on a social, semiotic process." Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan, 1988), 4.

[50] Gunning, "What's the Point of an Index?" 24.

[51] See Rosalind Krauss, "Notes on an Index: Seventies Art in America, Part 2," *October* 4 (Autumn, 1977): 58-67; Thierry de Duve, "Time Exposure and Snapshot: The Paradox as Photograph," *October* 5, Photography, (Summer, 1998): 114.

[52] Krauss, "Notes on an Index," 59.

[53] Gunning, "What's the Point of an Index?" 24-25.

its transformation of the photographic emulsion, the digital camera – despite recording the same intensities of light – involves the *additional* encoding of the information into numerical data.[54] While Gunning admits that these differences have had a profound impact upon the storage, manipulation and transference of images, he asserts that such actions have little to do with indexicality. Indeed, he argues that few indexical devices actually resemble that from which they are produced, citing the household thermometer as a prime example of something which is trusted to be accurate despite the fact that the numerical registration of one's temperature bears little visual resemblance to the experience of a fever.[55] He writes: "The fact that rows of numbers do not resemble a photograph, or what the photograph is supposed to represent, does not undermine any indexical claim. An index need not (and frequently does not) resemble the thing it represents."[56]

By establishing that digital images are technically no less indexical than their analogue ancestors, Gunning is certainly not implying that the honesty or objectivity of digital photographs should be uncritically accepted, but rather that the entire notion of photographic indexicality – and truth – needs to be reconsidered. Even claims of the unprecedented opportunity for post-production alteration of digital images need to be tempered, as analogue photographs must also undergo extensive mediation in both the picture-taking process and its subsequent exposure and development. Referring to the risks involved in assuming an opposition between old and new photographic technologies, Gunning argues, "The claim that digital media alone transform their data into an intermediary form fosters the myth that photography involves a transparent process, a direct transfer from the object to the photograph."[57] It is true that digital images may be altered with greater ease and efficiency, but analogue photography also "possesses processes that can attenuate, ignore, or even undo the indexical."[58] In a similar assertion, John Tagg challenges the realist interpretation of photography expounded by Barthes, Sontag and others, by arguing, "the existence of a photograph is no guarantee of a corresponding pre-photographic existent."[59] Rather, "*every* photo is the result of specific, and in every sense, significant distortions which render its relation to any prior reality deeply problematic."[60]

[54] Gunning, "What's the Point of an Index?" 24.
[55] Ibid., 25.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ibid.
[58] Ibid., 26.
[59] Tagg, *The Burden of Representation,* 2.
[60] Ibid.

Directly opposing the claim that we have entered a post-photographic age, Gunning asserts that the difference between digital and analogue photography is relative, not absolute.[61] As Gunning asserts: "The new ease of manipulation of the image that digital processes offer can at points seem to attenuate the indexicality based truth claim of the photograph, but this threat of deceit has always been an aspect of photographic practice: the risk that defines the game, dependent on the social value of photography's truth claim."[62] Of fundamental importance to my own argument is Gunning's assertion that we need to reevaluate the concept of photographic indexicality and its connotations of truth or transparency. Building on his position, I argue that, far from being a benign interpretation of the medium's technical capacities, the notion of photographic truth or indexicality is deeply political and has wide-reaching repercussions that do not only concern the lack of policies or regulations for the production and dissemination of digital images – as Richtin and Mitchell are most concerned – but are arguably relevant to the analysis of any and all – digital *or* analogue – photographs. Indeed, following Gunning and Tagg, I question the efficacy or advantage of drawing such a strict distinction between analogue and digital media on the basis of indexicality. While there are certainly benefits to the increased recognition that photographs cannot be uncritically accepted as accurate representations of reality, the unsettling effect of this contemporary awareness is a failure to adequately acknowledge that fabricating or manipulating photographs has *always* been possible. Therefore, expanding on the work of these theorists, I argue that a particularly troubling rebound effect of the lack of faith in digital images has been the renewed evidentiary authority often attributed older analogue images.[63]

In *The Burden of Representation,* Tagg argues that "The very idea of what constitutes evidence has a history," and that this history involves relevant technologies, the institutions and discourses within which they circulate and shifting social and political relations of power.[64] "The coupling of evidence and photography in the second half of the nineteenth century," he argues,

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[61] Gunning, "What's the Point of an Index?" 26.
[62] Ibid., 38.
[63] In fact, one could also argue that, despite the suggestions made by theorists such as Ritchin and Mitchell, we are currently witnessing a resurgence of faith in *digital* – as well as analogue – photography's truth claims. Indeed, even with ample information regarding the capacity for online image alteration, the increased mobility of digital imaging devices and the immediacy of image transmission has arguably implied that digital images are *more* reliable than older analogue photographs, delayed and decontextualized in their dissemination by printing processes. A vital example is the global reaction to images taken and transmitted via social networks by citizen journalists, embedded in crisis zones. Again, this type of amateur reportage is one of the reasons that Prosser and others suggest traditional photography is in crisis.
[64] Tagg, *The Burden of Representation,* 4-5.

"was bound up with the emergence of new institutions and new practices of observation and record-keeping" that were, themselves, linked with the formation of anthropological and evolutionary discourses.[65] As anthropology and ethnography were so intertwined with colonial exploration, taxonomy and collecting, it is nearly impossible to separate the history of photography – and the ethical implications of its presumed indexicality – from the history of colonialism. In fact, curator Veronica Passalacqua describes photography as "one of the most pervasive and effective weapons of colonialism."[66] This observation is central to my thesis. Referring to the work of contemporary artists, she argues, "The very same medium that exacerbated colonial tensions is now used as a tool for Indigenous empowerment and sovereignty by exerting an authority over how, when, and why Indigenous peoples choose to be imaged."[67] An examination of photography's use and conceptualization in colonial North America, is thus of direct relevance to the discussion of contemporary Indigenous artists who employ photographic media to confront the enduring impact of settler colonialism in their work.

2. Reframing the Photographic Frontier

According to Carol Williams, the excess of images produced for anthropological, entertainment, surveillance and census purposes in nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America effected a veritable "photographic frontier" – a visual narrative of the history of contact, colonization, and the European co-optation of Indigenous land and identity.[68] Despite repeated assertions of the medium's inherent objectivity and impartiality, Williams argues, "the camera was not a benign tool of observation. Photography's purpose was instrumental: it was evidence in support of imperial science, topographical exploration, and colonial expansion."[69] The medium was used for strategic political, commercial and research purposes, serving expertly in support of emergent social sciences and evolutionary theories of racial hierarchy – including anthropology, physiognomy, craniotomy and eugenics – as well as to encourage settlement in the new world. "Photography," writes Williams, "was part and parcel of the colonial conquest."[70]

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[65] Ibid Tagg, *The Burden of Representation,* 5.
[66] Passalacqua, "Introduction," *Our People, Our Land, Our Images: International Indigenous Photographers* (C.N. Gorman Museum, University of California, Davis; Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 2006), xi.
[67] Ibid., xii.
[68] Williams, Carol, *Framing the West: Race, Gender, and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 7.
[69] Ibid., 5.
[70] Ibid., 77.

Indeed the excess of photographic representations of Indigenous peoples in North America around the turn of the twentieth century was matched by a near insatiable desire for such images, both locally and globally. Williams attributes this to the concurrent emergence and popularity of professional anthropology and the tourism industry.[71] Of course, this coupling established a strange set of circumstances wherein ostensibly academic or scientific study and taxonomy was, in many ways, market-driven.

The choices made by (predominantly white, European) ethnographic photographers as to what aspects of Indigenous lives and cultures to "document" or depict, reflected this convergence of industries, with photographs serving a simultaneously anthropological and propagandistic function in an attempt to assuage fears of Indigenous resistance to colonial settlement and inspire immigration to North America. Indeed, expunging the violence of contact and colonization and the isolation, poverty and poor conditions on reserves and in Residential Schools, Williams argues, "these photographs offer tame impressions of settlement."[72] Despite the blatant romanticism of the images, dependent upon often elaborate processes of selection, staging and omission, widespread belief in the camera's inability to lie functioned to obscure the political, commercial or other motivations behind the images' production. Certainly it was the medium's assumed objectivity and indexicality that suited it so well to anthropological study, the discipline and the technology symbiotically fostering faith in each other's claims of impartiality. Williams argues, however, that we need to question the assumed neutrality of *both* anthropology *and* photography.[73] As Pauline Wakeham reveals, "modern anthropology developed under the aegis of the colonial nation-state" and its findings at the time reflected the already established power dynamics between Indigenous and settler societies and provided scientific or analytical support for colonial expansion, legislation and political policies.[74] Therefore, in addition to its adherence to commercial demands, anthropology at the time was guided by evolutionary theories of European racial superiority and an expansionist doctrine of progress.[75] In this capacity, photography proved masterful at connoting objectivity, while obscuring intentionality. Far from being unmediated, the imaging and examination of Indigenous peoples involved a series of

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[71] Williams, *Framing The West*, 13.
[72] Ibid., 7.
[73] Ibid., 76.
[74] Wakeham, Pauline, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 132.
[75] Williams, *Framing The West,* 76.

decisions and devices designed for specific effects. Again satisfying both commercial and anthropological demand, the photographs that proliferated were primarily staged portraits of supposedly pre-contact "authentic Indians," untarnished by modernity or the influence of European culture.[76]

The photographic frontier that Williams describes functioned to construct cultural and racial differences between First Nations and European settlers that have persisted as stereotypes or imagined realities ever since. This is despite ample evidence that ethnographic images produced during the process of colonization were frequently staged, falsified and manipulated for effect. Williams attributes this reaction to the conflicted position of photography, with its claims of truth telling and objectivity that have been – and continue to be – both destabilized and reaffirmed.[77] Indeed, as previously suggested, the lack of faith in the trustworthiness of digital images arguably has contributed to the assumption of *authenticity* in relation to historical analogue photographs.

However, referring precisely to North America's photographic frontier, Daniel Francis asserts: "Photographs have always masked reality as well as exposing it. The viewer never knows what is just outside the frame, or how the photographer has selected and posed the contents of the image to convey a particular feeling or point of view."[78] Such techniques can range from the seemingly benign acts of staging and selection to more complex mechanical means, such as the common practice of shooting subjects in the studio and then painting, compositing or superimposing their portraits over landscape scenes to provide images of "Indians" in appropriately exotic settings.[79] In fact, as will be discussed in the following chapter, it is now widely known that Edward Curtis, one of the most famed ethnographic photographers working in North America at the beginning of the twentieth century, employed a number of these strategies in purporting to produce a comprehensive photographic record of all Indigenous nations in North America.[80] Reinforcing European preconceptions and stereotypes of Indigenous

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[76] Williams, *Framing The West,* 76.
[77] Ibid., 4-7.
[78] Francis, Daniel, *Copying People: Photographing British Columbia's First Nations 1860-1940* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1996), 2.
[79] Willaims, *Framing The West,* 20-21. Williams details the "combined negative" process employed by the British Columbia based photographers Hannah and Richard Maynard and Benjamin Leeson in the late nineteenth century who would merge studio portraits of posed and costumed Indigenous sitters with "wilderness" scenes or photographs of First Nations villages and encampments.
[80] Edward Curtis's *The North American Indian*, published in twenty volumes between 1907 and 1930, comprises a collection of photogravures and narrative texts describing the artist's observations and encounters with Indigenous communities.

"authenticity," Curtis spread props and costumes indiscriminately over models regardless of their tribal or cultural affiliations and carefully removed all evidence of modernity or European influence from the picture plane, even tampering directly with the photographic plate.[81]

Beyond simply fulfilling the frontier fantasies of colonial photographers and their audience, the reduction of Indigenous peoples to a perpetually primitive state was politically strategic. It functioned to conceptually compartmentalize Indigenous peoples, relegating them to a persistent and indefinable past, thus naturalizing their disavowal and destruction in the present and justifying the continued colonization of their land and resources. Referring to the ideology behind these historical photographs, contemporary artist Hulleah J. Tsinhnahjinnie argues, "The over-romanticization and simplification of Native existence have been and continue to be two of the greatest assaults on Native existence."[82] Similarly, Wakeham suggests that the relentless depiction of Indigenous peoples as "atavistic, frozen specimens of the past who are ostensibly dead to the present," amounts to a form of "temporal genocide" and functions to "deny Indigenous peoples' continued existence and their political and human rights."[83] Wolfe refers to this type of representation as "repressive authenticity" – a dangerous form of romantic stereotyping that, he argues, while "not genocidal in itself… is often concomitant with genocidal practice."[84] Of particular importance to my own argument is the way that Tsinhnahjinnie, Wakeham and Wolfe all highlight the political power, violence, and enduring impact of *representation* on the social and cultural health, and the lives and rights, of Indigenous people. Employing a terminology of abuse or assault, the authors disclose the role of representation in contributing to what I describe as the chronic or protracted catastrophe facing Indigenous peoples across the continent. And, of course, the primary and most authoritative mode of representation in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was ethnographic photography. In fact, borrowing the term from Timiskaming art historian, Sherry Farrell Racette, I describe this form of representational violence and repression – the use of photography to

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[81] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 92-108. Indeed, Wakeham argues that "The 'distortions' that mediate every photograph's relation to reality are intensified in Curtis's image-corpus due to his hands-on tactics of doctoring the photogravure process… his photographs were highly stylized and manipulated images that constructed rather than merely recorded, primitive natives in the likeness of colonial stereotypes" (95).

[82] Tsinhnahjinni, Hulleah J., "When Is a Photograph Worth a Thousand Words?" *Photography's Other Histories*, Eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003): 44.

[83] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 203.

[84] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 402.

uphold colonial narratives and symbolically dispossess Indigenous peoples of self-determination, individuality and futurity – as *photo-colonialism*.[85]

Of relevance to this intersection of anthropology and photography as tools of future foreclosure and temporal containment or representational control, Johannes Fabian argues, in *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object*, that since the discipline's emergence, "oppressive uses of time" have defined anthropological practice and contributed to the power imbalance between anthropological observer and Indigenous subject of scrutiny.[86] While anthropological research has always depended heavily on interaction and communication with Indigenous interlocutors, Fabian argues that, following fieldwork, such interaction is often suppressed through various strategies of spatio-temporal distancing. He deems this process a "denial of coevalness," to signify "a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse."[87] Indeed, this has been described elsewhere as the construction of an "'ethnographic present,' a timeless place untainted by modernity," in which western social sciences conceptually place all Indigenous peoples.[88] Rather than attributing such action to anachronism, implying a mistake or accident, Fabian insists the denial of coevalness is a politically charged process of *allochronism,* which consciously refuses acknowledgment of the simultaneous sharing of space.[89]

One major effect of anthropology's temporal manipulations in the late 1800s was the visual and linguistic naturalization of Indigenous peoples' eventual disappearance, inspiring the emergence of salvage ethnography. Indeed, the narrative tragedy of the "vanishing Indian," unprepared to make it in the modern world, cast the anthropologist as a heroic figure, assigned the urgent and commendable task of rescuing and recording all that remained of Indigenous customs before they were lost forever. A founder of Canadian anthropology and subscriber to the doctrine of disappearance and salvage, Marius Barbeau wrote in 1923: "It is clear that the Indian, with his inability to preserve his own culture or to assimilate ours, is bound to disappear as a race… His passing is one of the great tragedies of the American continent."[90] The statement

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[85] In her contribution to the anthology *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada*, Racette uses the term "photo-colonialism," almost in passing, to describe – according to the book's editors, Carol Payne and Andrea Kunard – incidents "whereby the camera was used to consolidate and naturalize colonial authority." "Introduction," xvi.

[86] Fabian, Johannes, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002, 1983), 2.

[87] Fabian, *Time and the Other,* 31.

[88] Deborah Root, "Inuit Art and the Limits of Authenticity," *Inuit Art Quarterly* 23.2 (Summer 2008): 18.

[89] Fabian, *Time and the Other,* 32.

[90] Quoted in Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 131.

discloses a twisted form of melancholy or sentimentality that Renato Rosaldo has termed "Imperialist nostalgia": the peculiar condition whereby "agents of colonialism long for the very forms of life they intentionally altered or destroyed."[91] Rosaldo argues that the lament functions to mask one's complicity in processes of domination or destruction, claiming, "The relatively benign character of most nostalgia facilitates imperialist nostalgia's capacity to transform the responsible colonial agent into an innocent bystander."[92] In addition, simultaneous to the proliferation of images romanticizing the pre-contact "Indian" by ethnographic photographers, the Canadian and American governments were enacting policies of "aggressive civilization" that legally and often violently prohibited the practice of Indigenous customs.[93] Thus, Wakeham suggests that driving the salvage paradigm was a sentiment even darker than imperialist nostalgia: "it seems that… the real 'Indian problem' is that native peoples will not just vanish according to colonialism's prophecy. Therefore the task of salvage ethnography is to hasten and manufacture the loss of the native lifeways the anthropologist purports to rescue."[94]

Wakeham likens the ideological foundation of salvage ethnography – and particularly its visual articulation in photography, and later film – to that of taxidermy, "a posture that purports to preserve and to monumentalize, to defeat time."[95] The art of taxidermy developed and flourished alongside that of photography and both are historically linked to "the rise of colonial exploration and the related desire to collect and study specimens from distant lands."[96] According to Wakeham, the uncomfortable alliance between these two technologies of visual capture and preservation in the discourses of anthropology and ethnography, saw "the semiotics of taxidermy… transferred from the animal corpse to a new form of 'specimen': the racialized body of the native other."[97] Ethnographic photography functions like taxidermy, for Wakeham,

[91] Rosaldo, Renato, "Imperialist Nostalgia," *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989): 107-108.
[92] Ibid., 108.
[93] "Aggressive civilization" was a policy established by Ulysses S. Grant to assimilate Indigenous peoples into the Euro-American population by prohibiting and eliminating Indigenous customs and cultural practices. The cornerstone of the policy was the establishment of Indian Industrial schools and educational experiments in military prisons throughout the United States. The program was enthusiastically endorsed by Nicholas Flood Davin in his 1879 *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds*, which led to the establishment of the Canadian Residential School System. Across North America, Indigenous cultural and spiritual customs and ceremonies, such as the Potlach and the Sundance, were rendered illegal and participants in such practices were subject to imprisonment. Derek G. Smith, "'The Policy of Aggressive Civilization' and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools For Native Peoples in Canada, 1870-95," *Anthropologica* 43.2 (2001): 253-271.
[94] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 138.
[95] Ibid., 125.
[96] Ibid., 10.
[97] Ibid., 87.

in that both media are predicated on the notions of capture and preservation that imply a certain set of power relations and both effectively reproduce "death in the image of life."[98] Indeed, as Solomon-Godeau argues, "the use of the camera has historically engendered a vocabulary of mastery, possession, appropriation, and aggression; to shoot a picture, to take a picture, to aim the camera, and so forth."[99] Wakeham reveals the lengths to which these metaphoric associations have historically gone, citing a 1908 article in the American journal, *The World's Work: A History of Our Time*, written by historian Edmond Meany and entitled, "Hunting Indians with a Camera."[100] As implied in its title, the article employs a series of sport-hunting metaphors and animalistic adjectives for the Indigenous peoples preyed upon by ethnographic photographers. Indeed, the article follows previously established "flawed logic" that legitimated and justified the combination of sport hunting and taxidermy as an "urgent solution to the threat of species extinction."[101] According to Wakeham, the same logic was applied to the photographic preservation of the supposedly vanishing race, entailing a conceptual "shift from the 'ethnographic animal' to the 'ethnographic Indian,'" and a replacement of the gun with the camera.[102] The camera, it would seem, is afforded an even greater level of efficiency than the gun: while one can shoot with either, the camera has the capacity to simultaneously perform taxidermy on its target. According to the analogy, the ethnographic photographer is presented both as hunter and hero, "both preserver and predator of the vanishing race."[103]

Wakeham argues that this "doubled preservationist/predatory logic… is symptomatic of the broader institutional practice of 'salvage ethnography,'" and I would argue that it is, in fact, paradigmatic of colonial ideology in North America more broadly.[104] Indeed, reflected in expressions of imperialist nostalgia, anthropological urgency and the commercial trade of Indigenous images and artifacts, there is a fundamental paradox at the core of the colonial project that endeavoured to collect and conserve precisely those markers of Indigenous cultural identity that were also the targets of aggressive assimilation, prohibition and punishment. As will be

[98] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 18.
[99] Solomon-Godeau, "Who Is Speaking Thus?" 181.
[100] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 89.
[101] Ibid. Wakeham cites William Hornaday's 1891 treatise, *Taxidermy and Zoological Collecting,* which she argues abided by "fraught conservationist rhetoric," according to which, "to prevent the extinction of wildlife, the collector had a 'duty' to take on the task of extermination himself, to kill the animal properly, and to preserve its remains in taxidermic form" (51).
[102] Ibid., 87.
[103] Ibid., 90.
[104] Ibid.

demonstrated in Chapter One, the role of photography in this history cannot be understated. Referring extensively to Wakeham's articulation of the salvage paradox and the violent legacy of taxidermic representation, this dissertation builds on existing scholarship surrounding colonial photography in North America by analyzing ethnographic images alongside another class of photographs produced in the same historical period: coeval with the proliferation of exoticized ethnographic images, was the production of an extensive archive of photographs designed to promote Canada's Residential School System and America's Indian Boarding Schools throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Unlike the exotic images produced for anthropological and commercial purposes that capitalized on symbols of "Indianness," residential school photographs were intended to demonstrate the system's successful process of cultural assimilation. Despite their parallel production and circulation, these two types of images are rarely discussed in close connection with one another and there has yet to be an extensive analysis of their reciprocal implications. Undertaking this examination, I argue that the juxtaposition of these two types of images functions as a visual manifestation of imperialist nostalgia: the first romanticizing and lamenting the loss of *authentic* Indigeneity, the second celebrating the supposed success of the civilizing mission and its assimilationist agenda. Both collections of images enact representational violence as described by Wakeham, Wolfe and Tsinhnahjinnie, while simultaneously omitting imagery of any tangible or physical violence occurring beyond the photographic frame, sustaining a sanitized impression of colonial settlement. What is more, I suggest that the paired analysis of these two archives facilitates a necessary investigation of photographic ethics, both in terms of the medium's historical use and its persistent theorization as indexical, objective, honest and benign.

3. Photographic Ethics and the Picturing of Atrocity

As previously mentioned, one effect of the shift from analogue to digital media has been increased critical attention paid to the ethics of photography. Ethical concerns certainly seem to be central to the claims made by those who suggest we have entered a post-photographic age. Controversies of this type typically concern the way photographs are now – or can be – composited, the speed and means of their circulation, the ease of their alteration, and their increased production by citizen journalists, embedded reporters, and even the "perpetrators and

participants" of atrocities.[105] But, evidenced in the ways that photography functioned historically as a tool of colonial propaganda and control, the medium's ethics have long been unstable – a result, it cannot be denied, of the easily exploitable notions of indexicality and objectivity. Indeed, this is further elucidated through the combined analysis of the photographic production of contemporary artists with an examination of the way photography functioned in the service of colonialism. The remainder of this review thus engages with current scholarship surrounding photographic ethics with a concentration on the medium's connection to the imaging of atrocity. Throughout this discussion, I interrogate the way such photographic practices relate to, confirm or conflict with photographic representations of Indigenous people by non-Indigenous colonial image-makers.

Referring to the common and interdisciplinary photographic practice of imaging atrocity, Prosser asserts, "There was surely atrocity before photography, but without the same kind of evidence."[106] Both lauded as an asset for social justice campaigns and decried as deceptive or exploitative, the stakes are high in debates regarding photography's ethics as a result of the medium's entrenchment in news media, humanitarianism, and judicial systems. In *Human Rights in Camera*, Sharon Sliwinski examines the significant role of visual images in human rights discourse. She argues that contrary to the assertion in most major declarations that individual rights and freedoms are "self-evident" and "inalienable," history has proven time and time again that this is by no means the case.[107] The horrors of war, slavery and genocide have made it evident that rights – rather than innate – must be granted or bestowed and are by no means distributed equally to everyone. Indeed, rather than preceding or preventing their violation, Sliwinski argues that rights are typically declared in response to evidence of an atrocity having taken place. She states: "The conception of rights did not emerge from the abstract articulation of an inalienable human dignity but rather from a particular visual encounter with atrocity."[108] Providing a series of examples from the production of engravings illustrating accounts of the 1755 Lisbon Earthquake, to the pivotal role of photographs in garnering global awareness of

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[105] Peter Maass, "Perpetrators and Participants: War Photographers of the Digital Age," Paper presented at the conference, "Photojournalism: Then & Now," organized by Media@McGill, the McGill Institute for the Study of Canada and the McCord Museum, Montreal, QC. November 2nd, 2012.
[106] Prosser, "Introduction,"11.
[107] Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 18-19. Sliwinski's argument is indebted to the work of Hannah Arendt and her notion of "the right to have rights." See *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1951).
[108] Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera,* 58.

crimes against humanity and the drafting of rights declarations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Sliwinski centralizes the role of the spectator in the recognition and establishment of human rights and argues that "our shared ideas about the constitution of the human subject leans on aesthetic encounters."[109] Sliwinski credits the global circulation of images of atrocity with building a community of distant spectators – described elsewhere by Shoshana Felman as an "alignment of witnesses" – whose virtual coming together initiates "the deal of a shared humanity."[110] Indeed, Sliwinski suggests that, "the notion of universal human rights was born and is carried, in part, in the minds of distant spectators."[111] In a similar assertion, Azoulay suggests that an image of atrocity effectively functions as an "emergency claim" – an alarm, alerting distant spectators to the occurrence of a crisis and demanding urgent and immediate action.[112]

Despite the profound impact of such images on the constitution of human rights, Sliwinski, also admits that "[a]s the historical record plainly shows, spectators' capacity to witness such events from a distance has had little effect on the frequency or savageness of these atrocities."[113] In fact, she notes the common claim that the excess of images of atrocity has "engendered a kind of audience malaise known as compassion fatigue."[114] Indeed, the question of photography's capacity to effect action or change is often raised and the suggestion made that contemporary spectators are desensitized by the sheer excess of images of atrocity, to the point that horror has become banal.[115] Alternatively, reflecting Barthes' assertion that the temporality of photography is the paralyzing "anterior future," Prosser argues that – rather than leading to action – photographs of atrocity can overwhelm spectators with feelings of helplessness, burdened by the knowledge that they are too late to help; what they see has already occurred.[116]

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[109] Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera,* 5.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography,* 27.
[113] Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera,* 29.
[114] Ibid., 13.
[115] The popular notion of "compassion fatigue" is typically traced to Sontag's 1977 *On Photography*, in which she referred to the impotence generated by media over-saturation of images of atrocity. In her final rumination on the medium, *Regarding The Pain of Others* (2003), Sontag retracted much of what she had said, arguing that images of atrocity do still have the capacity to shock or emotionally affect the spectator, but still admitting that reactions to such images cannot be controlled. For a good discussion of the fallacy of compassion fatigue and the evolution of Sontag's argument between her two major publications of the subject, see David Campbell, "The Myth of Compassion Fatigue," February 2012, http://www.david-campbell.org.
[116] Prosser, "Introduction," 10; Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* 96.

While documenting atrocity may be undertaken with the most positive and progressive of intentions, it is also an ethically ambiguous tradition, at times more harmful than heroic. As Prosser states, "The photographing of atrocity always involves an ethical crisis of representation."[117] As I have already argued, no photograph is actually "an act of non-intervention," and – while it may provide invaluable visual evidence for the pursuit of justice – it may also obscure or omit important information; it may misrepresent an event, or even be deliberately decontextualized. Furthermore, as Prosser argues, "Photography is not innocent of but can be part of an atrocity."[118] Photographs can aestheticize atrocity, transforming a painful event into a spectacle and contributing to or exacerbating a victim's suffering or pain. Photography is an ambivalent medium, easily put in the service of divergent powers and positions and a photograph's meaning can change over time and across contexts.[119] Furthermore, Prosser questions whether there could ever be a universal consensus as to what constitutes an atrocity. He argues that some atrocities might leave little visual evidence of their occurrence, and, in any case, their visual registry in photographs can never be capable of communicating the complexity of the event. Even more complex, in some circumstances an atrocity is only recognized en masse as such in retrospect.[120]

Even with all of these limitations in mind, Prosser argues that, inundated with images of atrocity, and aware of their integral role in the establishment of rights and the enactment of justice, "skewing or leaving out human rights violations committed in history, which is supposed to record for posterity, can be an atrocity."[121] This point is crucial for a holistic analysis of the historical photographs considered in this project. The ethnographic images of exotic "Indians" and the promotional photographs of residential school students, to which contemporary artists repeatedly return, mask the genocidal violence underlying the images. What is more, in the age of photographic over-exposure to atrocities world wide, produced in increasing excess from the mid-nineteenth century to the present, very few images of direct colonial violence against Indigenous peoples exist. With only a few exceptions, the photographic frontier thus persists in

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[117] Prosser, "Introduction," 9.
[118] Ibid.
[119] A cogent example is the existing archive of American lynching photographs and postcards. Initially produced as sadistic souvenirs celebrating mob-motivated vigilante justice and collected and circulated as trophies by the perpetrators and spectators of the crimes, these same photographs were later taken up by civil rights activists as evidence of human rights abuses and racist acts of murder. The same photograph, differently contextualized, thus has the capacity to function in promotion *or* protest of a given event.
[120] Prosser, "Introduction," 11.
[121] Ibid., 12.

providing a tame or sanitized impression of colonization and settlement.[122] Indeed, referring to the role visual imagery has played in the constitution and protection of human rights, and the remarkable lack of such materials in the context of North American settler colonialism, Tsinhnahjinnie argues: "The photographic evidence of U.S. genocidal practices is not extensive (if there is no evidence of genocide then there was no genocide)."[123] While images of direct violence or blatant atrocity may be limited, the body of photographs depicting Indigenous people, whether as exotic ethnographic "Indians" or subject to institutionalized assimilation, is vast and, with close analysis, is revelatory of the historical and continuing crisis that is North American settler colonialism. Indeed, Prosser argues that "much can remain oblique, sidelined or hidden in atrocity photographs," and that "putting the photograph back in its context can restore a complex frame and narrative to the photograph."[124]

In her essay, "The Execution Portrait," Azoulay argues that we need to expand our understanding of what constitutes an image of atrocity, claiming "The way photography partakes of picturing atrocity is not by atrocity residing or appearing in the photograph."[125] Rather than the image itself, Azoulay claims we need to consider "the photographic event in which it was taken, and eventually the photographic event of viewing it."[126] She writes:

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[122] Throughout my research, I have come across a handful of exceptions that do in fact directly picture violence or atrocity. These are: a collection of photographs documenting the aftermath of the 1890 massacre near Wounded Knee Creek on the Lakota Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, that directly depict the corpses of slaughtered men, women and children; a series of postcards depicting the lynching of Native Americans, along with Mexican and Chinese people, in California around the turn of the twentieth century; and a rare collection of photographs revealing the rounding up of Indigenous children after the 1920 amendment to the Indian Act made enrollment in Canadian Residential Schools mandatory, and their transportation in overflowing cattle cars. Both of the first two examples listed here – which will be discussed in subsequent chapters – were reproduced and circulated as souvenir postcards and trophies, exacerbating the atrocity, by further exploiting the victims. For a discussion of the Wounded Knee photographs, see Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie, "When is a Picture Worth A Thousand Words?" *Photography's Other Histories,* Eds. C. Pinney and N. Peterson (Durham and London, Duke University Press): 40-52. For information on the lynching photographs, see Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West, 1850-1935* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006). For a mention of round-up photographs, see Racette, "Haunted: First Nations Children in Residential School Photography," 57. Expanding beyond these historical examples, it should also be acknowledged, that up until the 2011 declaring of a state of emergency on the Attawapiskat First Nation Reserve in Ontario, and the media's publication of photographs documenting the deplorable conditions on the reserve, very little visual imagery of the state of poverty-stricken reserves had circulated in the mainstream media. This is despite the excess of such images depicting foreign locations. Indeed, the lack of photojournalistic documentation has arguably contributed to a lack of public awareness of the continuing catastrophe plaguing Indigenous communities in North America in the terms described by Azoulay.

[123] Tsinhnahjinnie, "When is a Picture Worth A Thousand Words?" 45.

[124] Prosser, "Introduction," 8.

[125] Azoulay, "The Execution Portrait," *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, Eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2012), 251.

[126] Ibid., 252.

"A photograph pictures atrocity when it is created under disaster circumstances *regardless of what it captures,* even when no visible trace of the atrocity is actually left in it. In other words, photographs picture atrocity by their mere coming into being in disaster condition, but the atrocity that they picture is not reducible to that which has been established as its visual attributes. The presence – or absence – of such attributes in the photograph does not change the ontological fact that when a photograph is produced in an atrocity, it is part of the picture of atrocity."[127]

According to Azoulay's argument, photography is much more firmly embedded in the circumstances wherein atrocities are committed. While such a statement is rather common to the contemporary moment, in which digital devices allow for the capture, transmission and transmogrification of images directly from conflict zones by witnesses, victims, perpetrators and participants, I argue that this is precisely how one needs to approach the photographs produced in the service of colonialism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America, as well as, to a certain extent, the production of the contemporary artists examined in this dissertation.

Azoulay makes evident the fact that neither the image nor the occurrence of an atrocity is immediately evident to every observer. Picturing atrocity, in this sense, becomes much more insidious and functionally embedded in the context of pervasive and impending conditions of crises plaguing subjugated communities. Indeed, there is a clear link to be drawn between Azoulay's conception of surreptitious atrocity photos and her re-theorization of catastrophe as a chronic condition that easily goes unnoticed by external witnesses. Azoulay's assessment is useful for a reevaluation of the photographic archive surviving from the colonial period in North America, in which photographic objectivity is exploited via omission, to obscure the outward expression of violence or atrocity. Lacking obvious "emergency claims," I argue that a re-consideration of these images, in concert with the examination of photographs produced by contemporary artists, elucidates the roots of contemporary catastrophic conditions facing Indigenous peoples across North America.

Employing a number of aesthetic strategies that likewise call the medium of photography itself into crisis, the artists' work examined in the following chapters reveals the source of contemporary catastrophe in the events of colonization, the history of the Residential School System and the obscuring of settler colonial violence in the writing and recording of history. Approaching the works of these artists as strategies of aesthetic unsettlement that function simultaneously as emergency claims and expressions of visual sovereignty, I contemplate the

[127] Azoulay, "The Execution Portrait," 251.

expected role of the spectator. The editors of *Picturing Atrocity* argue, "Photographs of atrocity… bring with them a particular set of ethical responsibilities."[128] Indeed, Prosser asserts that the failure to picture human rights abuse or to omit evidence of its occurrence from the photograph is itself an atrocity, but similarly, "not to look at pictures of atrocity is to deny its existence…. Atrocity is going on all around us. The least we can do is acknowledge it."[129] Of course, there is a wide gap between acknowledgment and action and, addressing this chasm, my discussion throughout the following chapters includes a consideration of how viewers might achieve a form of ethically responsible, unsettled spectatorship. This includes the enactment of durational and ethically engaged spectatorial strategies, such as acknowledging the unrequited or latent claims of past and future photographic participants and refiguring attention to not simply *look at*, but to *watch*, the images unfold.[130]

The central questions guiding this project remain: How are contemporary artists *photographically* confronting the historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism in North America? And, what are the political, ethical and conceptual implications of such artistic practices for a re-theorization of the medium of photography itself? In the following chapters, I describe two primary aesthetic strategies explored by contemporary artists to address these questions and provide an in-depth analysis of various works that all engage with the history and contemporary theorization of photography, denoting the medium's current crisis of conscience, disclosing the historical roots of contemporary catastrophic conditions, and soliciting a form of ethical or responsible spectatorship from the viewer. In each case, my analysis is structured around these three central claims that account for the representational, historical and ethical dimensions of the artistic practices under discussion.

Chapter Breakdown

I: Atrocity Obscured: Omission and Exposure in Colonial Photography

Building on my literature review, this dissertation's first chapter concerns the history of colonial photography in North America, with a focus on two types of images that dominated the photographic frontier: ethnographic portraits of Indigenous peoples produced for both

[128] *Picturing Atrocity*, 15.
[129] Prosser, "Introducton," 7.
[130] I am referring here to Azoulay's suggestion that, although the verb "to watch" is typically reserved for an engagement with moving pictures and other durational phenomena, in order to effect political action or change, "dimensions of time and movement… need to be re-inscribed in the interpretation of the still photographic image." *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 14. This will be discussed at greater length in the following chapters.

anthropological and commercial purposes and photographic propaganda for the Residential and Industrial School Systems in Canada and the United States. Following Azoulay's expanded notion of what constitutes an image of atrocity, I argue that all of these photographs were produced within – and, in fact, bear traces of – conditions of violence, disaster and dispossession, and therefore need to be recognized as atrocity images. Indeed, I argue that a reconsideration of the historical archive as replete with images of atrocity – even if visually obscure – reveals the extent of photography's role in settler colonial violence against Indigenous peoples. This chapter lays the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation, which focuses more on the work of contemporary artists who address the historical and ongoing perpetration of settler colonialism through direct engagement with historical photographs, including some of those discussed in this opening chapter.

For my discussion of ethnographic images, I concentrate on the work of Edward S. Curtis, on account of its enduring prominence – even celebration – in Canadian and American visual history and popular culture. I engage with Marcia Crosby's assertion that the visual culture of colonization functioned to fulfill frontier fantasies through the construction of a homogenous "Imaginary Indian," often at the expense of Indigenous people's dignity and self-determination. What Wolfe describes as "repressive authenticity," is fundamentally connected to notions of the "vanishing Indian" as the driving force behind the anthropological salvage paradigm. This type of imagery – still so familiar to contemporary spectators – is indicative of both the logic of elimination guiding settler colonialism and its seemingly incompatible desire for collection and preservation. Contextualizing Curtis's photographs, a significant portion of this chapter concerns the concurrent image archive, illustrating institutionalized assimilation perpetrated in the Residential and Industrial School Systems and targeting vulnerable Indigenous children. From their earliest days, these re-education systems relied heavily on the medium of photography to promote the schools, secure funding from both the private and governmental sectors and reassure the public of the individual, societal and economic benefits of their existence. Therefore, a vast collection of photographs exists, representing a vital, yet inadequate, resource that requires close attention and analysis. Contrasting Curtis's photographs with those produced in promotion of the schools, I investigate how the two archives both support and contradict one another's claims and consider their relation to the history of picturing atrocity.

Residential school photographs, while objectively innocuous, ultimately depict the isolation, incarceration and aggressive assimilation of Indigenous children for promotional and

political purposes. In addition to the more common federally or institutionally commissioned photographs, I also discuss images produced in the early- and mid-twentieth century by an amateur photographer with direct and close access to students. In contrast to those produced for official circulation, these photographs depict more intimate images in which children are often pictured individually, smiling, and even occasionally identified by name and nation. Despite the more positive portrayal and potential amity existing between the participants in these photographic encounters, the images can never be entirely separated from the system in which the photographer worked and which is responsible for such egregious abuses. I thus consider these historical images as a valuable resource for an analysis of both the insidiousness of settler colonial ideology and the experienced and witnessed inter-generational trauma resulting from the Residential School System and other genocidal structures.

II: Unsettling the Photographic Frontier: Archival Intervention

Chapters Two and Three both examine the work of contemporary artists who engage directly with the photographic history of colonization, its production of repressive authenticity, and its complicity in structures of racism, violence and dispossession. These artists employ a number of artistic tactics to expose the perpetuation of settler colonial structures in contemporary North America, shifting attention from perpetration in the past to accountability in the present. The work of these artists is divided according to two – sometimes overlapping – aesthetic strategies: *archival intervention* and *satire, mimicry or masquerade*. In all cases, to different degrees, these artists engage photography as both medium and subject of their work, addressing the weaponization of the camera in the service of settler colonialism.

In Chapter Two, I concentrate on the work of three artists who each undertake processes of direct archival intervention, re-purposing, editing and annotating historical photographs and footage in ways that transform them into contemporary objects. Chris Bose (Cree), Ken Gonzales-Day (Mexican-American) and Meryl McMaster (Cree and Scottish) each express a form of visual sovereignty, as described by Michelle Raheja, undermining the assumed or initial power of the original images and re-mobilizing them – with important updates – to different effect. Their work undermines and expands upon existing narratives about the historical beginnings and contemporary character of Canada and the United States to insist upon awareness of continued racial and cultural discrimination, disenfranchisement and abuse. Bose's audio-video and digital collages, incorporating both found photographs and film footage, directly

confront the history of the Residential School System and, more specifically, the complacency of reconciliation-era Canada, following the government's 2008 official apology to former students. His work is haunting and confrontational, refusing to spare spectators the burden of knowledge or responsibility. Interacting directly with the types of images discussed in the second half of Chapter One, Bose's work accounts for their absences and silences, re-writing violence into the archive and drawing attention to ignorance and omission as atrocities themselves. In a sophisticated act of alteration for his ongoing series *Erased Lynching*, Gonzales-Day digitally removes the ropes and hanged bodies from postcards and press photographs depicting Indigenous, Mexican and Chinese victims of lynching in the nineteenth-century American West. Effectively performing his own act of erasure or omission, Gonzales-Day's work draws attention to an under-acknowledged aspect of colonial terrorism. With the victims removed from the images, the focus is redirected to the perpetrators and bystanders, often themselves included in the images. Additionally, I argue that the eerie emptiness at the centre of each frame draws specific attention to the presence of the photographer and the camera's complicity in transforming trauma into spectacle. Finally, McMaster's 2008-2010 series, *Ancestral* consists of composite portraits of herself and her father, overlaid with nineteenth-century ethnographic images of unnamed Indigenous people produced by non-Indigenous photographers, including Edward Curtis. The resulting images depict multiple generations of Indigenous photographic subjects and contradict the guiding ideology of disappearance that drove the production of the original images. Rather, McMaster's layered portraits assert Indigenous presence, perseverance and cultural rootedness.

Employing tactics of layering, juxtaposition, annotation and erasure to expose and re-focus the camera's subjective eye, re-claiming representational power, I argue that these artists' work enlists spectators to approach the viewing experience from a more critical and ethically engaged perspective. Referring to Jacques Derrida's notion of justice as "being with specters" and Dylan Robinson's assertion that settlers need to accept "intergenerational responsibility" for the perpetuation of racist and segregationist colonial structures, I argue that these works of art demand the development of introspective, durational and unsettled forms of spectatorship.

III: Re-staging the Play of History: Satire, Mimicry and Masquerade

In this final chapter, I focus on the work of three contemporary artists, as well as one early Indigenous photographer, who also engage closely with colonial photographs, in these cases

employing strategies of satire, mimicry and masquerade to interrogate the presumed authority of historical images and the ideologies they entrench. Contemporary artists, Wendy Red Star (Apsáalooke), Kent Monkman (Cree/Irish) and Da-ka-xeen Mehner (Tlingit/Nisga'a) each include themselves directly in their images, acting as both photographer and performer and interrogating the traditional role Indigenous peoples have played in the history of photography. Referring to the common expectation of Indigenous people to "play Indian" for largely non-Indigenous audiences, these artists raise significant questions about the assumed power dynamics of colonial photographic encounters and the productive potential of strategic complicity. Their work undermines both the assumption of objectivity attached to analogue photography and the imbalance of power understood as governing ethnographic image making. As such, I argue that their work expresses visual sovereignty, resilience and an assertion of Indigenous futurity.

Referring back to the work discussed in this dissertation's preface, Chapter Three opens with another of Red Star's photographic series. A collection of four large-scale photographs, *Four Seasons* (2006) confronts the intertwined mediums of photography and museum dioramas, addressing the traditional treatment and exhibition of Indigenous people in each. Satirically recreating both the built environments and photographic compositions so common in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but without the façade of objectivity or authenticity, Red Star reveals the fundamentally fabricated nature of both media. Contrasting her work with Wakeham's notion of taxidermic semiosis, I note that the parody stops short of the artist's actual self-portrait in which, rather, Red Star proudly asserts her present existence and cultural identity. Considered in connection with *Medicine Crow and the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation*, Red Star's *Four Seasons* reveals the artist's interest in honouring Apsáalooke self-determination and sovereign identification.

In contrast to the conspicuous contemporaneity of Red Star's series, Monkman and Mehner push their mimicry of historical images to the extreme, masquerading their photographs as antique objects and therefore undermining the truth claims of historical photography. For his 2006 photographic series, *The Emergence of a Legend*, Monkman disguises five twenty-first century portraits of his two-spirit alter ego Miss Chief Eagle Testickle as nineteenth-century daguerreotypes, effectively employing a threefold process of sexual, racial and temporal masquerade. Referencing over a century of Indigenous performers "playing Indian" on stage and screen for settler and overseas audiences, Monkman and Miss Chief reveal the enduring non-Indigenous fascination with the fantasy of the imaginary Indian and the strategic complicity of

Indigenous actors in the facade. Similarly parodying expectations of Indigenous authenticity, but employing tactics of both mimesis *and* archival intervention for his 2009 *Reinterpretation* series, Mehner digitally spliced his own body into historical photographs to appear as the mirror image of his ethnographically preserved ancestor. Appropriating and altering a set of found photographs produced by the Alaska-based studio Case & Draper at the turn of the nineteenth century and depicting a man believed to be his distant relative, surrounded by a mixture of studio props, museum-owned artifacts and accessories, Mehner's images are temporally distorted, highly-contrived family photographs.

All three of the contemporary artists examined in this chapter interact with a lengthy history of Indigenous people's solicitation to perform the role of "the Indian" in a variety of contexts, as well as the distorted images with which non-Indigenous audiences were satisfied. Most significantly these works disclose both the performative *and* productive positions occupied by Indigenous peoples in the history of photography – with Monkman and Mehner including the camera in their images, placed in the hands of their Indigenous protagonists – in fact, pointing toward an under-acknowledged legacy of early Indigenous photographers. Responding to this aspect of the artists' retroactive play, I therefore conclude this chapter with my own look backwards, closing with a discussion of early twentieth-century Indigenous photographers. I focus this conclusion primarily on a relatively obscure collection of images produced by otherwise renowned Kiowa photographer Horace Poolaw. These images, I argue, are indicative of a long – if, largely disregarded – history of self-reflexive resistance to photo-colonialism and repressive authenticity on the part of Indigenous image-makers. Poolaw's output, like the work of the contemporary artists discussed in this dissertation, are as assertive of Indigenous survivance and futurity as they are critical of attempts toward cultural dissolution and genocide. In all cases, the works examined interrogate the ethical ambiguity and changing use of photography, disclosing the historical origins of contemporary crises, and soliciting spectators' active and unsettled attention.

CHAPTER I
ATROCITY OBSCURED: OMISSION AND EXPOSURE IN COLONIAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Reviewing the photographic collection at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC, Tuscarora curator Richard Hill wrote, "Photography came into use during a time of great turmoil for Indians."[131] The sentiment was similarly expressed by artist Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie in a 1993 article, "Compensating Imbalances," wherein she chronicled the parallel development of photography alongside the colonial dispossession of Indigenous peoples' land, lives and rights from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Rather than referring specifically to their direct convergence, she outlined the synchrony of the processes in an episodic play-by-play: Joseph Nicéphore Niépce's announcement of the Daguerreotype in France in the 1830s coincided with the enforcement of the Indian Removal Act in the United States; Eadweard Muybridge's serial photographs of a horse in motion was published two years after Custer's defeat in the battle of Little Bighorn; mass marketing campaigns for the point-and-shoot Kodak camera were initiated while Indigenous peoples defended their sovereign, religious and treaty rights against increased encroachment, persecution and attack; an entire Lakota community was slaughtered by the US Cavalry on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in Wounded Knee, South Dakota, and photographs of the aftermath were traded as postcards among settler society, but despite the increased availability of the camera for amateur image makers, "not one photograph of the Wounded Knee Massacre is from the Native point of view."[132] Indeed, referring to the relative lack of Indigenous photographers in the medium's first hundred years, Tsinhnahjinnie's juxtaposed timelines reveal that, under physical, psychological and spiritual attack, survival took obvious precedence over photographic training.[133]

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[131] Richard Hill, "Developed Identities," *Spirit Capture: Photographs from the National Museum of the American Indian* (Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999): 141.

[132] Tsinhnahjinnie, "Compensating Imbalances," *Exposure* 29.1, "Native American Photography" (Fall 1993): 30.

[133] Ibid., 29-30. While certainly outnumbered by non-Indigenous photographers in the professional realms of anthropology and journalism, there were also Indigenous photographers practicing across North America during the medium's earlier days, some of whom will be discussed in this dissertation's final chapter. Some examples include Richard Throssel (Cree/Métis/Scottish), Jennie Ross Cobb (Aniyunwiya), Benjamin A. Haldane (Tsimshian), James Brady (Métis) and Horace Poolaw (Kiowa). For more information, see: Veronica Passalacqua, "Finding Sovereignty Through Relocation," *Visual Currencies: Reflections on Native American Photography*, eds. Henrietta Lidchi and Hulleah Tsinhnahjinnie (Edinburgh: NMSA Publishing Ltd., 2010): 19-35; Sherry Farrell Racette, "Returning Fire,

From the moment of the medium's introduction, Indigenous people were, however, commonly enlisted as subjects for non-Indigenous photographers whose images circulated for political, commercial, ethnographic and entertainment purposes both within North America and overseas. This excess of images was produced in a period of intense and sustained conflict between Indigenous and settler nations, at a time when the photographic documentation of disaster, desecration and war was becoming increasingly common.[134] It is, therefore, remarkable that so few photographs produced around the turn of the twentieth century contain overt depictions of violence or atrocity committed against Indigenous people. Certainly, the most notable exception is the collection of images referred to by Tsinhnahjinnie, taken in the aftermath of the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee and primarily attributed to the commercial photographers Clarence G. Morledge or Trager & Kuhn [Figures 1.1-1.4]. The massacre at Wounded Knee resulted in the deaths of over 250 Lakota men, women and children, as well as 25 members of the United States Cavalry and is generally cited as the last major military conflict of America's "Indian Wars."[135] Prefiguring the images of atrocity, horror and war with which twentieth century publics would become so familiar, the Wounded Knee photographs have become the iconic, if anomalous, images of a contentiously defined Native American genocide: views of a snow-covered terrain, littered with the frozen bodies of men, women and children; close-ups of contorted figures, manipulated and repositioned for greater photographic effect; the dead piled in heaps, loaded onto wagons and into mass graves; and American soldiers posing for the camera with souvenirs stripped from their victims' bodies.[136]

The Wounded Knee photographs directly conform to the conventions that viewers have come to expect from images of atrocity: the visual depiction of bodies pushed to their limits,

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Pointing the Canon: Aboriginal Photography as Resistance," *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada,* Eds. Carol Payne and Andrea Kunard (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press): 70-90.

[134] For example, in addition to the work of early war photographers in the nineteenth century, the same period saw the proliferation of photographs documenting the lynching of African Americans in southern United States as well as Chinese, Mexican and Native Americans in the West – a historical phenomenon that will be discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

[135] In his essay included in *Picturing Atrocity*, "Visible and Invisible Scars of Wounded Knee," Mick Gidley argues that common references to the event as a "battle," rather than a massacre, "represents a failure of recognition on the part of the dominant culture" (27). Indeed, most accounts describe the majority of the predominantly unarmed Lakota victims (disproportionately women and children) being killed while huddled inside their tents or trying to escape the cavalry's cannons and gunfire, many tracked down and slaughtered in the aftermath of the initial conflict.

[136] The taking and selling of souvenirs from the massacre has been well documented and, as highly sought commercial objects, Gidley describes the way the photographs themselves functioned like trophies ("Visible and Invisible Scars of Wounded Knee," 30). In this regard, a comparison can easily be drawn to the coeval production and commercial trade of lynching photographs in America, which were also commonly printed as postcards and are often likened to trophy hunting photographs.

trespassed upon by violence, death or defilement; the pain of others rendered spectacular by the photographic apparatus. When accounting for the pervasive presence of photography and its centrality in the colonial project, what is arguably more surprising than the grotesque nature of the Wounded Knee photographs themselves, is, in fact, their exceptionality. Addressing the absence, Tsinhnahjinnie argues, "The photographic evidence of U.S. genocidal practices is not extensive (if there is no evidence of genocide then there was no genocide)."[137]

In place of such easily identifiable "evidence" of violence or massacre, there exists an extensive archive of photographs produced for ethnographic, entertainment or propagandistic purposes, that depict Indigenous peoples as either exoticized "Indian" types or embroiled in varying stages of enforced assimilation. While lacking or less overt in their depiction of violence or barbarity, such photographs are, I argue, indicative of what Patrick Wolfe describes as the "logic of elimination" driving settler colonial assaults against Indigenous people in North America and, due to their complicity, should be recognized as, themselves, images of atrocity. My argument is here informed by Ariella Azoulay's assertion that a photograph need not be explicit in its imagery to bear the stamp of catastrophe, but that "a photograph pictures atrocity when it is created under disaster circumstances *regardless of what it captures*, even when no visible trace of the atrocity is actually left in it."[138]

In the following analysis, I re-examine the settler colonial archive, looking beyond photographs of explicit violence or brutality to address and contextualize the more common and seemingly innocuous images that dominate North America's photographic frontier. This chapter is concerned with the concurrent production of two types of photographs produced by primarily non-Indigenous photographers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. These are: (1) ethnographic portraits of Indigenous peoples pictured in stereotypical settings and poses for anthropological and entertainment purposes and (2) personal and promotional photographs produced in support of Canada's Residential School System and America's Indian Boarding Schools. The coeval production of these two types of images – the first purporting to salvage the last vestiges of an assumedly "vanishing race," and the second celebrating a declaratively assimilationist agenda intended to eliminate all signs of indigeneity – elucidates a fundamental paradox at the centre of colonial ideology that sought the simultaneous preservation and

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[137] Tsinhnahjinnie, "When is a Photograph Worth a Thousand Words," *Photography's Other Histories*, Eds. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson, (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003): 45.
[138] Ariella Azoulay, "The Execution Portrait," *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, Eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2012), 251. Emphasis in original.

eradication of Indigenous cultures. Taken together, they therefore constitute a visual manifestation of Rosaldo's notion of "imperialist nostalgia" discussed in this dissertation's introduction, whereby the agents of colonialism pathologically "mourn the passing of what they themselves have transformed."[139] What is more, designed to demonstrate and naturalize the disappearance or dissolution of Indigenous identities and existence, the photographs are emblematic of – even contributory to – the eradicative ideology driving settler colonialism. Bringing these two types of photographs together and recasting them as images of atrocity, according to Azoulay's expanded definition, I demonstrate that both the ethnographic images of imaginary Indians and the photographs picturing residential school students in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were produced in conditions of heightened crises that were and remain exacerbated by the omission of atrocity from the photographic record.

In her own scholarship, Azoulay is concerned with establishing an ethics of spectatorship, which, she argues, is grounded in the re-inscription of dimensions of time and movement in the act of viewing.[140] She suggests that in order to engage with an image in ways that might effect political action or change, "one needs to stop looking at the photograph and instead start watching it."[141] Whereas the verb "to watch" is typically reserved for an engagement with moving pictures and other durational phenomena, she states, "Photographs bear traces of a plurality of political relations that might be actualized by the act of watching, transforming and disseminating what is seen into claims that demand action."[142] She describes photography as a multifaceted "apparatus of power," irreducible to any one of its elements or actors (including the camera, the photographer, the subject or object of the image, as well as its subsequent spectators), and she calls for a re-consideration of photography as "an ensemble of diverse actions that contain the production, distribution, exchange, and consumption of the photographic image."[143] According to this conception, the printed photograph itself is but a point of departure – insufficient as evidence and incapable on its own of adequately conveying the extent of the atrocity to which it might attest – soliciting spectators' active attention and analysis to reconstruct and respond to the photographic event from which the image results.[144] It is in this

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[139] Renato Rosaldo, "Imperialist Nostalgia," *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-memory (Spring 1989): 107-108.
[140] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography* (New York: Zone Books, 2008): 27.
[141] Ibid., 14.
[142] Ibid., 25-26.
[143] Ibid., 86.
[144] Ibid., 356.

sense that Azoulay posits the photographic encounter – however imbalanced or exploitative – as regulated by a sort of civil contract, according to which the resultant image "enables the injured parties to present their grievances, in person or through others, now or in the future."[145]

Throughout this chapter, I borrow from Azoulay's assessment of ethical spectatorship as attentiveness to the multi-dimensionality of the photographic encounter, as well as its evolution or endurance in time. I do this by re-examining the context in which the images were produced and circulated (both historically and contemporarily) and by accounting for the parallel production of the two genres of images under discussion. Beginning with an examination of ethnographic photography, and building on the literature review from the introductory chapter, I unpack the notion of the "vanishing Indian," that guided so much of colonial photography and functioned to both naturalize and justify the settler colonial logic of elimination. I focus this analysis on the photographic production of Edward S. Curtis, for the sheer infamy of, and retained interest in, the photographer and his work. My reading of Curtis's photographs is grounded by attentiveness to the Canadian and American assimilationist policies that both informed and undercut the fantasies concocted by Curtis and his contemporaries. As a result, the bulk of this chapter concerns the history of the Indian Residential and Industrial School systems and the integral role – even the complicity – of photography in their promotion and administration. I examine a number of official images produced by professional photographers as well as a significant collection of largely unseen amateur images taken by a residential school teacher in the mid-1920s. This final collection of photographs is arguably even more complex than the images produced for official publication and is of paramount importance for an understanding of the insidious ideology that allowed for both the establishment of the Residential School System, and the continued inattention of the Canadian and international public to the endemic atrocities committed there within and perpetuated in structurally discriminatory child welfare and education services today. My discussion in this chapter therefore remains informed by Wolfe's description of settler colonialism as a form of sustained "structural genocide" and Azoulay's re-articulation of catastrophe as a perpetual threshold state.

Indeed, Azoulay's expanded interpretation of atrocity images as often unremarkable can be clearly linked to her re-theorization of contemporary catastrophe as a chronic condition that is often unperceived by external witnesses. Azoulay's assessment is therefore fruitful for a reevaluation of the photographic archive surviving from the colonial period in North America, in

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[145] Azoulay*, The Civil Contract of Photography,* 86.

which the medium's objectivity was exploited via omission, to directly obscure the outward expression of violence or atrocity. I argue that a re-consideration of these images, lacking obvious "emergency claims," reveals the roots of a continuing catastrophe in North America. A number of the contemporary art works examined in subsequent chapters directly or obliquely reference photographs produced during the period under discussion and the enduring legacy of both the images and the environments in which they were made. This chapter thus lays the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation in which the perpetual return to this photographic legacy by contemporary Indigenous artists functions to disclose a chronic catastrophe, rooted in a history of institutionalized atrocity, elimination and expropriation. The combined analysis of ethnographic and residential school photographs reveals photography's complicity in and exacerbation of the atrocities either imaged or obscured, therefore raising significant questions about the medium's ethics and exemplifying the crisis of conscience facing photography today.

Edward Curtis and the Myth of the Vanishing Race

Edward S. Curtis's monumental book project, *The North American Indian,* comprised twenty volumes of text and photographic illustration, each with an accompanying portfolio of large-scale photogravures, and was driven by an ambitious and paternalistic desire to produce a comprehensive record of the continent's varied Indigenous peoples before they disappeared forever. Published in portions between 1907 and 1930, the project was the largest anthropological endeavour of its kind, taking over thirty years to produce and requiring substantial political lobbying and economic support.[146] Divided by region, each volume details the artist's findings, impressions and opinion of the Indigenous nations he visited during his travels, articulated in a combined ethnographic and nostalgic tone that imbued the project with a sense of both immediacy and memorialization. In the general introduction to the project, Curtis writes:

[146] Beginning the fieldwork for *The North American Indian* in the mid-1890s, Curtis received official financial backing for what was becoming an increasingly ambitious endeavour from the banker and business magnate J. Pierpont Morgan in 1905. In addition to the annual support provided by Morgan, in *Edward S. Curtis and the North American Indian Project in the Field*, Mick Gidley describes, the extent to which Curtis's project was intertwined with the American political and financial systems, with Theodore Roosevelt's official endorsement (the president even penning the forward to the first volume) and further funds provided by government officials and wealthy patrons in the banking, forestry and railroad industries, all of whom certainly had stakes in the aggressively sought – if ideologically naturalized – removal of Indigenous peoples from the valuable territories on which the United States was established. (University of Nebraska Press, 2003): 13.

> The great changes in practically every phase of the Indian's life that have taken place, especially within recent years, have been such that had the time for collecting much of the material, both descriptive and illustrative, herein recorded, been delayed, it would be lost forever… the information that is to be gathered, for the benefit of future generations, respecting the mode of life of one of the great races of mankind, must be collected at once or the opportunity will be lost for all time. It is this need that has inspired the present task.[147]

The sentiment is a clear assertion of imperialist nostalgia, wherein the lament distracts from the actual causes of any "changes" taking place, eliminating acknowledgment of either the responsibility of colonial society or the resilience of Indigenous communities. Despite the individual heroism and iconic identity often attributed Curtis himself – not least in President Roosevelt's forward to the first volume wherein the artist is described as being "blest" with such talent, charm and ambition so as to achieve "what no other man ever has done" – Curtis worked extensively with Indigenous interpreters, informants and assistants.[148] This was, of course, common practice as western practitioners of emergent social sciences, such as anthropology or ethnology, very rarely spoke the languages of the subjects they studied. Additionally, Curtis, as a photographer by trade, had no formal anthropological training. Despite his lack of education, ethnographic conventions inform both the tone of the text and the composition of many of Curtis's photographs, thus lending the project a pseudo-scientific legitimacy. Indeed, contemporary artist and curator Jeffrey Thomas, who has engaged closely with *The North American Indian* in his own work, argues Curtis "employed ethnography as an authoritative voice, while using photography to tell a fictional story."[149]

A staunch adherent to the myth of the "vanishing Indian," the fiction constructed in Curtis's photographs and corroborated by his accompanying text, concerned the purportedly inevitable disappearance of once thriving cultures, incapable of adapting to a radically evolving modern world. As described in the previous literature review, the notion of the "vanishing Indian," lamented in expressions of imperialist nostalgia and articulated in ethnographic images, served as both an ideological justification for the enterprise of salvage ethnography and the

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[147] Curtis, "General Introduction," *The North American Indian*, xvi-xvii.

[148] Among others, Scottish and Tlingit George Hunt worked as negotiator, interpreter and photographic assistant to Curtis during the making of *The North American Indian* as well as production assistant, consultant, actor and director for Curtis's 1914 film *The Land of the Headhunters*. Additionally, Curtis employed Alexander Upshaw (Absaroke) and mentored Métis photographer Richard Throssel who later went on to establish a photography studio in Montana. For more information see Racette, "Returning Fire," 73-74 and Gidley, *Edward Curtis*, 10-12.

[149] Jeffrey Thomas, "Aboriginal Interventions into the Photographic Archive: A Dialogue Between Carol Payne and Jeffrey Thomas," *Visual Resources: An International Journal of Documentation* 18.2 (January 2011): 116.

anthropological plundering of Indigenous peoples' artifacts, while simultaneously naturalizing the assumedly inevitable dissolution of Indigenous cultures and thus removing any responsibility for population decline on the part of colonial governments. Ethnographic photographers like Curtis, expressly embodied the "doubled preservationist/predatory logic" that Wakeham argues was fundamental to in the salvage paradigm, casting proponents as both heroes and hunters.[150]

The consequences of this ideology and photography's complicity in it cannot be underestimated, and Sherry Farrell Racette argues, "The most damaging and persistent aspects of photo-colonialism have been its nostalgic celebration of 'vanishing races' and the authority given to its representations."[151] Indeed, Wakeham describes the representational primitivism that conceptually confined Indigenous peoples to an unchanging pre-modern state as a form of "temporal genocide" with unequivocal and enduring implications for the lives and rights of those who, in fact, failed to disappear.[152] The political motivations behind the myth of the vanishing Indian were thus multi-faceted, relieving settler-colonial governments of responsibility, and thereby justifying both the continued cooptation of Indigenous territories and the implementation of exclusionary or assimilationist policies. The myth's articulation in photography, literature and popular culture further served to appease and reassure a growing settler population of its inherent right to occupation, while simultaneously satisfying imaginative fantasies of the new nation's Indigenous ancestry.[153] Indeed, Hill argues that the temporal relegation and romanticism that characterized colonial photography, worked to produce an idea of Indians that was both exotic and comforting. He writes: "Photography brought the wild Indian into the safe confines of the home, and in doing so tamed the savage beast. These Indians might have strange costumes and surroundings, but they never appear threatening. Instead, they are enveloped in a romantic stillness and removed in time."[154]

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[150] Pauline Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs: Reconstructing Aboriginality* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 90.
[151] Racette, "Returning Fire," 79.
[152] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 203.
[153] There is a long and well-documented history of Canadian and American settlers falsely identifying with and even attempting to embody or adopt Indigenous cultures in their own self-presentation. Arguably the most famous and extreme example would be the British-born conservationist, Archibald Belaney, who went by the name Grey Owl and publicly portrayed himself as the son of a Scottish man and Apache woman. See Bruce Erickson. "'A Phantasy in White in a World That is Dead': Grey Owl and the Whiteness of Surrogacy." *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature, and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*. Eds. Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron, and Audrey Kobayashi. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2011: 19-38. For more information on the settler fascination with and heralding of "New World" Indigenous heritages, see Rayna Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe," *Folklore* 99.1 (1998): 30-55.
[154] Hill, "Developed Identities," 141.

Photo-Colonialism and the Construction of Authenticity

While a great number of Curtis's photographs depict people, individually or in groups, engaged in action of some kind – dancing, fishing, weaving or gathering water, for example – and others picture camps, architecture, art and other objects, the vast majority are portraits: close range, dramatically lit depictions of unsmiling individuals, facing the camera or in profile [Figures 1.5-1.8]. A number of the compositions thus parallel the conventions of photographs produced in the service of phrenology, craniology and forensic sciences, easily aligning the project with social Darwinist theories of racial gradation.[155] The stylization of the portraits – depicting mostly older individuals, dressed in beads, fur and feathers, with wearied, contemplative expressions, set against darkened backgrounds – has been primarily read as an aesthetic strategy suggestive of the subjects' stoic resignation to the passing away of their people and their pre-contact lives. Caricaturing this obvious interpretation, Hill argues, the costumes confirm the Indian's place in the past, while "the soulful gaze into the soft light seems to question the future."[156] However relevant as a critique of propagandistic photographic conventions, the persistent reliance on such readings also risks reinforcing assumptions of racial or cultural superiority by unquestioningly accepting an assumed imbalance of power and failing to recognize any agency on the part of the photographic subjects.

Asserting the necessity of attending to all participants in the photographic encounter, Azoulay argues that it is "patently insufficient to account for photography through a focus on the photographers or spectators" alone.[157] And, in fact, a number of (primarily Indigenous) artists and writers have transcended the traditional reading of such images in precisely these ways. For example, Azoulay's notion of "watching" is paralleled and preceded in Tsinhnahjinnie's reading of the latent strength and resilience evident in the expressions of Curtis's photographed subjects.[158] Rather than sadness or stoicism, she perceives defiance in the unsmiling faces of the

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[155] Indeed, Wakeham relates Curtis's portraits to the comparative analysis of photographs depicting the skulls of different Indigenous "types," taken by John Collins and included in Samuel Morton's 1839 *Crania America.* Wakeham argues that these pictures of skulls were treated like portraits, "treating bone like the more frequently fetishized surface of skin," to more naturally link cranial form and measurement to the assumedly inferior or primitive mental capacities of non-Caucasian races. She further argues: "in Curtis's photography skin may cover over bone, but it does so in a way that puts both tissue and skull into play, operating together in the service of racialization." *Taxidermic Signs,* 108.

[156] Hill, "Developed Identities," 141.

[157] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 18.

[158] Tsinhnahjinnie, "When Is a Photograph Worth a Thousand Words?" 42.

photographer's iconic Indians.[159] Similarly, in reference to colonial photography in Australia, Michael Aird describes a more engaged form of spectatorship among the Indigenous community wherein viewers "look past" the obvious stereotypes in search of the identities, strength and self-assurance of their ancestors.[160]

Indeed, it must be recognized that every one of the portraits produced by Curtis and his contemporaries would have been the result of a transaction of some kind, necessitating a system of negotiation and communication – however exploitative – between artist and model. As Hill argues, with the arrival of photography, "Indians became collaborators, captured for eternity in strange poses that were not always of their own making."[161] The majority of photographs surviving from the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, conform to a series of compositional and aesthetic conventions that further functioned to construct a fantasy of a timeless or primordial "imaginary Indian," uncontaminated by contact and cultural exchange, to stand in for all Indigenous peoples across the continent. However, even if the subjects were portrayed less as individuals and more as imaginatively constructed Indian types, they would – in many cases – have been active participants in the performance, well aware of the political and intellectual implications of the images. Hill argues that during such a tumultuous period in the history of North America's Indigenous peoples (and persisting to some extent in the present day), "playing Indian" in fact became a viable means of making an income and, "to survive, many Indians latched on to these stereotypes."[162]

In *The North American Indian,* the images exclusively picture figures dressed in popularly recognizable tribal clothing, marked by its difference from European attire, the supposed significance of particular items or accessories, often detailed in Curtis's accompanying captions. The ethnographic tone of the text thus functioned to conceal the extent to which the scenes were staged and the sitters' outfits assembled according, in some cases, to the artist's assumptions or desires. At the time of the photographs' production, the majority of Indigenous communities had been relocated and confined to reserves and reservations within which the

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[159] Tsinhnahjinnie, "When Is a Photograph Worth a Thousand Words?" 42. Similarly, Hill argues that whereas "the sternness seen in many Indian faces has been translated as stoicism. It could just as easily be a sign of the sitter's annoyance with the pose." "Developed Identities," 141.

[160] Michael Aird, "Growing Up With Aborigines," *Photography's Other Histories,* 23.

[161] Hill, "Developed Identities," 141.

[162] Ibid. Of course, further consideration needs to be given to photographic portraits commissioned or entered into by Indigenous people controlling their depiction in ways quite distinct from the subjects of Curtis's images, such as Bell's 1881 portraits of the Apsáalooke delegates discussed in this dissertation's Preface, as well as the photographs – much fewer in number and more limited in reach – taken by Indigenous photographers themselves.

dominant mode of dress reflected extensive cultural exchange, adaptions necessitated by dramatically altered ways of life, and increasingly strict prohibitions enforced by the settler state against ceremonial practices, cultural expression and traditional modes of subsistence. While Curtis makes claims throughout the text that "the pictures show what actually exists… not what the artist in his studio may presume the Indian and his surroundings to be," his photographs were, in fact, strategically staged to avoid any evidence of modernity, miscegenation or even cultural contact.[163] As Thomas writes: "Because the subjugation of Indians by the U.S. and Canadian governments created a very different culture than that which Curtis had set out to depict, he resorted to re-creating the past through the memories of community elders."[164] What is more, it has been repeatedly reported that in some cases the artist even supplied his sitters with costumes, props and accessories to enhance their exoticism and satisfy stereotypes that were already firmly entrenched.[165] In addition to tricks of lighting and costume play, Curtis, like many of his contemporaries, also engaged in the direct doctoring of his photogravures, scratching into or painting over the photographic plate in order to eliminate all evidence of modernity or cultural hybridity from his photographs.[166]

The 1910 photograph *In A Piegan Lodge* [Figure 1.9], is a flagrant example of such photographic manipulation and of the artist's "fictionalization of history."[167] The photogravure depicts two men identified as Little Plume and his son Yellow Kidney, seated on the ground in the interior of a tent, surrounded by objects that Curtis claims are suggestive of "various Indian activities": a pipe and tobacco are positioned between the two men; a buffalo-skin shield and medicine bundle hang nearby.[168] In addition to these items, however, the image's negative, held in the collection of the Library of Congress, reveals an alarm clock, removed from the final image, also situated in the space between the two men [Figure 1.10]. As the clock clearly conflicted with the Curtis's fantasy of unadulterated Indigenous existence, he scratched it out and superimposed an image of a small woven basket in its place before printing the final

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[163] Curtis, *The North American Indian*, xiii-xiv.
[164] Thomas, "Aboriginal Interventions," 116.
[165] See, for example: Wakeham, "Celluloid Savage," *Taxidermic Signs,* 87-127; Daniel Francis, *Copying People;* James C. Faris, *Navajo and Photography: A Critical History of the Representation of an American People* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2003).
[166] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 98.
[167] Thomas, "Aboriginal Interventions," 116.
[168] Curtis, *The North American Indian*, 256.

photograph.[169] Reflecting Fabian's notion of anthropology's *allochronism* or the temporal subjugation of Indigenous peoples to an ethnographic present previously discussed, Wakeham describes Curtis's action as "a deliberate eradication of all evidence of cultural hybridity… [that] enables the literal erasure of the time of Western progress from the past world of the authentic 'North American Indian.'"[170]

The comparative analysis of the two images reveals a paradox whereby staging and fictionalization were employed in colonial photography for the purpose of enhancing the apparent "authenticity" of the image.[171] *The North American Indian* as a whole, and the entire notion of the vanishing race, was in fact predicated on a skewed sense of authenticity, according to which Indigenous people were judged against a settler colonial fantasy that was consistently reinforced in photographs produced for both ethnographic and entertainment purposes. Indeed, the macabre impulse toward imperialist nostalgia had much less to do with the physical death of Indigenous peoples – despite a very real decrease in population as a result of violent combat, poverty, disease and starvation – as it did with the perceived loss of Indian *authenticity*. The fear – and the desire – was not that Indigenous people would cease to *be*, but rather that they would cease to *be Indians*. Indeed, in a 1905 correspondence with Curtis, President Roosevelt praised the artist's project, writing: "You have begun just in time, for these people are at this very moment rapidly losing the distinctive traits and customs which they have slowly developed through the ages. The Indian, as an Indian, is on the point of perishing."[172] The staging and manipulation of ethnographic photographs was thus motivated by the prescribed task of preserving images of "the Indian, *as an Indian*," even if no such individual actually existed. Indeed, the text accompanying the photographs in *The North American Indian* repeatedly reasserts the artist's claim to have faithfully recorded some of the last authentic Indians in existence without recourse to artistic intervention, insisting: "The object of the work is to record by word and picture what the Indian is, not whence he came."[173] Indeed, the mere insinuation of cultural contamination or interracial mixing would arguably have decreased the value of Curtis's

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[169] Anne Makepeace, *Edward S. Curtis: Coming to Light,* (National Geographic, First Edition, 2002): 175; Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 98.
[170] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 98.
[171] Indeed, Wakeham argues, "The 'distortions' that mediate every photograph's relation to reality are intensified in Curtis's image-corpus…his photographs were highly stylized and manipulated images that constructed rather than merely recorded, primitive natives in the likeness of colonial stereotypes" (*Taxidermic Signs,* 95).
[172] Quoted in Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 92.
[173] Curtis, "Introduction," *The North American Indian,* xv-xvi.

project, as is evident in the caption accompanying the image *Lelehalt – Quilcene* [Figure 1.8], for example, which reads: "Among the Pacific Coast tribes the moustache does not necessarily indicate white ancestry. The earliest travelers noted that many of the men had considerable hair on the face."[174] It's a minor phrase in a collection of much bolder and sometimes startling statements, but is indicative of both the imposed markers of identity seemingly required for an Indigenous person to be accepted as "authentic" by outsiders, and of the artist's defensiveness regarding his audience's potential skepticism. Indeed, it was particularly this insecurity and need to satisfy stereotypes already firmly entrenched within settler society that would have driven the artist's practices of staging and otherwise altering his images.

Wolfe describes the romantic stereotyping characteristic of photo-colonialism as a form of "repressive authenticity" against which living Indigenous peoples are perpetually measured. The strategy functions to reduce complex identities and sets of relationships to a simplistic opposition between authenticity and perversion. It is a dichotomy on either side of which "the Indian's" eventual elimination is reinforced: a*uthenticity* implying an inability to adapt or change with the times, *inauthenticity* signaling the progressive dilution of one's Indigeneity. As such, Wolfe argues that repressive authenticity is itself symptomatic of settler colonialism's logic of elimination.[175] Highlighting its grave implications for those rendered *inauthentic*, he suggests that although the representational violence of romantic stereotyping "is not genocidal in itself… it eliminates large numbers of empirical natives from official reckonings and, as such, is often concomitant with genocidal practice."[176] At its most basic, however, repressive authenticity, like the implied innocence of imperial nostalgia or the benign language used to naturalize the notion of the vanishing Indian, amounts, according to Wolfe, to "a diversionary ruse that works by pointing away from its practical effects."[177] Indeed, as already insinuated, the implied urgency of salvage ethnography, heralded as benevolent and necessary, functioned to obscure or avoid the actual causes of population decline and deteriorated health and living conditions among Indigenous nations.

By the time Curtis embarked on his mission, decades had passed since the enforcement of America's Indian Removal Act that exiled all Indigenous peoples east of the Mississippi River

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[174]Curtis, *The North American Indian,* vol. 9, Plate 304.
[175] Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8.4 (December 2006): 402.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Patrick Wolfe, "Nation and MiscegeNation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era," *Social Analysis* 36 (October 1994): 111.

from their ancestral territories and enforced their relocation in the West, resulting in mass deaths and disenfranchisement. North of the imposed American border, the 1876 Indian Act in Canada had legally rendered Indigenous peoples wards of a paternalistic government that had claimed authority to determine the Indian status – and, by extension, treaty rights and territorial claims – of the new nation's inherited Indigenous peoples. As a result of the Act and its subsequent amendments, virtually all First Nations were sequestered on allotted reserve land, in many cases requiring governmental permission to travel to and from, impeding migratory hunting and agricultural practices and enforcing sedentary ways of life in spaces with often insufficient resources.[178] Additionally, a policy of aggressive assimilation had been initiated across the continent, the cornerstone of which was the establishment of Indian Boarding, Industrial and Residential Schools and the institutionalized abduction and separation of Indigenous children from their families and communities.

In fact, in the opening of her seminal essay, "Haunted," Racette questions why there are so few children in the photographs taken by Curtis and his contemporaries in the early decades of the twentieth century. While a predilection for picturing the elderly certainly contributes to the aura of impending death and disappearance in photographs produced for salvage ethnographic purposes, Racette provides a much darker and more concrete explanation for the limited appearance of children in the images: "The stark answer is that pictorial absence reflected physical absence. Very few children were left in the communities they visited. Most had been taken to residential and industrial schools, and it is in this photographic legacy that we must seek their images."[179] Indeed, produced in the same period as the ethnographic photographs reinforcing the notion of an inevitably vanishing race is an extensive archive of images documenting and promoting the "success" of the Canadian and American policies of assimilation institutionalized in the Residential School System. The comparative analysis of these two types of images reveals the severity of the settler colonial logic of elimination from which imperialist nostalgia and repressive authenticity function to divert attention. The remainder of this chapter thus concentrates on the history of assimilationist education in Canada and the United States with

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[178] For example, initiated by Indian Affairs Commissioner Hayter Reed in 1885, a "pass system" was in place in western Canada between the 1880s and the 1930s that required Indigenous people to secure the permission of an Indian Agent before exiting or re-entering their reserves, clearly detailing the purpose and duration of travel. See: F. Laurie Barron, "The Indian Pass System in the Canadian West, 1882-1935," *Prairie Forum* 13.1 (Spring 1988): 25-42. http://iportal.usask.ca/docs/Prairie%20Forum/The%20Indian%20Pass%20System%20(v13no1_1988_pg25-42).pdf.

[179] Sherry Farrell Racette, "Haunted: First Nations Children in Residential School Photography." *Depicting Canada's Children*. Ed. Loren Lerner. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2009: 49.

a specific focus on the important role photography has played in the system's administration and interpretation.

At a Crossroads

An 1885 photograph taken by Otto B. Buell, under the employment of the Canadian Pacific Railway, pictures students, staff and clergy of the Qu'Appelle Industrial School in Lebret, Saskatchewan [Figure 1.11]. Produced in promotion of the recently erected residential school, situated in the background of the image, the photograph illustrates the degree to which the notion of the "vanishing Indian" functioned to justify and build support for the Canadian government's assimilationist mission. Seated just outside the gated school grounds, a couple dozen Indigenous boys, dressed identically in school uniforms, are pictured in profile, looking out into the distance ahead of them. Their gazes mirror those of the two men seated behind and above them on the hill – one of whom has been identified as the school's founder, Father Joseph Hugonnard – as well as a handful of female staff and students standing off to their side. In addition to the direction of the priest's gaze, the children also parrot his pose: they sit tidily on their knees with their hands in their laps and their hats placed neatly in the grass beside them. Depicted as his disciples, the implication appears to be that the children are turned toward an unfolding future to which they have gained access through Christian conversion and mimetic transformation.

By contrast, separated from the other figures in the photograph, an elderly woman and child occupy the foreground of the image, staring into the camera with concentrated, unsmiling expressions. The pair is distinguished in placement, pose, manner and dress: wrapped in blanket-style clothing, the boy's long hair contrasts with the closely shorn heads of the students in uniform. Instead of facing the future, as the others do, they look directly into the camera, a technology tasked with freezing time and preserving the past. The photograph is designed to display a moment of transition, progress as a process of social evolution or improvement, naturalizing what was, in fact, aggressively sought by the agents of settler colonialism: the destruction and eradication of Indigenous identities, cultural practices and territorial claims. This ideology is even evident in the arrangement of the image, with the school and the priest located at the highest points of the composition, elevated pictorially and symbolically. As the staff and students look into the distance, the school is presented not as the destination, but as the vehicle of

progress, its open gate at the foot of the hill, signaling an invitation, beckoning the boy in the foreground to enter, leaving behind the old woman and the old ways she represents.

However, it is neither the subject nor compositional symbolism that is most remarkable about Buell's photograph and most pertinent to the current discussion. Rather, it is the image's contextual omissions and invisibilities. The date of the photograph is significant, depicting one of the first residential schools officially erected in western Canada, a year after the federal government formalized its partnership with the Christian church, thus expanding the already existing industrial or mission school system across the country.[180] The photograph was produced in the same year as the Saskatchewan Resistance came to an end with the trial and execution of Louis Riel, events for which Buell also served as official photographer.[181] In addition to political tensions, the living conditions of Indigenous peoples in the Qu'Appelle region had been severely compromised by the building of the trans-continental railroad, the decimation of the buffalo population and the relocation and confinement of First Nations to reserves. While the 1876 Indian Act had already rendered Indigenous peoples wards of the state, stripping them of their sovereign rights and freedoms and rendering them reliant upon government subsidy to support starving populations, amendments to the act in 1884 further prohibited the practice of cultural and religious ceremonies such as the Potlatch and the Sun Dance.[182] Buell's photograph was taken in conditions of crisis and upheaval, and while change itself is made the subject of the image, it is presented not as disruptive or devastating, but as a peaceful and positive process of teleological transformation. Equally obscured by the image is the suffering and trauma experienced by residential school students, separated from their families and incarcerated in abusive institutions designed specifically to extinguish their cultural identity. Buell's photograph constitutes an image of implicit, if undisclosed, atrocity, that necessitates reactivation by informed and attentive spectators to acknowledge the catastrophic conditions behind the image's

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[180] The Federal Government opened its first Industrial School in Battleford in 1883 and placed it under the administration of the Anglican Church. The Qu'Appelle school and another in High River, Alberta were subsequently opened in 1884 under the administration of Roman Catholic Oblates. *Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, *Summary: Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company Ltd., June 2, 2015): 186.

[181] Buell, in fact, also served as official photographer at the trials of Riel and the others involved. Racette ("Haunted," 79). Racette refers to Métis artist Edward Poitras' 1993 billboard installation *1885* in which he appropriated and reprinted Buell's photograph on a grand scale. In Poitras' artist statement, he provides an even bleaker interpretation of the image, suggesting that with their gazes directed toward the southwest, they face Regina and the site of Riel's execution. Racette writes: "The children were forced to witness events that lay beyond the range of their vision – a cautionary lesson organized and performed for the camera" (80).

[182] See, for example, John Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism: A Century of Dishonour, 1869-1969," Research paper for First Nations Governance," 2008.

production and beyond the open gates it depicts. Approaching and examining the photograph as a contract between the camera, photographer, and photographed subject, as Azoulay suggests, allows for a recognition that "what 'was there' wasn't there *necessarily* in that way."[183] Indeed, reflecting Azoulay's assertion that "on its own, the photograph is incapable of conveying the event to which it attests," Prosser argues: "If atrocity is not necessarily visible in the atrocity photograph, what we see can be quite ordinary – until we know the full story."[184] Produced at a particularly fraught juncture, with the explicit intent of promoting an institution and an ideology responsible for the committing of exorbitant and enduring atrocities, photographs such as Buell's and the others discussed in this chapter are revelatory of photography's unstable ethics. Furthermore, obscurant of the atrocities committed in the schools, these photographs necessitate the development or encouragement of responsible and durational spectatorial strategies to address both the context of the photographs' production and their changing interpretation as they remain in circulation.

The Residential School System

On June 2nd, 2015, after five years of research into Canada's Residential School System and the hearing of testimonials from former students, staff and their descendants, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) released an executive summary of its final report.[185] In addition to a detailed history of the Residential School System, its lasting legacy and intergenerational effects, the report includes survivors' testimonials and 94 recommendations toward reconciliation for the federal government. In decisive and damning language, the Commission describes the Residential School System as "an integral part of a conscious policy of cultural genocide."[186] The report states:

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[183] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 94.

[184] Ibid., 356; Jay Prosser, "Introduction," *Picturing Atrocity: Photography in Crisis*, Eds. Geoffrey Batchen, Mick Gidley, Nancy K. Miller, and Jay Prosser (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2012) 11.

[185] The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was established as part of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) reached in 2006 and approved by the courts in 2007 following revelations made and reparations sought by former residential school students. In 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered an official apology to residential school students and their descendants on behalf of the Canadian Government and the TRC began its research and investigation in 2010. For detailed information about the IRSSA and the TRC see *Final Report,* 131-134; and TRC's official website: http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=7.

[186] TRC, *Final Report,* 57. The authors write: "The Canadian Government pursued this policy of cultural genocide because it wished to divest itself of its legal and financial obligations to Aboriginal people and gain control over their land and resources" (3).

> For over a century, the central goals of Canada's Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aboriginal people to cease to exist as distinct, legal, social, cultural, religious and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were an integral element of this policy, which can best be described as "cultural genocide."[187]

Over 150,000 children passed through the Residential School System in Canada between the 1880s and the 1990s and equal numbers went through the American system before its gradual dissolution began in the 1930s.[188] Derek G. Smith argues that despite the tendency to distinguish between Canadian and American Indigenous affairs, there exist many instances of overlap, imitation and overt collaboration between the two governments and their policies, and he cites the comparable systems of residential and industrial schools in both countries as a prime example.[189] Indeed, while Christian mission schools, as well as a handful of labour-oriented industrial schools were already operating in Canada since the early seventeenth century, Nicholas Flood Davin's 1879 *Report of Industrial Schools for Indians and Halfbreeds* is typically recognized as the founding document for the official initiation of the Indian Residential School System. Davin was dispatched by then Minister of the Interior Sir John A. Macdonald to report on the "American policy for Indian administration known as 'the policy of aggressive

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[187] TRC, *Final Report,* 1. Defending their use of the term, the authors write: "*Physical genocide* is the mass killing of the members of a targeted group, and *biological genocide* is the destruction of the group's reproductive capacity. *Cultural genocide* is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And… families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealings with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things."

[188] David MacDonald, "First Nations, Residential Schools, and the Americanization of the Holocaust," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40.04 (December 2007): 1001. Following from the publication of the 1879 Davin Report, urging the Canadian government to establish a long-campaigned-for school system reflecting the educational experiments conducted in America as the cornerstone of "aggressive civilization," the Residential School System was officially inaugurated in 1880. It was built on the existing system of mission schools run by the Christian church since the early seventeenth century and the church thus remained central to the operation of residential schools once the federal government took control of Indigenous education. In 1920, an amendment was made to the Indian Act, making mandatory the enrollment of all Indigenous children between the ages of five and fifteen. At this point, families who failed to submit their children could be imprisoned and the children taken by force. The Residential School System reached its peak in the 1930s with 130 schools operating across the country. In 1969, management of the schools was transferred to the Department of Indian Affairs, limiting the involvement of the church and the government began the slow dissolution of the system. By 1986, most residential schools had closed or been transferred to the control of First Nations band councils, with the last federally funded school (Gordon Residential School in Saskatchewan) closing in 1996. See http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools/; Smith, "'The Policy of Aggressive Civilization' and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools For Native Peoples in Canada, 1870-95"; Racette, "Haunted."

[189] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 258.

civilization.'"[190] Designed by President Ulysses S. Grant's administration and passed by congress in 1869, the policy aimed toward the total assimilation and enfranchisement of Indigenous peoples into the American citizenry. In his report, Davin described the Industrial School system, as the "principle feature" of aggressive civilization.

Initiated with the establishment of the Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania, the American system was decisively rooted in a series of education experiments targeting Indigenous participants in the wars of resistance, conducted by Captain Richard S. Pratt at Florida's Fort Marion military prison.[191] The ideological incentive that sought the replication of such experiments in institutions targeting children is reflected in Davin's report wherein he argues, "If anything is to be done with the Indian, we must catch him very young."[192] He writes: "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."[193] He further suggests that the fundamental mark of success in the American system was proving to be the distance established between children and their families, insisting that "the day-school did not work, because the influence of the wigwam was stronger than the influence of the school."[194]

As Racette describes, "Removal and separation of children and their reconstruction into useful 'citizens' were closely woven into an overall policy that envisioned the destruction of collective identities, the assimilation and integration of individuals, and the subsequent acquisition of remaining First Nations lands."[195] Adapted by the Canadian government following a number of Davin's recommendations, Racette describes the Residential School System as effectively being grafted onto the already existing mission school system, thus combining militaristic control with "Christian zeal."[196] While the Canadian government did not officially adopt the moniker of aggressive civilization, the establishment of the Residential School System in 1880 directly replicates the program and, as Smith argues, "Canada's policy may not have been aggressive in name, but it was certainly aggressive in practice."[197] In addition, to combat

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[190] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 254.
[191] Racette, "Haunted," 49-50.
[192] Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-breeds,* 1879, 12. http://eco.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.03651/1?r=0&s=1.
[193] Ibid., 2.
[194] Ibid., 1.
[195] Racette, "Haunted," 50.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 255.

decreased enrollment in the schools following reports of disease, inadequate food and high mortality, as well as a number of instances of children dying while trying to escape the abusive institutions, the Indian Act was amended in 1920 to render the attendance of all children, officially between the ages of five and fifteen, compulsory.[198] Parents' refusal to submit their children thus became a crime, punishable by law and so began at least two decades of what Racette describes as "an era of 'roundups,' where children were forcibly removed from their homes and transported to schools in overcrowded wagons, cattle trucks and boats."[199] She argues that, coinciding with the global rise of fascism and increasingly segregationist political conservatism, the 1920s and 30s effectively amounted to "the most oppressive period of First Nations history in Canada."[200] Indeed, deputy superintendent of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott's 1920 document that led to the Indian Act's amendment declared, "Residential Schools were established to get rid of the Indian problem… Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no more Indian Question and no Indian Department."[201]

'Kill the Indian in the Child'

In an examination of residential schools in British Columbia, Sarah de Leeuw argues that if "residential school buildings and grounds were colonial geographies in which First Nations students were enveloped," the physical bodies of the children became even more intimate locations for the imposition of settler-colonial control.[202] Referring to survivor testimonies describing the extent of physical modification, constraint and trauma endured by students, de Leeuw suggests that, just as children occupied the residential school space, the schooling invaded or embedded itself in the bodies of its inmates as well.[203] She argues: "The colonial

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[198] Racette, "Haunted," 57. In the earliest years of the Residential School System, parents primarily sent their children voluntarily, hoping to assure the youth greater preparation for life in a rapidly changing colonial environment. With devastating numbers of death and disease in the schools as well as increased reports of children running away to escape mistreatment, hunger and desperation, enrollment declined significantly.
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid., 51.
[201] Quoted in Racette, "Haunted," 51. As Roland Chrisjohn and Sherri Young assert in *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Residential School System in Canada*, "put bluntly, the 'problem' was (and is) that there were (and are) Aboriginal owners (and their legal descendants) inhabiting the land to which the Europeans wish to lay claim" (Penticton, BC: Theytus Books), 70.
[202] Sarah de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms: The Material and Experienced Places of British Columbia's Residential Schools," *The Canadian Geographer* 51.3 (Autumn 2007): 344.
[203] Ibid. 348.

project… conceived of First Nations children's bodies as bounded yet permeable places into which, with proper force and structure, Euro-colonial sensibilities could be fixed… They were the places into which the colonial project physically asserted itself through forced eating rituals, discipline and punishment, and (perhaps most aggressively) through assault and impregnation."[204]

Testimonies by former students and staff have revealed appalling conditions in the overcrowded and often under-funded schools, with disease quickly spreading through the malnourished student body. Startling statistics of physical, psychological and sexual abuse, instances of abortions performed on female students impregnated by staff, as well as cases of forced sterilization, and even the use of children as the unwitting test subjects for harmful nutritional experiments have been reported and confirmed.[205] Children attending the schools had been taken from their families – in some cases, by force – and were very rarely allowed visitors (it wasn't until after 1960 that students were occasionally sent home for the holidays). Their hair was shorn, their names changed, sometimes replaced by a number, and they were forbidden to speak their Indigenous languages or otherwise exhibit their cultural identities, in many cases losing the ability to communicate with their families once finally released from the schools.[206] It is estimated that at least 6000 children died while in attendance, the majority of whom were buried in unmarked graves on school grounds.[207] Still more students perished not long after release from the schools, often bringing infectious diseases back to their communities, as well as

[204] de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms," 348; 347.

[205] For summaries of survivor testimonies collected by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, see: http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Survivors_Speak_English_Web.pdf

[206] Numerous survivors have recounted the systematic shaming they were subjected to in the schools as well as the constant fear of punishment that deterred them from passing their languages on to their own children. As a result, the TRC report states, "Many of the nearly ninety surviving Aboriginal languages in Canada are under serious threat of extinction… Some languages are close to extinction because they only have a few remaining speakers of the great-grandparent generation" (202). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 36% of Canada's Indigenous languages are critically endangered and risking extinction; 18% are severely endangered, being used only by the great-grandparent and grandparent generations; 16% are definitely endangered, being used by great-grandparent, grandparent and parent generations; and, the remaining 30% are all vulnerable (*Final Report,* 202). The TRC argues: "If the preservation of Aboriginal languages does not become a priority both for governments and for Aboriginal communities, then what the residential schools failed to accomplish will come about through a process of systematic neglect" (*Final Report,* 202).

[207] The majority of deaths have been attributed to disease (primarily tuberculosis) or malnourishment, but deaths also resulted from violence, neglect, and suicide. See: http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/en/article/residential-schools/. The TRC reports that just under half of reported and recorded deaths were the result of tuberculosis, but that, in many cases, the names of the deceased or the cause of death were undocumented and records were commonly destroyed (92-95). The Commission further argues that the rate of death and disease in the schools was a result of criminal neglect and complacency on the part of the church and federal government, wherein children too ill to attend school were often admitted to keep numbers up and increase per capita funding, which remained always inadequate (92-103).

succumbing to suicide, violence or addiction.[208] Much of this history is still being uncovered and released, revealing a crisis of nearly incomprehensible proportions that persists in the intergenerational effects of the physical and psychological trauma experienced by residential school students.

Even before the release of the TRC's summary report, many had argued that the Residential School System, designed explicitly to "kill the Indian in the child," represented the most blatantly genocidal manifestation of settler colonialism in Canada, even if unrecognized as such by the Canadian government.[209] Indeed, asserting that, "elimination is an organizing principle of settler-colonial society," Wolfe asserts that the fundamental intent is the removal of Indigenous people's occupation of or title to the territories desired by settler populations.[210] He further claims that elimination can be articulated in a number of different ways from extermination to assimilation or statistical exclusion. He writes, "The logic of elimination not only refers to the summary liquidation of Indigenous people, though it includes that… it strives for the dissolution of native societies."[211] As such, "The question of genocide is never far from discussions of settler colonialism," but the connection between the two terms needs to be more nuanced than it often is.[212] According to Wolfe, although, "the two have converged – which is to say, the settler-colonial logic of elimination has manifested as genocidal – they should be distinguished. Settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory but not invariably genocidal."[213] By way of example, he argues: "genocide has been achieved by means of summary mass murder… there can be summary mass murder without genocide, as in the case of 9/11, and there can be genocide without summary mass murder, as in the case of the continuing postfrontier destruction, in whole and in part of Indigenous *genoi*."[214] More specifically, he insists that when considering the settler-colonial assault of Indigenous peoples, "A major difference between this

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[208] Mary Ellen Kelm, "'A Scandalous Procession: Residential Schooling and the Re/formation of Aboriginal Bodies,'" *Native Studies Review* 11.2 (1996): 62.
[209] The phrase "kill the Indian in the child" is a variant of the unofficial slogan of the flagship Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania and is attributed to an 1892 statement by the school's founder Captain Richard Pratt: "A great general has said that the only good Indian is a dead one, and that high sanction of his destruction has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian Massacres. In a sense, I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian, save the man." Quoted in Racette, "Haunted," 50.
[210] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 388.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid., 387.
[213] Ibid.
[214] Ibid., 398.

and the generality of non-colonial genocides is its sustained duration."[215] As a result, Wolfe proposes the term "structural genocide" as a more adequate descriptor, arguing, "When invasion is recognized as a structure rather than an event, its history does not stop – or, more to the point, become relatively trivial – when it moves from the era of frontier homicide."[216]

Similar to Wolfe's assertion that genocidal action can extend beyond mass extermination, Roland Chrisjohn and Sherri Young's research findings, published in the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, argue, "killing of members of a group (or groups) is only one of the acts that constitute genocide."[217] Indeed, coining the term in 1944, Ralph Lemkin defined genocide as "a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves."[218] And, following Lemkin's definition, Article II of the United Nations' 1948 Geneva Convention reads as follows:

> [G]enocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (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*.[219]

Arguing that even if the appallingly high mortality rate within the schools and the failure of the federal government to adequately support or protect the children in their care will not be accepted as sufficient evidence for subsection (a) of the UN declaration, Chrisjohn and Young

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[215] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," 400.

[216] Ibid. 403; 402. As stated in this dissertation's Introduction, there is a fruitful connection to be drawn between Wolfe's interpretation of settler colonialism and Azoulay's notion of catastrophe as "a chronic and prolonged situation" (*The Civil Contract of Photography,* 28) that is of fundamental importance to my own analysis which posits a crisis of sustained and systemic proportions to be pervading Canadian and American societies, rooted in historical and ongoing atrocities and disclosed in the work of contemporary artists.

[217] Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 88. See also, Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1961): 60.

[218] Quoted in Sliwinski, *Human Rights in Camera*, 114. Often overlooked is the fact that Lemkin initially proposed and preferred the term "cultural genocide." In "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," Wolfe identifies the importance of the original term in signifying an assault on the essential being or marked category of the nation or community under attack, but he also ultimately abandons the term for its risk of "confus[ing] definition with degree" (398).

[219] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by Resolution 260 (III) A of the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948. http://www.hrweb.org/legal/genocide.html. Emphasis added.

insisted there was ample evidence of Canada's culpability for at least (b), (c) and (e).[220] In fact, at least since 1920, the entire system was predicated on the forcible removal and transference of Indigenous children. Despite this, as Chrisjohn and Young remind, "Residential Schools continued to operate for some 30 years after Canada had signed the convention."[221] The recent report published by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission repeats the accusation, calling on the Canadian government to acknowledge and accept its historical attempt at committing cultural genocide against Indigenous people as a way of moving forward from truth to reconciliation.[222]

Residential School Photography

From its earliest days, photography played a pivotal role in the promotion of the schools and the securing of both private and federal funding. Over 20 million photographs are known to exist, representing a vital, yet inadequate, resource that requires close attention and analysis. Barring some key exceptions, the majority of the surviving photographs can be divided into three categories: (1) Before-and-after pairings of images documenting a child's supposed transformation from "savage" to "civilized"; (2) group portraits of the student body, typically posed in rows in front of the school buildings, dressed in identical uniforms and flanked by teachers and clergy; and (3) small group portraits of children engaged in the activities of prayer, labour or play. Most of these photographs were commissioned by government or church officials and produced by professionals to serve specific propagandistic purposes.[223] What is remarkable, if unsurprising, about the existing archive as a whole is the utter invisibility or omission of the atrocities committed in the schools. Referring to the existing archive of photographs, Racette writes, "Collectively, they provide a visual history of children's experiences over four generations, alternatively serving to promote, mask, conceal, and reveal the realities that lay

[220] Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 60.

[221] Ibid. The authors cite the startling statistics of child mortality in the schools and the failure of the church and federal government to provide adequate funds, food or healthcare or otherwise protect the children in their care as sufficient evidence that "Canada *did* bring about the deaths of Aboriginal Peoples," but they further argue that even in regards to the other dimensions of Lemkin's definition, genocide is the most appropriate descriptor.

[222] Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Justice Murray Sinclair, has been vocal in his interpretation of the Residential School System as an act of genocide, arguing that the Canadian government has worked hard to avoid being embroiled by the UN's definition. Chinta Puxley, "Indoctrination: Residential Schools Called a Form of Genocide," *The Globe and Mail* (Feb. 21, 2012).

[223] There are some exceptions: photographs taken by staff at the schools that reflect a greater degree of intimacy and even a very rare collection of photographs taken by the students at the Spanish Residential School where a handful of students were trained in photography and given access to a darkroom by staff member Father William Maurice. For more information see Racette, "Haunted," 2.

behind the doors."[224] As Racette argues, many of the images are, on the surface, indistinguishable from other school photographs and necessitate broader contextual information in order to be adequately approached.[225] The power of such images to obscure the trauma inflicted by the Residential School System can primarily be attributed to faith in the camera's truth telling capacity and thus photography's complicity in atrocity. Indeed, in her suggestion that we need to "watch" photographs more closely and conscientiously, Azoulay retains some adherence to Roland Barthes' infamous adage regarding the reality effect of photography, but qualifies that, "the photograph always includes a supplement that makes it possible to show that what 'was there' wasn't there *necessarily* in that way."[226]

1. Before-and-After Photographs

If, as de Leeuw argues, the bodies of Indigenous children were the conduits for the imposition of settler-colonial ideology, photography was the pre-eminent medium of its documentation and promotion. This is nowhere more evident than in the before-and-after/savage-to-civilized photographs so popular in the school system's earliest days. According to Racette, the practice of photographing children upon their enrollment and then after a series of physical transformations indicating their "progress" or improvement, began at Carlisle under Pratt's advisory as early as 1878.[227] The most well known Canadian example is probably the pair of photographs depicting Thomas Moore "before and after tuition" at the Regina Industrial school [Figure 1.12], which appeared in both the 1896 and 1904 Department of Indian Affairs annual reports.[228] The first image pictures the young boy, (already identified by his new name), dressed in a fringed and decorated tunic, beaded breach cloth, leggings and moccasins, with his long braids wrapped in fur. Symbolically staged to highlight his wildness, the furniture and floors are also draped in fur as if to equate the Indian with the animal. And, presumably in an attempt to display the boy's dangerous or deviant nature, he has been outfitted with a tiny toy pistol. Referring to the absurdity or ineffectiveness of the prop, Racette argues that paired with the child's frightened eyes and pouted lips, "the tentativeness of his body language makes the small

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[224] Racette, "Haunted," 80.
[225] Ibid., 49.
[226] Azoulay, *Civil Contract*, 94.
[227] Racette, "Haunted," 52.
[228] Ibid., 52; Milloy, *A National Crime*, 4-5.

pistol an ironic note."[229] In contrast, the second photograph pictures Thomas as slightly older, taller and thinner, dressed in a school uniform with his hair cut short. His stance in this second shot is much more confident, his expression a little harder, more resolute, even defiant. Instead of being surrounded by fur, he is pictured in a mock architectural setting, described by John Milloy as indicative of "the geometry of social and economic order; of place and class, and of private property the foundation of industriousness, the cardinal virtue of late-Victorian culture."[230] A potted plant on the pedestal beside him signifies the control and cultivation of nature, the symbolic civilization of wilderness or savagery.

Produced not long after the establishment of the Residential School System, photographs like those of Thomas Moore "were used to solicit public support, silence critics, and illustrate the launch of an ambitious initiative."[231] They were promotional materials, trading on the trope of the "vanishing race" and signifying the success of the government's benevolent attempt to save and civilize otherwise doomed Indigenous youth. Indeed, repeating the mandate of earlier Christian missions, Davin described the building of the system as nothing less than "a sacred duty."[232] However, as a defining feature of the logic of elimination, the implementation of the Residential School System amounted to an institutionalized attempt to eradicate Indigeneity through assimilation and enfranchisement, thus removing "the Indian" as obstacle in the acquisition of territory. As Wolfe writes, "Whatever settlers may say – and they generally have a lot to say – the primary motive for elimination is not race (or religion, ethnicity, grade of civilization, etc.) but access to territory. Territory is settler colonialism's specific, irreducible element."[233] In fact, this base incentive for the implementation of the residential school system registers in the "after" photo of Thomas Moore, wherein the potted plant represents nature's subjugation and cultivation, as well as the boy's future participation in "civilized" society.

As a contrast to the implied potential of children in the Residential School System, Racette describes another form of staged before-and-after photographs that pair uniformed students with more "traditionally" dressed Indigenous elders, typically – and likely inaccurately – captioned as visiting parents.[234] More directly identifying the schools' initiative, the

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[229] Racette, "Haunted," 53.
[230] Milloy, *A National Crime*, 5-6.
[231] Racette, "Haunted," 56.
[232] Davin, *Report*, 11.
[233] Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism," 388.
[234] Racette, "Haunted," 55-56.

photographs purport to document a process of *generational* transformation. Moreover, Racette suggests, “The choice of elderly people to represent the collective body of ‘parents’ also associates the persistence of traditional beliefs with a generation soon to pass away, a visual construction of the desired ‘vanishing Indian race.’”[235] Buell’s photograph of staff and students at Qu’Appelle Industrial School, earlier described, relies precisely on this construct and arguably fits the conventions of both the individualized and intergenerational before-and-after photographs described by Racette. A generational and cultural divide is implied by the presence of the old woman in the foreground, while the boy accompanying her embodies and represents the pre-assimilated version of the other children, already indoctrinated in the system.

Published in promotional pamphlets and annual reports, photographs such as these attest to the perceived power and persuasiveness of the medium and its ability to influence public opinion. Indeed, photography’s role in the strategic documentation and promotion of the Residential School System is, I argue, indicative of the ethical crisis with which the medium is currently confronted. Masking and misrepresenting the experiences of vulnerable children, tortured and traumatized by a fundamentally racist and eradicative system, these photographs need to be recognized as images of atrocity. Despite the deliberate staging of the photographs and the incapacity of their falsehood to adequately account for the atrocities committed in the schools, they also retain traces of trauma as it is registered in the children’s forced physical modification. Indeed, de Leeuw argues that before-and-after photographs were “composed to highlight the inscription of civilization on the Aboriginal body.”[236] The suggestion that the images foreground the children’s physical (and, by extension, cultural, spiritual and social) transformation is, in fact, applicable to almost all residential school photographs.

2. Class Photos

As examples of the most common and enduring type of residential school photographs, group shots such as “St. Paul’s Industrial School, 1901” [Figure 1.13] or “Kamloops Residential School, 1934” [Figure 1.14], are exemplary of the system’s attempted elimination of individuality or Indigenous cultural identity. Standardized and repeated from school to school over the duration of the system’s existence, these class photos emphasize uniformity and acculturation. Divided by gender and organized according to age and height, the students form

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[235] Racette, “Haunted,” 56.
[236] de Leeuw, “Intimate Colonialisms,” 346.

compact rows, flanked by figures of authority, literally walled in by teachers and clergy. The alignment of civilization and Christian conversion is foregrounded in the photograph from Kamloops Residential School in which two priests occupy the front and centre of the image, their power and privilege asserted by their seated position in contrast to the standing students and staff behind them. It is a recurrent composition, wherein students are arranged on stairs or a natural slope in front of school buildings descending into a row of staff and clergy. de Leeuw argues: "Figuratively, the composition of the photographs employed the architecture of the school to emphasize and illustrate the possibility of First Nations children transforming into the non-Indigenous subjects who occupied the photographic foreground of the images."[237]

If a holistic transformation of the children is merely insinuated in the photographs' arrangements, it is actualized in the forced physical modification of the students upon admittance to the schools. These are *all* "after" images, or more accurately "after*math*" images following, what Racette has described as, the development of "cruel and often sadistic arrival rituals to mark a child's entry into a world that utterly rejected all their previous experiences."[238] Countless survivor testimonies refer to the initial trauma experienced upon arrival at the schools, whereby they were stripped and scrubbed, their hair was cut short or shaved, their clothing exchanged for uniforms or hand-me-downs and their names replaced with numbers or Euro-Christian constructions.[239] For many former students, these initial moments left lasting scars, following their apprehension and removal from families and their inability to understand the language spoken by staff and administration. The cutting of hair, alone, Racette describes as an incredibly symbolic practice for many First Nations, in some cases signifying cultural or familial attachment. She thus argues that the haircutting process had a double meaning: "From an institutional perspective, the haircut was the first step toward 'civilization,' and it marked both a symbolic and physical severing of cultural, social and familial ties. From an Indigenous perspective, it symbolized death and mourning."[240] This literal act of detachment, severing children from their history, their personal and cultural identity is evident in the surviving photographs. Indeed, in taking a more engaged and empathetic look at the photographs, they can be recognized as records of trauma and atrocity: the direct attempt to control the bodies and

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[237] de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms," 345. It is, in fact, a similar tactic to the less conventional composition employed by Buell for his photograph of the Qu'Appelle Industrial School.
[238] Racette, "Haunted," 59.
[239] Ibid. See also "The Survivors Speak," http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Survivors_Speak_English_Web.pdf
[240] Racette, "Haunted," 60.

break the wills of small children in an effort toward total cultural annihilation. Racette argues that, "The short hair in residential school photographs is the visual testimony of a deeply symbolic and traumatic gesture enacted on the bodies of children."[241] In addition to the traces of assimilation and transformation registered on the bodies of the children pictured, the photographs are underwritten by a litany of other abuses and indignities.

3. Deflecting Criticism

In 1999, a decade before the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) released a report detailing the types of abuses that occurred in the schools, alleged and admitted by former students, staff, church officials and bureaucrats.[242] The list of physical, psychological and sexual torture and punishment, added to and expanded upon in subsequent years, reads like a catalogue of horrors: corporal punishment resulting in the drawing of blood, broken bones, unconsciousness and death; the use of weapons such as whips, straps, clubs, razor blades and electrified cattle prods; the burning or scalding of children's skin; the insertion of needles into student's tongues as punishment for speaking in Indigenous languages and into other regions of their bodies; sexual assault, impregnation, forced abortions and sterilization; the employment of an electric chair for both punishment and the entertainment of officials; public humiliation; enforced nudity and prolonged exposure to extreme weather conditions; children being left to wear soiled underwear for days and force-fed their own vomit.[243] Additionally, students suffered from the psychological trauma of separation from their parents and siblings, as well as daily dehumanization and cultural vilification. Confined to unsanitary and overcrowded living conditions, survival or sustained existence in the schools would have been a struggle in itself.

Analyzing the system according to a Foucauldian model of discipline and totalized individuation, Smith argues that, "residential and industrial schools were indeed an aggressive form of intercultural domination."[244] Similarly, reporting on the RCAP findings Chrisjohn and Young describe Residential Schools as "total institutions," borrowing from Erving Goffman's

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[241] Racette, "Haunted," 59.

[242] The final report was published by Chrisjohn and Young as *The Circle Game*.

[243] Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 49-51. Also see "The Survivors Speak," http://www.myrobust.com/websites/trcinstitution/File/Reports/Survivors_Speak_English_Web.pdf

[244] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 260.

assessment of asylums, prisons and concentration camps.[245] In Goffman's account, total institutions are defined as "walled off" structures separated spatially and ideologically from society wherein a large inmate population is controlled by a small supervisory staff with absolute access to the inmate's personal belongings, space and self.[246] Goffman asserts that through the constant surveillance, examination and modification of the inmates' bodies, the interruption and regulation of schedules and circadian systems, and the dispossession of self or collective identification within total institutions, the unbalanced authoritarian power "penetrates the private reserve of the individual and violates the territories of his self."[247] In fact, Chrisjohn and Young seize upon this point to argue that beyond the horror stories recounted by survivors, an unceasing onslaught of "less dramatic indignities and abasements… made up life at Indian Residential School."[248] The authors describe these as the "little atrocities" dominating "the relentless burden of life in Indian Residential School."[249] They refer to "the constant stream of racist slurs that accompanied lessons… the persistent undercurrent of hunger; the impenetrable loneliness; and so on."[250] de Leeuw argues that with the ideology built even into the architecture of the schools, students "were materially reminded in their every movement that their lives and culture were subordinated to a more imposing and powerful force making effort to overtake and transform them as Indigenous peoples."[251]

In a report on the ill-health of students in the schools, both physically and psychologically, Mary-Ellen Kelm argues that, publically promoting health education in the production of a strong and supple labour class, "the goal of residential schooling was to 're/form' Aboriginal bodies."[252] And, arguing that this did in fact occur, she asserts, "the results were not the strong, robust bodies, well-trained for agricultural and domestic labour of the schools' propaganda, but weakened ones who, through no fault of their own, brought disease and death to their communities."[253] Kelm describes the twisted irony of children apprehended and separated from their families according to the rationalization that Indigenous peoples – particularly women

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245 Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 90-91.
246 Ibid.
247 Goffman, *Asylums,* 28-29.
248 Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 87.
249 Ibid.
250 Ibid.
251 de Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms," 345.
252 Kelm, "'A Scandalous Procession,'" 52.
253 Ibid.

– were inherently unclean, retrogressive and insalubrious, only to be incarcerated in overcrowded and unsanitary institutions, plagued by violence, disease and malnutrition, that directly contributed to poor health and lowered life expectancy.[254] Indeed, a scathing report filed by the chief medical officer of the Department of Indian Affairs, Dr. P.H. Bryce in 1907, found that at least one quarter of residential school students had died while in attendance or shortly thereafter, primarily from diseases contracted at the schools.[255] Bryce attributed the deaths most commonly to the rapid spreading of tuberculosis within overcrowded and confined spaces with inadequate ventilation or sanitation and made a series of recommendations including greater funding for architectural renovations, improved training for staff, and increased access to fresh air, nutritional food and medical attention.[256] In the now infamous publication, Bryce referred to the government's lack of action as evidence of "criminal disregard," arguing, "this trail of disease and death has gone almost unchecked by any serious efforts on the part of the Department of Indian Affairs."[257] And, indeed, further reports throughout the duration of the system's operation, reveal that this remained the case despite adequate evidence that 50% of the children in some schools died in the late 1930s and over 70% of all residential school students tested positive for active tuberculosis.[258] The TRC concluded, "The federal government knowingly chose not to provide schools with enough money to ensure that kitchens and dining rooms were properly equipped, that cooks were properly trained, and, most significantly, that food was purchased in sufficient quantity and quality for growing children. It was a decision that left thousands of Aboriginal children vulnerable to disease."[259] What is more, it was amid and with full awareness of such accusations regarding the deplorable and deadly conditions within the schools that Duncan Campbell Scott successfully campaigned for the legally enforced apprehension of all Indigenous children to increase residential school enrollment.

Recent revelations have surpassed the already horrific allegations of negligence or indifference expounded by Bryce, alerting the contemporary public to instances of the deliberate withholding of medical attention, anesthetics and food both for cost-cutting measures and

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[254] Kelm, "'A Scandalous Procession,'" 52-62.
[255] Ibid., 62.
[256] Despite the scandal that erupted over the Bryce report, no significant changes were made to the system and fifteen years after submitting his initial report, Bryce resigned from the Department of Indian Affairs and publicly released his findings as the 1922 book, *The Story of a National Crime being an Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada.*
[257] Bryce, *The Story of a National Crime*, 14.
[258] Kelm, "'A Scandalous Procession,'" 64. See also: TRC, *Final Report,* 93-94.
[259] TRC, *Final Report,* 92.

medical experimentation. In his 2013 article, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952," food historian Ian Mosby uncovered a series of nutritional experiments conducted on unwitting Indigenous subjects, including residential school students. Mosby reveals that, following the post-war publication of even more damning reports on the prevalence of disease and malnutrition in the schools, government and church officials partnered with nutritionists and medical professionals, not in an effort to improve the environment and the health of the children, but rather to capitalize on their weakened condition.[260] Indeed, he argues that, eager to study the correlation between malnourishment and disease and the impact of nutritional interventions in an otherwise inadequate diet, medical researchers perceived the Residential School System as "a ready-made 'laboratory' populated with already malnourished human 'experimental subjects.'"[261] After a series of investigations in the mid-1940s revealed systemic malnourishment with the quantity and standard of food administered to residential school students failing to meet national nutritional requirements, a multi-year program of experimental research was established within six residential schools beginning in 1947.[262] Students were divided into control and test groups with the latter being unknowingly administered previously untested dietary supplements, and both groups were denied dental care or medical intervention for the duration of the study to avoid interference with the results.[263]

Mosby's research revealed the complicity, awareness and cover-up of the information by successive Canadian governments, corroborated by Minister of Aboriginal Affairs, Bernard Valcourt not long after the publication of his article.[264] Indeed, as Mosby addresses, former students have long suspected and spoken out about questionable medical practices and potential experimentation, and finally had their testimonials validated by the author's findings and their

[260] Ian Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science: Nutritional Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942-1952," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 46.91 (May 2013): 148-152.
[261] Ibid., 152.
[262] Ibid., 158-160.
[263] Ibid., 160-163.
[264] In fact, in their *Final Report,* the TRC cites a number of instances in which the federal government refused to cooperate with the Commission's request for official documents referring to the administration of, and abuse perpetrated in, the Residential School System, despite its obligation to do so according to the terms of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) In many cases, the TRC had to seek – and were successful in attaining – court direction in obtaining necessary information and evidence (30-33).

eventual governmental verification.[265] The government's involvement in these events is atrocious, but almost unsurprising in a system devoted to the destruction and elimination of Indigenous culture. What is more, Mosby refers to the prevalence of "ethically dubious" medical experimentation across the globe in the mid-twentieth century.[266] Such experiments, he argues, "tended disproportionately to use institutionalized, racialized, and otherwise vulnerable populations as research subjects," as they were both incapable of giving informed consent and perceived as a social or economic burden.[267] He argues, through their subjection to medical research and experimentation, "use*less* bodies were rendered use*ful* by being made us*able* in the national project of regeneration, thus gaining a utility they were believed to otherwise lack."[268] As Mosby states, "the most significant legacy of these studies of Aboriginal nutrition during the 1940s and 1950s is that they provide us with a unique and disturbing window into the ways in which – under the guise of benevolent administration and even charity – bureaucrats, scientists, and a whole range of experts exploited their 'discovery' of malnutrition in Aboriginal communities and residential schools to further their own professional and political interests rather than to address the root causes of these problems or, for that matter, the Canadian government's complicity in them."[269]

Even if the experiments were in line with the discipline's unscrupulous ethics of the time, the shroud of secrecy surrounding them for so long attests to the administrators' fear of the public's reaction. As further evidence of photography's entanglement with colonial science and particularly pertinent to the topic of this dissertation, Mosby reveals that photographers were employed alongside doctors, nurses and medical technicians to "document" the process.[270] The resulting images depict comforting and familiar scenes of children being examined by smiling medical practitioners, designed to reassure the public of the care and attention being provided residential school students. Two images taken during the period of medical experimentation at

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[265] Mosby, "Of History and Headlines: Reflections of an Accidental Public Historian," April 2014, http://www.ianmosby.ca/of-history-and-headlines-reflections-of-an-accidental-public-historian/.

[266] Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science," 166-167. Mosby makes obvious reference to the atrocities committed by doctors in the Nazi regime as well as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment conducted over a period of thirty years, between 1932 and 1972, that tracked the result of untreated syphilis on impoverished African American men, denied access to effective treatment following its development in the early 1940s.

[267] Ibid., 167.

[268] Jordan Goodman, Anthony McElligott and Lara Marks, eds., *Useful Bodies: Humans in the Service of Medical Science in the Twentieth Century* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2003): 12. Quoted in Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science," 167.

[269] Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science," 171.

[270] Ibid., 168.

Port Alberni Indian Residential School, BC, in 1948, for example, show a nurse taking blood and saliva samples from young boys, implying the regular monitoring and examination of their physical well-being, while concealing and conflicting with the neglect and mistreatment from which they suffered [Figures 1.15-1.16]. Indeed, Mosby argues that any discomfort, anxiety or confusion experienced by children during their use as test subjects is masked in the images.[271] Figure 1.16, for example, portrays an assumedly kind and compassionate nurse leaning endearingly over the children, apparently amused b*y their* amusement at the task they have been asked to perform. Directly obscuring the atrocious circumstances, within which these children were, in fact, pawns in an ethically dubious series of experiments, the images function in similar ways as the diversionary notion of the vanishing race. Thus, half a century after the era of before-and-after photographs used to rationalize and justify the establishment of the Residential School System, photography remained a central and strategic tool of cultural genocide.

Despite the increasing secrecy surrounding the Residential School System throughout its operation, there were always active critics – not least of whom, the children, their families and communities – as well as available evidence of the ill health and mistreatment of students. Thus, the use of photography as a tool of persuasion and propaganda was integral to the longevity and general acceptance of the system.[272] And, indeed, Racette describes the extent to which residential school photography – initially illustrating a rhetoric of Christian benevolence and salvation surviving from the mission school system – evolved continuously to confront changing public opinion and newly developed concerns. Indeed, in the earliest decades of the system's operation, when apprehension on the part of settler society primarily concerned the financial burden of housing and educating Indigenous children, photographs were published displaying the labour extracted from students to offset the cost of running the schools [Figure 1.17]. As Racette describes, during the same historical moment in which child employment among non-Indigenous Canadians was being restricted, residential school students often spent the majority of their time labouring in agricultural, industrial or domestic sectors.[273] Reinforcing Euro-North American

[271] Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science," 168.
[272] Of course, it necessitates repeating that the schools and the Canadian and American governments were ultimately unsuccessful in their intention to assimilate or eradicate Indigenous peoples.
[273] Racette, "Haunted," 65. Racette argues that in some cases, children worked for the entire day and spent little if any time inside the classroom. Indeed, the TRC argues: "The government believed that between the forced labour of students and the poorly paid labour of missionaries, it could operate a residential school system on a nearly cost-free basis" (*Final Report,* 62).

patriarchal ideals, photographs projected a vision of work as divided according to gender with boys trained in manual labour and girls groomed for domestic service.[274]

Similarly, when so many reports and alarming statistics were surfacing regarding the poor health of students, the focus of photographs shifted to downplay labour and emphasize classwork, prayer and eventually extra-curricular activities like music, sports or arts and crafts [Figures 1.18-1.19]. Additionally, Racette points to a number of photographs depicting calisthenics classes and children seated at bountiful meals produced and published around the time that Bryce issued his damning health report. The images display a direct attempt to cover up and divert attention away from the devastating sanitary conditions, epidemic disease and malnourishment revealed to be plaguing the schools.[275] This type of visual counter-claim functioned in a similar way as, and provided a clear precedent for, the official photographs depicting nurses' visits and children's check-ups during the era of clandestine medical experimentation disclosed in Mosby's research. The scope and duration of this photographic legacy, in fact, corroborates Mosby's assertion that the "experiments must be remembered and recognized for what they truly were: one among many examples of a larger institutionalized and, ultimately, dehumanizing colonialist racial ideology that has governed Canada's policies towards and treatment of Aboriginal peoples throughout the twentieth century."[276]

Residential school photographs, from the early period of before-and-after images to the campaigns in the mid-twentieth century, chronicle over a hundred years of institutionalized obscuring of atrocity. Indeed, produced for such expressly propagandistic purposes, it is not surprising that the images would be so censured and sanitized. Returning to them with historical hindsight and ample evidence of the abuses and atrocities underlying their production, affords a unique opportunity to re-analyze the photographic events in question with attention to the persistent presence of the photographed subjects and the promise encompassed in the civil contract that Azoulay attributes to the photographic encounter. However, it is also important to address the photographs produced and never intended for publication, taken by amateurs

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[274] Racette, "Haunted," 65. The gender division would have been strictly enforced in every aspect of residential school life. Racette argues that girls' labour would have primarily amounted to scrubbing floors or working in heavy-duty laundry rooms, while the photographs primarily depict them sewing or undertaking other handicrafts. She further reveals that the representation of Indigenous children as productive labourers, eventually garnered its own backlash with the non-Indigenous public concerned about integrating with Indigenous people in the work place and further reports had to be released arguing that the schools only intended to teach the children skills to work on their reserves (68).

[275] Ibid., 73.

[276] Mosby, "Administering Colonial Science," 172.

embedded in the workings of the Residential School System. Fairly uncommon and often overlooked, such images provide invaluable instances to explore the societal and intellectual embedment of the institutionalized ideology of colonial benevolence and the many moralistic justifications for undeniably deplorable acts. Such images are particularly complicated, nuancing the narrative of official propaganda, but risking either undue reassurance about the experiences of children in the schools or minimizing vilification to that of single indoctrinated individuals. The final images discussed in this chapter thus arguably raise more questions than answers, but are of vital importance for understanding the insidiousness of settler colonial ideology and its photographic expression.

A Road Paved with Good Intentions

Included in the McCord Museum's Notman Photographic Archives is a significant and largely unseen collection of photographs and personal musings produced during the 1920s by Quebec-born Alice Constance Dunn while working as a teacher in St. Michael's and Elkhorn Residential Schools in Alert Bay, BC and Manitoba. Organized into two heavy leather albums, Dunn's photographs depict a range of subjects and activities not dissimilar from those documented by official residential school photographers. They include, for example, shots of students, dressed in uniforms and assembling themselves for class photos, attending church services, performing domestic duties and manual labour in laundry facilities and lumber yards, participating in calisthenics classes and playing sports [Figures 1.20-1.22]. They are differentiated from professional photographers by the often-awkward framing, blurred bodies and near-ubiquitous inclusion of Dunn's shadow in the foreground of the photographs. The vast majority of the photographs appear to have been taken during recreational time and depart dramatically from the highly contrived and emotionally distanced images that circulated publicly when the schools were still running. Instead of the hauntingly expressionless faces of children posed in rows or performing proscribed tasks, these photographs are, for the most part, more candid and congenial, displaying a level of intimacy and familiarity otherwise lacking in the existing archive. Individual children make repeat appearances in multiple images, pictured alone or in small groups, smiling, laughing and even hamming it up for the camera [Figures 1.23-1.24].

In a few select cases, these children are even identified and individualized, their names – and, in at least one instance, their nations – written by Dunn on the backs of the photographs.[277]

Dunn's photographs by and large articulate a sense of affinity or affection between the photographer and her subjects, implying moments of reprieve or enjoyment – even normalcy – in otherwise abhorrent circumstances. And, indeed, in her own writings – as in the testimonies of survivors who recount fond memories of staff members who exhibited kindness, affection, encouragement or protection – Dunn describes the sincerity and care with which she attended to her students. But, despite the positivity or potential amity existing between Dunn and the children in the images, the photographs (and the photographer) can never be separated from the system in which she worked and which was responsible for so many atrocities. In fact, any relief felt by contemporary spectators is easily and eventually undercut by the recognition that it simply should not be so rare or reassuring to see a smile on a child's face. Indeed, describing the "little atrocities" or the "miseries of everyday existence" experienced by the students, Chrisjohn and Young include on their list, "the good times, times that reveal the barrenness of the rest of the existence at Residential School."[278] What is more, when watching the images closely, one is inevitably confronted with countless reminders of the context in which the photographs were produced. In the background of the images are the ubiquitous fences and imposing brick buildings that appear in the formulaic photographs produced for official circulation; architectural and compositional reminders of the children's incarceration, confinement and monitored movement. Furthermore, a close look at the collection reveals evidence of attempted assimilation and physical transformation played out over time, displayed in the once shoulder-length hair of young girls cut into uniform bobs and the increasingly gaunt faces of the children over time, incapable of filling out their loose-fitting work clothes.

These reminders are nowhere more evident than in a series of three photographs taken in 1924 and depicting a group of ten Indigenous boys, dressed in "Indian" costumes, wearing paper headdresses and brandishing bows and arrows, in an absurd and performative parody of their stereotyped selves [Figures 1.25-1.27]. Labeled, *Aboriginal Boys as "Indians," St. Michael's*

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[277] On the back of a photograph picturing a group of boys pictured outdoors with their coach, holding hockey sticks and equipment for clearing the ice, Dunn recorded the names and nations of the five boys in the foreground: James Bird (Cree), Peter Shorting (Ojibwe), Henry McKay (Sioux), Colin Tobacco (Cree) and James Thomas (Cree). McCord Museum collection: M2010.81.10.32. In a personal letter also included in the McCord's collection, Dunn admits to encouraging students "often against the rules" to use their Indigenous languages during recreation, so they wouldn't lose the ability to communicate with their families upon return to their home communities. Dunn to Harold Cardinal, Feb. 21, 1971, McCord: P739/A.

[278] Chrisjohn and Young, *The Circle Game*, 87.

residential School, Alert Bay, BC, the photographs present three different configurations of a single scene: "Ten Little Indians," arranged from tallest to smallest, affecting stoic and caricatured grimaces and accessorized with weapons as diminutive as the toy pistol gripped by Thomas Moore in his infamous "after" portrait. One frame pictures the ten boys standing side-by-side and facing the camera; the other two depict them as if approaching the space occupied by the photographer, first standing erect with the tallest in the lead and then in reversed order, slightly hunched forward as if stalking prey or entering into battle. The children pictured, appear in others of Dunn's photographs, often grinning widely in their work clothes or school uniforms, displaying a sense of ease or comfort with one another and with their photographer. That candid camaraderie, however, is absent in the "playing Indian" images. Rather, the children's expressions – contorted to reflect the stereotypical stoicism of cartoon warriors – imply an awareness of the dubious irony by which they have been cast to derisively perform a caricature of their cultural identity in an institution intent upon its eradication.

As in the majority of her photographs, Dunn's presence is foregrounded in the image by the shadow she casts. An otherwise insignificant occurrence, this particular mark of the amateur, in the context of the Residential School System, carries additional, symbolic connotations of surveillance and control. The hyper-regulated and perpetual monitoring of inmates, denied even the most meager semblance of privacy, being a defining characteristic of total institutions. Dunn's shadow thus becomes a stand-in for the omnipresent predation of the settler state and the administrators of an abusive and eradicative ideology at the behest of which these children have been enlisted to partake in a macabre and humiliating performance of self-mockery.

The "Playing Indian" images are unexplained in any accompanying documentation, outside of a brief informative caption included in a 2013 exhibition mounted by the McCord Museum in collaboration with the TRC, entitled *Honouring Memory*. It reads: "The students at St. Michael's play "Indian" for their teacher's camera. They are wearing paper costumes and stereotypical accessories for the occasion."[279] While little information is available or recounted by survivors regarding the practice of having residential school students participate in such performances, the phenomenon is also captured in photographs from other decades and regions and appears almost naturalized within the larger photographic history.[280] They are disconcerting

[279] "Honouring Memory – Canada's Residential Schools," exhibition panel, 2013. http://www.mccord-museum.qc.ca/pdf/exhibits/Panneaux_McGill_2013.pdf.

[280] For example, similar photographs are housed in the Library Archives of Canada, with one attributed to another amateur photographer, Sister Liliane, while she was employed at Pukatawagan Residential School in Manitoba

and complicated images that, I would argue, are emblematic of the eradication/preservation paradox at the core of settler-colonial ideology, which sought the dissolution of Indigenous identity and the retention, rather, of its boorish caricature kept alive in ethnographic images, pop culture cartoons and Hollywood Westerns.[281] What is more, produced for personal, rather than promotional purposes by someone implicated and embedded in the administration of the school and supposedly devoted to the care and overseeing of the students, Dunn's photographs expose the entrenchment and insidiousness of colonial ideology whereby assimilationist and eradicative policies were supported by repeated moralistic justifications.

Accompanying Dunn's photographs in the McCord Museum's collection are a handful of the photographer's written musings, personal poetry and correspondences. These documents further reflect the degree to which the photographer – and presumably a high percentage of other employees – proscribed to the notion of assimilationist education as a benevolent gesture administered by church, state and concerned citizens. Dunn's adherence to the ideological argument, even when aware of the atrocities for which it is accountable, is exposed in a typed letter written over forty years after she had stopped working for the Residential School System and addressed to Harold Cardinal, President of the Indian Association of Alberta, in reaction to his recently published book, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians*. Cardinal's book, written in response to Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Jean Chrétien's 1969 White Paper that sought the dismantling of the Indian Act and, with it, the distinct legal status and treaty rights of Indigenous peoples, was a comprehensive critique of Canadian-Aboriginal affairs for over a century, with particular attention paid to the damaging effects of the then still functioning Residential School System.[282]

In her letter, Dunn describes being compelled to reach out to the author, both to congratulate him on the book and to defend both herself and the system for which she worked. The letter is revelatory of how ingrained colonial ideology could become, as Dunn parrots the most common justifications for the establishment of the Residential School System, as it was repeatedly reinforced in promotional photography. She refers to the dramatic population decline

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during the 1950s (Library and Archives of Canada, PA-195120), and another taken in 1950 at Bishop Horden Hall in Moose Factory, Ontario (Library and Archives of Canada, PA-181590). Moreover, the photographs are also reminiscent of those contained in the personal collections and family albums of non-Indigenous children, captured gleefully playing Indian in Boy Scouts, summer camps and at birthday parties, and are revelatory for the iconic caricature of Indianness in settler-colonial society.

[281] The history of "playing Indian" will be discussed at greater length in Chapter Three.

[282] Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton: M. G. Hurtig Ltd., 1969). See, in particular, Chapter 5, "The Little Red Schoolhouse: Gallons of White Paint."

among Indigenous communities and the "serious doubt as to their ultimate survival as a race," being all but reversed "due in large measure to the concern and efforts of the Christian missionaries," but fails to acknowledge accountability for Indigenous population decline.[283] She argues for the benefit of training children in the language and skills necessary to find success in a rapidly changing world, both mourning the loss of *the Indian's* "happier and more natural way of living" and asserting the inevitability of change.[284] She suggests that the prohibition of students speaking any language other than English or French – a rule she also insists she refused to abide, encouraging children to retain their first languages – was primarily enforced for the practical necessity of establishing a common language for use in the schoolyard. She admits that teachers – herself included – were provided no special training when employed in the schools and that "there were many 'misfits'" who took up the job.[285] She describes rampant alcoholism and child neglect in contemporary Indigenous communities, without any reflective acknowledgment of the links between societal problems and the trauma experienced by survivors of the Residential School System. And, in perhaps the most patronizing – if simplistically self-defensive – statement included in the letter, she implores Cardinal to recognize that "there were also many who devoted their lives and hearts to the care and service of your people," and "it is in large measure due to their efforts that you and many other promising young Indian people had a chance to be born, and to be educated to become champions of their race."[286]

The letter is informative for an understanding of how ingrained and insidious the moral justifications that drove the Residential School System were for many participating in its administration, as well as the assumptions and beliefs that allowed it to operate for more than a century. Indeed, Dunn's defenses directly reflect the rhetoric of risk, benevolence, moral duty and racial superiority illustrated in both ethnographic images eulogizing the inevitable decline and disappearance of "once noble races" and residential school photographs celebrating the supposed "successes" of the government and church's assimilationist endeavours. If her own photographs display a level of comfort with and compassion for the children in her care, they are equally implicated in a system responsible for countless atrocities and indignities that have had lasting effects on the experiences and perceptions of Indigenous *and* non-Indigenous peoples

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[283] Dunn, "Letter to Harold Cardinal."
[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid. Included in the documents accompanying Dunn's albums and housed in the McCord Museum archives is Dunn's diploma from teacher's college. However, the TRC report reveals that the majority of teachers hired to work in residential schools did not have even the basic training with which Dunn was equipped (*Final Report,* 3, 75).
[286] Dunn, "Letter to Harold Cardinal."

across North America. Dunn's images, like other residential school photographs and the ethnographic images produced by Curtis and his contemporaries, exhibit "a process of omission or censorship or neglect that itself constitutes atrocity."[287] Re-framed in this way, the photographic legacy of North American settler colonialism reveals that the ethical instability of photography necessitates the attentive and durational participation of contemporary spectators to account for both the context in which the photographs were produced and their enduring impact in contemporary society.

As Azoulay suggests, it is insufficient to approach photographic images of this kind without accounting for their continued presence, circulation and display, and for "the photographed persons who haven't stopped being 'there.'"[288] This kind of engagement can be productive for an understanding of the historical roots of current catastrophes plaguing Canadian and American societies as is commonly confronted in the work of contemporary artists. In the following chapters, I discuss a range of aesthetic and political strategies employed by artists who reference the role of photography, either directly or obliquely, in settler colonial structures: in the committing, documenting or obscuring of atrocities and in the production and perpetuation of repressive authenticity. These works implore spectators to re-visit colonial assumptions and ideologies that have long justified the oppression of Indigenous people and account for their perpetuation into the present. In the following chapters, I argue that confronted with either historical or contemporary photographic imagery produced in a settler colonial environment, all spectators have a responsibility to unsettle themselves and examine their position in relation to the images, engaging openly with both the content of the work and all participants of the photographic encounter.

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[287] Prosser, "Introduction," 12.
[288] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 16.

CHAPTER II
UNSETTLING THE PHOTOGRAPHIC FRONTIER: ARCHIVAL INTERVENTION

On June 11, 2008, accompanied by the leaders of Canada's major political parties and a number of Indigenous representatives in the Canadian House of Commons, Prime Minister Stephen Harper delivered an official apology to former Residential School students and their descendants for Canada's role in the establishment and administration of the Indian Residential School System.[289] Referring to over 120 years of institutionalized racism, systemic abuse and the attempted assimilation of tens of thousands of Indigenous children as a "sad chapter in our history," Harper declared: "The government now recognizes that the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative and that this policy has had a lasting and damaging impact on Aboriginal culture, heritage and language… There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again."[290]

The temporal rhetoric employed for the apology has been much discussed, according to which a strict division was drawn between the previous residential school era, when racist colonial attitudes prevailed, and toward which contemporary Canadians can look back and cast judgment from a more informed and open-minded present.[291] Pauline Wakeham and Naomi

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[289] Following the prime minister's statement of apology, Liberal leader Stéphane Dion, Bloc Québecois leader Gilles Duceppe and leader of the New Democratic Party, Jack Layton, each delivered their own remarks. Indigenous leaders, Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Patrick Brazeau, National Chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, Mary Simon, President of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, Clement Chartier, President of the Métis National Council and Beverley Jacobs, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada were all present at the Apology ceremony. Following the remarks of party leaders, in a last-minute decision, each of the Indigenous representatives was permitted, for the first time in history, to address Parliament and respond to the apology. See Eva Mackey, "The Apologizers' Apology," *Recognizing Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress,* eds. Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013): 59. See also Government of Canada, "House of Commons Debate, 39th Parliament, 2nd Session," *Edited Hansard* 142.110 (11 June 2008): http://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/39-2/house/sitting-110/hansard.

[290] The Statement of Apology can be read in full on the Government of Canada website: http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649

[291] See, for example: Mackey, "The Apologizers' Apology"; Pauline Wakeham and Naomi Angel, "Witnessing in Camera: Photographic Reflections on Truth and Reconciliation," *Arts of Engagement*: *Taking Aesthetic Action in and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016): 94-137; Matthew Dorrell, "From Reconciliation to Reconciling: Reading What 'We Now Recognize,' in the Government of Canada's 2008 Residential Schools Apology," *English Studies in Canada* 35.1 (2009): 27-45; and Wakeham, "The Cunning of Reconciliation: Reinventing White Civility in the 'Age of Apology,' *Shifting the Ground of Canadian Literary Studies,* eds. Smaro Kamboureli and Robert Zacharias (Waterlook: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012): 209-233.

Angel, for example, argue that the tone of the apology implies a "retrospective model of witnessing" that confines wrongdoing to the past and shifts attention away from the present state of settler colonialism in Canada.[292] According to Wakeham and Angel, this temporal distancing was reinforced "via the rhetorical deployment of anaphora, or the repetition of the phrase 'we now recognize' for strategic emphasis."[293] Indeed, the phrase appears six times in a seven-minute speech of less than 1000 words.[294] The implication is not only that the current administration and citizenry are absolved of any accountability for the atrocities under discussion, but that previous generations are also exonerated, because "the wrongs they committed are only 'recognizable' as such 'now,' with the benefit of social enlightenment in the intervening years."[295] Thus, in both the past and the present, Canada's culpability is implicitly mitigated. Indeed, anthropologist Eva Mackey has described the event as "a choreographed ritual of regret" wherein, "over 200 years of colonial violence, momentarily brought to the foreground through the apology process, become contained in the past so that the nation may move forward into a unified future."[296] Accordingly, this forward-looking aspect of the apology's structure functions in ways similar to the compartmentalization of the wrongdoings to the past. Both sidestep any concern about the continuation of settler colonial structures *in the present*, "failing to implicate the state or settler subjects as beneficiaries of the policies, and construct[ing] a blank slate of innocence for Canada's future."[297]

The government's apology was broadcast live on national television and both the written statement and video footage of the event were made available online. N'laka'pamux/Secwepemc artist and curator Chris Bose – himself the son of residential school survivors – has described being "both amazed and enraged" by Harper's speech.[298] In an artist statement for the 2013

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[292] Wakeham and Angel, "Witnessing in Camera," 99.
[293] Ibid.
[294] "… the Government of Canada *now recognizes* that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes and we apologize for having done this. *We now recognize* that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions that it created a void in many lives and communities, and we apologize for having done this. *We now recognize* that, in separating children from their families, we undermined the ability of many to adequately parent their own children and sowed the seeds for generations to follow, and we apologize for having done this. *We now recognize* that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect and were inadequately controlled, and we apologize for failing to protect you…" "Statement of Apology," http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649. Emphasis added.
[295] Wakeham and Angel, "Witnessing in Camera," 100. Of course, as was discussed at length during the previous chapter, evidence of the ill health and poor treatment of residential school students was readily available since the earliest days of the system's administration, with examples including P.H. Bryce's 1907 medical report.
[296] Mackey, "The Apologizers' Apology," 60.
[297] Ibid., 64.
[298] Chris Bose, "Artist Statement," *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools*, 38.

exhibition, *Witnesses: Art and Canada's Indian Residential Schools* at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery on the University of British Columbia campus in Vancouver, BC, Bose writes of the apology: "I never thought it would happen in my lifetime, or even ever, but how empty it seemed and how quickly it came and went on the Canadian consciousness was unsettling."[299] Driven by these mixed emotions, Bose began the production of a prolific body of work responding to the legacy of the Residential School System, the potential impact and/or inadequacy of the government's apology and the perpetuation of ignorance he perceived amongst the Canadian public. In December of 2008, Bose launched the Urban Coyote TeeVee Blog, as an online platform for the development and sharing of a new piece of original digital art every day for a year.[300] Having amassed thousands of archival photographs associated with Canadian settler colonial relations, the history of the Residential School System and the colonial imaging of Indigenous peoples in North America, Bose incorporated them in a number of digital collages, photomontages and films. In many cases, these images and assemblages include text from Harper's Statement of Apology, juxtaposing the Prime Minister's words with those of historical figures like John A. MacDonald or Duncan Campbell Scott and sepia-toned images of residential school students, seated at their desks and staring blankly at the camera, or otherwise printed over faded photographs of powwow dancers in action.

One of these images, posted on May 18, 2009, remobilized the infamous pair of photographs depicting Thomas Moore, before and after his enrollment in the Regina Indian Residential School, discussed in the previous chapter. Titled, *here you go canada, ask me another stupid question…* [Figure 2.1], the diptych is overlaid, in this case, with Bose's own stream-of-consciousness writing. Unpunctuated and unedited, the artist's words are printed in vertical lines, from top to bottom, broken up only where they would otherwise cover the two photographs of Thomas Moore. With everything from the typeface of the prose to the colour scheme of the photographs in different shades of black and grey, reading the text is difficult and requires that viewers enlarge the image on the screen, squint and scan the lines, making

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[299] Chris Bose, "Artist Statement," 38. In her essay, "The Apologizers' Apology," Mackey describes how the government and the media framed the apology as a one-way communication, rather than a dialogic exchange between the apologizing Canadian government and the Indigenous peoples to whom they were apologizing. She writes: "Harper, as well as the mainstream media, appeared to predetermine that the apology would be accepted… and afterwards that it *had been* accepted," 65.

[300] Following the initial year-long project, Bose has kept the website active, posting written work and visual art at a continuous, although more occasional, rate. See: https://findingshelter.blogspot.ca

inferences and assumptions as to what particular words might be when the letters get lost in the image behind them. The text reads:

> The route of the so-called progress is paved on other people's misery never the one's in control of the land the resources the money and sadly I now know the same old bigotries have not been washed away by some golden chalice of intelligence at some fountain of knowledge more than ever it's the same old greed and want and pride heartlessly lumbering over the impoverished the helpless the lost and the one's in power, the one's in control Goddamn their ignorance shines so fucken' bright when they ask childlike questions about my race about why my people seem so lost so backward so timid revealing something so sad about themselves that I really cannot even begin to explain several centuries of oppression in ten second sound bites for them and really I don't care to and they don't really want to know they just want to empathize and feel it for a half an hour not even to understand it but to hold it for a little while to study it and then they will go back and write a grant about it to get some money to study it further and perpetuate the dumb. (Chris Bose, *here you go canada, ask me another stupid question*, 2009)

Layering the text over the paired portraits, Bose draws direct connections between the forced re-education of children like Thomas Moore, current societal dysfunction and the ongoing ignorance of the Canadian public in regards to both this history and its enduring impact on multiple generations of Indigenous people, and to the broader system of settler colonial oppression.[301] The juxtaposition of text and image both resists the compartmentalization of settler colonialism and white supremacy to the past, as was implied in the government's statement of apology, and demands more of the spectator than retrospective witnessing. Indeed, inverting Harper's refrain of "*we now know*," the second line of Bose's text reads, "sadly *I now know* the same old bigotries have not been washed away by some golden chalice of intelligence at some fountain of knowledge…"[302] With this turn of phrase, Bose refutes the suggestion that past wrongs can only be *recognized* as such *now* with the historical hindsight of an enlightened populace, unburdened by responsibility for these earlier atrocities and unaccountable for their perpetuation in the present. Rather, *here you go canada, ask me another stupid question* implores

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[301] Wakeham and Angel, in fact, describe typical reactions to the Thomas Moore photographs in similar terms as contemporary reflection on the Residential School System more broadly, marked by a division between past attitudes and what "we now recognize" to have been wrong. The authors describe: "… the photographs' significance as a 'before and after' set has lately accrued a doubled status, coming to represent not only the 'before and after' of an Indigenous child's experience with the [Residential School System], but also a 'before and after' index of two ways of seeing or two ideological lenses for viewing the residential school project. In this sense, the photographs have become part of a metanarrative contrasting public perceptions of assimilationist ideology during the height of the operation of residential schools and in the post-apology moment today," "Witnessing in Camera," 101.

[302] Chris Bose, *here you go canada, ask me another stupid question,* 2008 (emphasis added).

spectators to close the presumed temporal divide between past and present and read continuity into history. Referring, to "several centuries of oppression," instead of the residential school project specifically, Bose further insinuates that the atrociousness of the forced re-education system cannot be isolated from the larger and ongoing process of settler colonialism in Canada. Indeed, in addition to reinforcing assumptions of temporal distance, the strategic vocabulary employed for the statement of apology, betrayed an attempt to justify the Canadian government's role in running the schools, "partly in order to meet its obligation to educate Aboriginal children."[303] As Wakeham and Angel argue, the effect is an implicit dis-articulation of the Residential School System from settler colonialism's "multi-pronged assault on Indigenous lifeways," which risks minimizing or obscuring the scope of oppression.[304] Furthermore, as Mackey states, "By limiting the apology and the redress to residential schools, the official apology carved out a very small part of a much broader process of cultural genocide," including the theft of Indigenous land, the disregard for treaty obligations, the denial of Indigenous sovereign rights, and an overarching attempt to eliminate Indigenous presence.[305]

The mis-education and ignorance of settler society, to which Bose refers in his work, is arguably also an effect of the gaps and omissions in the photographic record and the perpetual circulation of images that, without due attention, risk obscuring atrocity and sanitizing history. Indeed, returning to the photographic archive discussed in the previous chapter, it is noteworthy that, despite the Residential School System's continued operation well into the 1990s, the perpetual selection and circulation of older black-and-white or sepia-toned images by the mainstream media, educational platforms and even the TRC, have arguably contributed to the perception that the era of aggressive assimilation is more distant history than it actually is. As Wakeham and Angel note, the reproduction of such images, without reference to dates or other specificities, "generates a semiotics of pastness," that links the Residential School System to an earlier period and shifts perspective away from the present.[306] As demonstrated in Chapter One, two types of images dominated the photographic frontier in North America: ethnographic portraits and residential school propaganda. And, although these images generally lack explicit depictions of disaster or violence, I have argued that they need to be approached as images of atrocity. Indeed, part of the violence encompassed in and enacted by these images and their

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303 "Statement of Apology," http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649.
304 Wakeham and Angel, "Witnessing in Camera," 95.
305 Mackey, "The Apologizers' Apology," 61.
306 Wakeham and Angel, "Witnessing in Camera," 98.

common recirculation is, I argue, the silence they generate and their contributory effect on misleading the public.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I posed the question as to how contemporary artists are confronting this visual legacy as (mis)representative of historical and ongoing processes of settler colonialism in their own photographic work. The remaining chapters are therefore concentrated on the work of artists who engage with this photographic record, enacting a number of aesthetic strategies that function to articulate the continuity of settler colonial occupation and shift the focus away from the past. To different degrees, all of the artists discussed in this and the following chapter take photography itself as the subject of their work, addressing the medium's critical role in settler colonialism. Engaging with historical images, either directly or obliquely, these artists attend to the omissions, inconsistencies and biases of the existing archive. While the following chapter examines the work of artists who reference and parody historical images – in often ironic or humorous ways – this chapter focuses on the work of three artists who each engage in practices of direct archival intervention, editing, annotating and re-purposing historical photographs and footage in ways that resist both their relegation to the past and the retrospective attention of spectators by registering their continued relevance in the present. Re-casting colonial images from an Indigenous perspective, these artists assert a sense of "visual sovereignty," described by Michelle Raheja, "as a creative act of self-representation that has the potential to both undermine stereotypes of Indigenous people and to strengthen what Robert Warrior has called the 'intellectual health' of communities in the wake of genocide and colonialism."[307] As Raheja contends, despite the centrality of imaginary Indian identity to national origin myths in settler colonial North America, Indigenous peoples in early film and photography were perpetually erased "through both the reenactment of the physical violence of the frontier and the discursive violence that notions of salvage anthropology propagated."[308] The artists discussed in this chapter attend to that real and symbolic violence, augmenting and updating archival photographs from diverse image histories. The discursive diversity of the works under discussion is, in fact, demonstrative of the very scope and scale of the colonial project. Engaging in tactics of annotation, juxtaposition, erasure and layering to confront and complicate imperialist nostalgia for frontier mythology, the notion of the vanishing Indian and the assumed absolution of post-apology Canada, Ken Gonzales-Day, Meryl

[307] Raheja, "Reading Nanook's Smile," 1161.
[308] Ibid., 1170.

McMaster and Chris Bose each appropriate and intervene in historical images, transforming them into contemporary objects, and eliciting spectators to recognize a sense of continuity in time and acknowledge the perpetration and perpetuation of settler colonialism in present-day North America. As a result, their work elucidates the catastrophic conditions that continue to plague settler-Indigenous relations in Canada and the United States.

Following an examination of another of Bose's works in response to the Canadian government's official apology I turn to an analysis of Mexican-American artist and writer Ken Gonzales-Day's ongoing series *Erased Lynching* (2002-present), in which he digitally removes the ropes and hanged bodies from a series of postcards and press photographs documenting the lynching of Indigenous, Mexican and Chinese men in the American West, during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.[309] Whereas most attention to the history of lynching in America – and to lynching imagery – has been focused on the extensive and targeted attacks against African Americans in the nation's southern states, Gonzales-Day's series addresses the lesser-known history of lynching in the West, and reveals the national scope of racialized violence and its often under-acknowledged connection to colonial settlement and nation-building. With the lynched bodies removed from the images, attention in Gonzales-Day's series is shifted from victim to perpetrator and witness, revealing, above all, photography's role in the representation and orchestrations of human suffering and barbarity.

If Gonzales-Day addresses the documentation of physical frontier violence, Cree artist Meryl McMaster tackles the "discursive violence" that Raheja argues was propagated by the anthropological salvage paradigm. For her 2008-2010 series, *Ancestral*, McMaster re-appropriated images made of Indigenous peoples by non-Indigenous photographers William Soule (1836-1908) and Edward Curtis (1868-1952), and painter George Catlin (1796-1872), all of whom were driven by a desire to document "authentic" Indigenous people before their imagined disappearance. Directly refuting the ideology that drove these earlier image-makers, McMaster produced her own photographs by projecting the historical images onto her and her father's faces and torsos, producing haunting and multi-layered portraits that collapse time and

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[309] The original *Erased Lynching* series consisted of one large-scale adaptable work and fifteen postcard-sized images produced between 2002 and 2006 in response to anti-immigration sentiments and increased vigilantism along the United States/Mexico border under the Bush administration in the early 2000s. In more recent years, Gonzales-Day has begun adding new images to the series as racial tensions in the United States have escalated again. In these later images, the artist has included archival images of the lynching of African Americans as a direct response to the dozens of police shootings of unarmed black men and the Black Lives Matter protest movement. Gonzales-Day, "Artist Statement," http://kengonzalesday.com/erased-lynchings/ and email correspondence.

imply lineage and continuity between the artist and her ancestors. Engaging in tactics of augmentation and layering, rather than subtraction or removal, McMaster's process arguably represents the opposite of Gonzales-Day's. However, both series are the result of the artists' archival intervention and the inhibiting of unchallenged access to the original photographic subjects. As a result of their aesthetic actions, Gonzales-Day and McMaster each imply a sense of temporal compression, transforming historical images into contemporary objects and refusing the relegation of settler colonial structures to the past.

By intervening in historical photographs and footage in strategic and political ways, Bose, Gonzales-Day and McMaster enliven archival images in the present, thus illuminating their continued relevance and the ongoing repercussions of the histories to which they refer. In different ways, all of the works discussed implore contemporary spectators to confront the remnants and revenants of history, however uncomfortable they may be. Considering these works alongside Jacques Derrida's conception of justice as "being-with-spectres" and Dylan Robinson's notion of "intergenerational responsibility," I argue that these works necessitate a contemplative, introspective and durational practice of unsettled spectatorship similar to that described in regards to historical images in the previous chapter. Rather than retrospective witnessing, I suggest that attending to works of art in this way – watching, rather than merely looking at the images, to use Azoulay's terms – must mean not only atoning for or empathizing with the past, but shifting perspectives in the present as well.

The Art of the Apology

Along with the series of composite digital images that Bose posted on his Urban Coyote TeeVee Blog following Canada's official apology to former residential school students, the artist produced a 10-minute video work, titled *The Apology,* as part of a 2011-2012 residency at Vancouver's UNIT/PITT gallery [Figures 2.2 & 2.3]. The short film consists of archival footage of 1941 Vancouver, mixed with panoramic shots of the contemporary city, and rare video footage of Indigenous children in an undisclosed residential school. The audio, which begins abruptly 2:05 minutes into the film, is taken directly from Harper's deliverance of the apology, edited and remixed by the artist so that significant words or phrases are repeated or enhanced by an echo effect, and moments of silence are inserted throughout. The prime minister's rhetorical deployment of anaphora, described by Wakeham and Angel as a strategic device to abdicate responsibility and imply a greater degree of temporal distance from the residential school era, is

overridden by Bose's editing, replaced with other, equally significant, repetitions. The most virulent or violent terms – glossed over or merely muttered in the original statement – are repeated with increasing volume, so that they seem to ring in listeners' ears. Phrases like, "assimilate them into dominant culture," "kill the Indian," "some of these children died" and "extraordinary courage" echo over the footage of students, surrounded at all times by church and school administrators. Dressed in uniforms, the children line up to have the identification numbers written on their arms checked and recorded; girls in white communion dresses walk behind nuns, stepping solemnly in time with one another. Some scenes depict members of clergy and staff raising a British flag on the school grounds and others show them seated in front of a makeshift stage on which people – presumably students – wearing headdresses and tasseled clothes, drum and dance in a circle, in a performance reminiscent of Alice Constance Dunn's photographs discussed in the previous chapter. The juxtaposition between the audio and visuals is unsettling and the footage, itself, haunting. The film's ghostliness is enhanced by the artist's editing techniques: the children's faces becoming blurred and their expressions washed away by over-exposure; their bodies reduced to silhouettes, fading into a kaleidoscopic colour spectrum and then appearing again, fully present. Three minutes before the end of both the film and the statement of apology, the footage begins again; moving more and more quickly, it is repeated a number of times, fast-forwarded and reversed, the children running backwards and forwards, ultimately caught in the inescapable cycle of the video loop.

Beyond the deliberate actions of the artist to highlight certain aspects of the government's statement of apology and the historical atrocities to which it refers, or the visual manipulation of the archival imagery, the effectiveness of *The Apology* comes, in part, from the rarity of seeing moving images or even colour footage of residential school students. Indeed, as previously discussed the vast majority of visual documentation of the Residential School System consists of black-and-white stock photographs that infer significant temporal distance from the present, generating a "semiotics of pastness" that works to redirect attention away from the present and render witnessing retrospective, despite the system's continued operation well into the last decade of the twentieth century. What is more, like ethnographic images of Indigenous peoples, residential school photographs, by and large, do not conform to the usual conventions of images of atrocity or human rights violations and therefore risk contributing to historical denial of the violence and genocidal underpinnings of the forced re-education system. *The Apology* breaks with this form of misrepresentation by both departing from the usual reliance on black-and-white

still images and by pairing the moving footage with the Prime Minister's 2008 statement. The combination of audio and visual footage and the emphasizing of both the most damning or atrocious phrases – "kill the Indian…kill the Indian" – and significant statements of strength and resilience – the "extraordinary courage" of survivors – implies a sense of continuity and contemporaneity in regards to the enduring legacy of the Residential School System and settler colonialism more broadly. Particularly in its initial exhibition – projected onto busy public streets in a part of Vancouver with a majority Indigenous low-income and homeless population, neighboring the city's bustling business district – *The Apology* confronts and challenges what TRC commissioner Marie Wilson has termed the "comfortable blindness" of many in the Canadian public in regards to their colonial history.[310] The various juxtapositions within Bose's film, including the camera's scanning of Vancouver's waterfront with the visible cityscape and presence of oil tankers in the harbor, link the Residential School System to the larger settler-colonial system of land theft and the occupation of unceded territories.

Mackey has pointed to the significance of the fact that "the words 'land,' territory,' or 'treaty' simply do not appear in the text of the Harper apology," despite the intertwining of assimilationist re-education policies, the strategic statistical reduction of First Nations populations and the appropriation of Indigenous territories.[311] Rather, she argues, obscuring these links and limiting the apology to the Residential School System, "does not require Canada or Canadians to account for the ways that intersecting processes of colonial theft of land and cultural genocide are the foundations of the modern nation-state, or to recognize that non-Aboriginal Canadians are all contemporary beneficiaries of this process."[312] The apology, according to Mackey, among others, thus risks perpetuating what Stó:lõ scholar Dylan Robinson describes as the "maintenance of ignorance" among settler society, regarding Canada's "history of colonization upon which their privilege rests."[313] What is more, when this history is framed as fundamentally past – in the statement of apology, or in the continued circulation of historical imagery without contemporary context – recognition of colonial oppression risks remaining retrospective. Through the use of colour footage and the spectral effect of the images' manipulation, along with the remixed audio of the prime minister's apology, Bose's film – like

[310] Quoted in Wakeham and Angel, "Witnessing in Camera," 95.
[311] Mackey, "The Apologizers' Apology," 63.
[312] Ibid., 61.
[313] Robinson, "Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility," 63. Robinson writes: "As the fallacious logic would have it, since settler Canadians are not themselves the perpetrators of past injustice of the state, why should they make any effort to engage in learning about this history…?"

the other works discussed in this chapter – asks of spectators that they unsettle their understanding of the history and enduring legacy of the Residential School System and the broader structure of settler colonialism in ways that account for their perpetuation in the present.

Unsettling Spectatorship

In the introduction to the book, *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*, Dylan Robinson and Keavy Martin describe "aesthetic action" as that which is mobilized towards the performance of a political and sensorial function: aesthetic actions "unsettle us, provoke us, and make us reconsider our assumptions."[314] The authors argue, "Actions like these have the potential to assist us in viewing the structures that we are embedded in more clearly… and also suggest to us possibilities for different kinds of engagements and understandings."[315] Building on this notion, I describe the provocative aesthetic actions of the artists examined in this and the following chapter as strategies of *aesthetic unsettlement* or, alternatively, as attempts to *unsettle spectatorship*. In so doing, I further argue that confronting these works of art and the social and political issues to which they refer, necessitates the development of ethical and durational spectatorial strategies such as those discussed in the previous chapter (i.e. Azoulay's notion of "watching" instead of looking at photographs) in order to engender what Robinson terms "intergenerational responsibility" and accountability for the entirety of the ongoing photographic encounter.

Robinson proposes the term as a companion to the common invocation of sustained and inherited victimhood implied in labels such as "intergenerational survivor" or "intergenerational trauma" – terms, he remarks, which were wholeheartedly adopted by the TRC.[316] By turning attention from victim to witness or perpetrator, Robinson proposes moving some of the burden of carrying history forward from the victims and survivors of oppression to the descendants and inheritors of settler colonial privilege, provocatively re-terming those in positions of privilege as "intergenerational perpetrators."[317] Clarifying that "to reconceive settler Canadians as perpetrators of intergenerational irresponsibility is to shift the framework of perpetration from action to inaction," Robinson refers to Azoulay's plea, as an Israeli settler citizen, to have the

[314] Robinson and Keavy, "The Body is a Resonant Chamber," *Arts of Engagement,* 13.
[315] Ibid.
[316] Robinson, "Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility," 48.
[317] Ibid., 65-66.

right not to be a perpetrator.[318] Azoulay writes, in the context of Israel: "The time has come for the second generation of perpetrators – descendants of those who expelled Palestinians from their homelands – to claim ***our*** right, ***our*** fundamental and inalienable human right: ***the right not to be perpetrators***."[319] Of course, in both estimations, accepting or refusing the position of intergenerational perpetrator involves a re-casting of perpetration from outward aggression to inactivity and indifference. It calls on individuals to "recognize and change their perpetration of irresponsibility constituted by ignorance."[320] In short, it implores individuals to consciously unsettle themselves.

My use of the term "unsettle" or "unsettlement" is strategic. On the one hand, I employ it as a decided alternative, at times, to "decolonize," in an attempt to avoid the metaphorical pitfalls or limitations of domesticating what is, for all intents and purposes, a definitively disruptive idea. Multiple scholars and activists have resisted the theoretical or conceptual adoption of decolonization, such as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, who insist, "decolonization specifically requires the repatriation of Indigenous land and life. Decolonization is not a metonym for social justice."[321] While adhering, for the most part, to Tuck and Yang's insistence, I do also consider the aesthetic actions of the artists under discussion as efforts toward what Métis artist and writer David Garneau terms "*cultural* decolonization" (as opposed to concrete land-based decolonization), and as examples of the conceptually fruitful "extra-rational potential of art."[322] "Cultural decolonization," according to Garneau, is not about alleviating settler guilt or discomfort, but is rather "about at once unsettling settlers and, ironically, helping them to adapt, to better settle themselves as noncolonial persons within Indigenous spaces."[323] As a non-Indigenous scholar with close family ties to Indigenous communities and a deep commitment to anticolonial action and settler accountability, I find Garneau's concept of cultural decolonization valuable, but I do endeavour to keep the artistic actions described in this thesis distinct from the

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[318] Robinson, "Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility," 66.
[319] Quoted in Robinson, "Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility," 66.
[320] Ibid., 67.
[321] Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1.1 (2012): 21. "When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future," 3.
[322] Garneau, "Extra-Rational Aesthetic Action and Cultural Decolonization," *Fuse* 36.4 Special Issue: Decolonial Aesthetics. (Fall 2013): 15-16.
[323] Ibid.

necessarily messy and revolutionary work of decolonization, and thus opt more often for the term "unsettlement."[324]

In employing the term "unsettlement," I do not mean to assume a settler audience (nor an Indigenous audience, for that matter), but all of the images discussed in this dissertation – whether historical or contemporary, whether made by Indigenous or non-Indigenous artists, and whether developed in the *service of* or as a *challenge to* colonial power – were produced within the confines of the settler colonial nations of Canada and the United States and these are conditions to which I want to make persistent implicit reference. As Garneau suggests, the unsettling work of cultural decolonization is "the perpetual struggle to make both Indigenous and settler peoples aware of the complexity of our shared colonial condition, and how this legacy informs every person and institution in these territories."[325] In addition, I intend the terms to invoke an antithesis to the multiple and disturbingly reassuring definitions of the words "settle" and "settlement." Beyond referring to the actions taken by those who initially invaded or now occupy Indigenous territories, the verb "to settle" carries connotations of mutual agreement or consensus (to settle upon an idea; to come to a settlement), or of resolution or acceptance (to settle a dispute; to settle for an option). It implies the calming of disorder (to settle down), the ameliorating of anxiety (to settle one's nerves) and the easing of discomfort (to settle one's stomach). As a noun, it even signifies reconciliation by financial recompense (to agree upon a settlement).

By employing the term "unsettlement," I intend to invoke all of these meanings, (which are so wholly at odds with the state of affairs in settler colonial North America) and infer a sense of their undoing. This, I argue, is the tone of the works of art under discussion and, as such, they require a similar undoing of traditional viewing practices. Responsible spectatorship of these works of art should offer no form of resolution, consensus, agreement or calm in regards to the history and perpetuation of settler colonialism in North America. Rather they should disturb, destabilize and open assumptions to further discussion or change. Finally, there is something of the spectral in the notion of unsettlement and implied in the works of art discussed in the current chapter. These artists' interventionist actions insist upon acknowledgment of the residue, the

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[324] Of course, my chosen vocabulary directly references that employed by a number of other authors, including (but not limited to) Arthur Manuel's *Unsettling Canada: A National Wake-up Call* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2015) and Paulette Regan's *Unsettling the settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011).
[325] Garneau, "Extra-Rational Aesthetic Action," 15-16.

revenants and the relentlessness of the past: its impact on the present and its implications for the future. Responsible spectators of works such as these are, I argue, *unsettled spectators*, in every sense of the word.

To practice a sense of unsettled and ethical spectatorship involves something akin to the ethical politics underlying Derrida's notion of justice as "being-with-spectres" – as being accountable to those no longer living and those not yet born – as well as the acceptance or embodiment of "intergenerational responsibility." I propose this type of spectatorship as a resistance to more retrospective models of witnessing that account, rather, for the persistence of settler colonial structures in the present. While retrospective looking may appear to be the most appropriate mode of approaching historical images – and photographs in particular, so often perceived as frozen moments of the past – failing to recognize the continuation of oppressive conditions in which colonial images were produced, amounts to the perpetuation (or perpetual perpetration) of the same violence or injustice. Indeed, as Azoulay implies in her suggestion that we need to learn to watch, rather than look at, photographs, the re-inscription of "dimensions of time and movement" into the interpretation of photographs has the capacity to engender a more ethical form of spectatorship that is accountable to victims and survivors of historical and contemporary atrocity or oppression. According to Azoulay, watching photographs – particularly those imaging catastrophic or otherwise inexplicable events – allows for a transcendence of aesthetic appreciation in favour of further political attention.[326] Attention that, she argues, we have a duty to pay to the dispossessed who remain on display, to "the photographed persons who haven't stopped being 'there.'"[327]

Ulrich Baer, in his analysis of photography and trauma, similarly describes the latent responsibility that politically fraught photographs demand of their spectators. He argues, we are generally expected to accept photography's testimony about time, which "structures the field between viewer and photograph," positing the former as "safely grounded in the present over here, while the photograph is assumed to refer to a prior moment that can be kept safely apart over there."[328] Time, according to this structure is composed of distinct and separable units that photographs register and keep in place, but the notion, for Baer, is untenable, as "photographs are unsettling."[329] Indeed, similar to Azoulay's notion of the multi-temporal reach of

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[326] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 14.
[327] Ibdi., 16.
[328] Baer, *Spectral Evidence,* 2.
[329] Ibid.

photographs, Baer argues that there is a "split time dwelling in every photograph – between an immobile past moment and its possibilities for redemption."[330] According to this conception, every photograph is "radically exposed to a future unknown to its subjects."[331]

While Baer implies that photographs, as a result of their spectral temporality, are unsettling on their own, he further suggests that artistic techniques of juxtaposition, re-appropriation and ironic subversion can afford spectators the ability to effectively "re-see" historical images, rescuing them from "their entombment in the ideologies and ways of seeing where they originated."[332] There is thus political impetus to the interruption and interrogation of historical archives and the insistence upon acknowledgment both of suppressed or forgotten histories and of their continued impact on the present. The examples of archival intervention undertaken by Bose, Gonzales-Day and McMaster function to signal the continuity of settler colonialism in Canada and enlist spectators to unsettle themselves and engage in ethical viewing practices and politics. As the authors of *Picturing Atrocity* suggest, "Making a conscious move from response to responsibility can involve our doing history and looking at old photographs, and also seeing how the past continues to inhabit the present."[333]

Ken Gonzales-Day: *Erased Lynching*

Ken Gonzales-Day's *The Wonder Gaze (St. James Park)* (2006-present) [Figure 2.4] is a large-scale panoramic photomural picturing a crowd gathered outdoors at night. Reflecting the analogue aesthetics of black-and-white flash photography, the figures in the foreground have been reduced to ghostly silhouettes, bright white shapes standing out against a black background. Men in suits and hats make up the majority of the crowd, but a few women are also present. Smoking, talking, standing around or milling about and swelling beyond the limits of the frame, the crowd appears aloof, orderly, composed. Most people have their backs turned, looking off into the distance or at one another, but some glance over their shoulders, turning to face the photographer, their expressions extinguished by the camera's blinding flash. A single tree bisects the picture plane, providing the only evidence of the outdoor setting. The costuming of the crowd

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[330] Baer, *Spectral Evidence,* 23.
[331] Ibid., 7.
[332] Ibid., 22. Baer's notion of "re-seeing" is borrowed from Fatimah Tobing Rony's conception of the redemptive potential of re-seeing and re-appropriating ethnographic images from perspectives other than that of the original photographer, elaborated in *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema, and the Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1996).
[333] *Picturing Atrocity,* 15.

and the flash's saturation of the scene imbue the image with an anachronistic and mysterious character. With few clues as to what brought all these people together, the event pictured is itself unclear and elucidated only by the title of the series in which *The Wonder Gaze* is included: *Erased Lynching.*

For the production of the series, Gonzales-Day digitally removed the ropes and hanged bodies from found photographs produced in the American West and circulated in the press and as postcards in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The act of erasure indicated in the series' title provides an eerie explanation for otherwise obscure images. The seemingly innocuous assembly pictured, had, it turns out, congregated to witness – either to condemn or to celebrate, perhaps to perpetrate – acts of unthinkable brutality, violence and murder. Removal of the dead and desecrated bodies from the photographs – an attempt, according to the artist to prevent their re-victimization – refigures the macabre spectacle as the spectators themselves.[334]

As a large composite work, *The Wonder Gaze* is unique among the images in the *Erased Lynching* series, the rest of which are produced to mimic the style, size and scale of the postcards from which they originated. Typically framed and arranged in a loose grid on the wall, some contain crowds or figures in the foreground and others are unpeopled, with the camera's gaze trained on a tree or a telephone pole that stands in as a surrogate signal for the missing victim. Whereas most attention to the history of lynching in America has concerned the targeted assault against African Americans in the nation's southern states, Gonzales-Day's series addresses the legacy of lynching in the West, which, while certainly operating at a smaller scale claimed the lives of hundreds of Indigenous, Mexican and Chinese victims, as well as some of Anglo-European descent, in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. The artist's removal of the victims from these historical photographs thus reflects their parallel omission from America's written history and national memory.[335]

The imposed absence of the lynched bodies from Gonzales-Day's images renders palpable their prior presence; they remain as ghostly invisibility, the series' title a constant reminder of their previous appearance in the images. Undermining the emphasis of the original images, the artist's intervention functions to redirect viewers' attention away from the suffering of the victims and towards what the artist describes as "the mechanisms of the spectacle": the

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[334] Ken Gonzales-Day, "Conversation: Ken Gonzales-Day, Grant Kester, Elize Mazadiego, and Jenn Moreno," *Pros** 1 (Spring 2011), 10.

[335] The ethnicity of the lynch victims, having been removed from the images, is not typically apparent or disclosed in the works' exhibition.

makeshift gallows, the perpetrators and witnesses, and, most significantly, the photographer and the photographic apparatus.[336] Indeed, as Jason Hill articulated in a 2009 review of Gonzales-Day's work, the removal of the victims from the picture plane shifts the focus of the images, leaving spectators to confront "the fact of *photography itself* at the lynching tree."[337] Exposing and interrogating photography's participation in – even production of – the lynching spectacle, Gonzales-Day's series addresses the medium's long and complex history of imaging atrocities, as well as the questionable ethics surrounding such images' exhibition and spectatorship. What is more, by employing contemporary technological means to alter historical images, he transforms the photographs and postcards into present objects, imploring spectators to consider the continued relevance and contemporary resonance of the images and the events to which they refer. The history of lynching in America – in the West and in the South – is demonstrative of the violence fundamental to the founding of the nation and lynching photography represents an early stage in the medium's contentious history of imaging atrocities. Engaging with the medium's questionable ethics, *Erased Lynching* is in many ways a photographic series *about* photography and its role in the representation and orchestration of human suffering and barbarity.

The Wonder Gaze (St. James Park) is a composited scan of several photographs taken at the double lynching of two men who – while awaiting trial for the alleged kidnapping and murder of a wealthy businessman – were seized from their cells and summarily executed by a lynch mob on November 26, 1933 in San Jose, California.[338] Distinct from the other images in the series, *The Wonder Gaze* varies in size, shape and resolution, is printed on wallpaper and adapted to fit the specificities of any space in which it is exhibited. Stretched across the surface of a wall or wrapping around a corner, contemplation of the image in its entirety necessitates the physical movement of the viewer, rendering spectatorship spatial and active.[339] It is an expansive image betraying an impossible perspective and thus reflects the camera's capacity to capture or compose scenes otherwise unavailable to the human eye. Gonzales-Day himself has described the dramatic effect of not only photography, but of the photographic *flash* on the spectacle of

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[336] Gonzales-Day, "Artist Statement."

[337] Jason Hill, "The Camera and the 'Physiognomic Auto-da-fe": Photography, History, and Race in Two Recent Works by Ken Gonzales-Day," *X-TRA Contemporary Art Quarterly* 11.3 (Spring 2009), http://x-traonline.org/article/the-camera-and-the-physiognomic-auto-da-fe-photography-history-and-race-in-two-recent-works-by-ken-gonzales-day/, accessed February 10, 2015. Emphasis in the original.

[338] Ken Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 106-108.

[339] Gonzales-Day, "Conversation," 14-15.

lynching. He argues that, until flashbulbs became commercially available, lynching photographs taken at night were relatively rare for logistical reasons, and therefore photographers, as well as spectators, would revisit the site in subsequent days to take pictures before the bodies were removed.[340] With increased access to flash photography in the early 1930s, however, the camera could be incorporated directly into the event and the photographer became almost a requisite presence and participant in the spectacle itself. Setting the evening alight and providing an image that would be otherwise inaccessible even to those in attendance, the flash afforded the photographic capture of the dying or recently dead, preserved in dramatic detail for both present and subsequent spectators.

The photographic flash is a central component of *The Wonder Gaze*; both illuminating and obscuring the scene, it underscores the presence and position of the photographer. Approaching *The Wonder Gaze*, viewers are confronted with the blurred and whitewashed faces of crowd members, turning toward the camera. The installation's scale establishes a spatial relationship between the spectators in the gallery and those within the image, the viewer now occupying the place of the absent photographer, transformed into a participant in the event. The presence of photography and its role in the lynching spectacle is particularly evident in *The Wonder Gaze*, but is also addressed and interrogated in other images throughout the series.

Water Street Bridge (2004) [Figure 2.5], for example, appears initially to be an old and slightly damaged oval portrait of a group of boys and men crowded together to fit within the photographic frame. The source photograph from which the image derived, however, included the bound and hanged bodies of two young men, suspended from above and occupying the foreground in front of the crowd. Describing the original image, Gonzales-Day points out that the majority of the people pictured are looking not at the lynched bodies hanging before their eyes, but rather into the lens of the camera, documenting, if anything, "the presence of the photographer and the spectacle of the camera itself."[341] This is a fact that is made even more evident by the artist's intervention in the image. The barefoot boys in the foreground appear as if having jostled for position to have their images immortalized on film, with one particularly proud-looking child confidently meeting the camera's gaze and holding what looks to be a coiled rope; a single remnant of the erased event. Of course, it cannot be known whether the crowd pictured in the image is, in fact, the lynch mob who dragged the two victims from the jail cells in

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[340] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West*, 57.
[341] Ibid., 97.

which they were being held, and hung them from the overhead beams of Santa Cruz's Water St. Bridge.[342] Taken in 1877, the original photograph was produced long before the invention of the photographic flash and, whereas the lynching occurred in the middle of the night, the photograph could not have been taken until the following day.[343] The people pictured in the image may or may not have been present at the event itself. Some may, rather, have been drawn to the scene by the gruesome spectacle or even at the photographer's behest. The rope clenched in the one boy's fist may be nothing more than a ghoulish prop he either brought to the scene himself or was furnished with by the photographer for greater effect. Regardless, all of these elements of the image – the organization of the crowd behind the once visible bodies, the onlookers' attention to the camera itself, instead of to the atrocity in front of their eyes, and the possible inclusion of props – illuminates how early on photography became a significant, if not constitutive part of the lynching spectacle. It also raises significant questions about the purpose of such images' production beyond any purported "documentary" claims. The photographs might have been intended to serve as warnings to would-be criminals or subjugated populations.[344] Or, perhaps, as will be discussed further on, they performed a tautological function, retroactively affirming the guilt of the victim by mere fact of his execution, thereby consolidating (white, settler) communities based on a fabricated distinction between the vigilant and the villainous.

Two other images in the series, *Tombstone, 1884* (2006) [Figure 2.6] and *Disguised Bandit* (2004) [Figure 2.7] are similarly composed, with groups of men and boys, flanking a central absence and directly facing the camera. *Disguised Bandit* pictures several white American soldiers, on the US/Mexico borderland, arranged around a knotted and twisted tree, with their guns casually leaning against their legs. Four men on the right, smile for the camera – one with a particularly toothy grin – while another three are awkwardly organized on the left side of the frame. With their legs squared to offset the weight of the missing victim's body, their arms

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[342] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West*, 93-95. The lynching of individuals already being held in jail cells and either awaiting trial or sentencing was a common occurrence that Michael J. Pfeifer argues demonstrates a rejection of, or mistrust in, the recently implanted judicial system (see: *The Roots of Rough Justice*, Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2011, 1-2). Gonzales-Day argues that the position of the lynch victims as accused criminals is one of the reasons that the history of lynching in the West is understood most often as vigilantism instead of lynching, even though similar situations occurred in the South (*Lynching in the West*, 96-97).

[343] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West,* 94.

[344] Shawn Michelle Smith argues that lynching and lynching images often served precisely this purpose in the South where lynched bodies were, at times, left in black neighborhoods as warnings and photographs were sent to economically or politically prominent African Americans as a way of telling them to "stay in their place" ("The Evidence of Lynching Photographs," *Lynching Photographs,* Berkley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2007: 23).

raised and their fists coiled around invisible ropes, they are characterized by the artist as "pulling at the air in what can only be described as a deadly pantomime."[345]

In *Tombstone, 1884*, a well-dressed crowd occupies the bottom quarter of the frame, themselves and the mountain range behind them dwarfed by a telephone pole standing straight and tall in the centre of the image. With the absence of the lynch victim's body, once blindfolded and bound to the pole, the photograph appears to be some sort of commemorative portrait, marking the occasion of the infrastructure's erection and initiation. There is no shortage of such images from the time and place pictured, of politicians and businessmen posing proudly for photographs next to newly laid railway tracks or recently established telegraph stations: symbols, all, of the seizing and occupation of colonized land and territory, and evocative of settler colonial nation building. In this context, despite the evidence having been erased from the image, the suggestion is that lynching performed a similarly community-building function. Indeed, Michael J. Pfeifer, in his 2011 book, *The Roots of Rough Justice*, argues that, "In nascent multicultural, transnational communities transformed by American expansion and resource extraction booms, white Americans found racial and class violence a powerful solvent for unsettled questions of political and cultural leadership."[346] Asserting their shared rejection of recently established legal systems in favour of "harsh and swift punishment," settlers "seized upon lethal group violence unsanctioned by law – particularly hangings – to enforce mandates of racial and class hierarchy and to pull into definition tenuous and ill-defined understandings of social order and community."[347] Similarly, asserting that the violent takeover and transformation of Indigenous territories is fundamental to America's origins, Ned Blackhawk argues that group violence became the organizing structure of the nascent nation: "It legitimated the power of migrants, structured new social and racial orders, and provided the preconditions for political formation."[348]

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[345] Gonzales-Day, "Artist Statement."
[346] Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice,* 46.
[347] Ibid., 54,1.
[348] Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press), 9. Blackhawk argues: "from the initial moments of American exploration and conquest, through statehood, and into the stages of territorial formation, violence organized the region's nascent economies, settlements and polities. Violence and American nationhood, in short, progressed hand in hand."

Lynching in America

Published in 2006 as a companion to his photographic work, Gonzales-Day's book, *Lynching in the West: 1850-1935* is one of the first major studies of the history of lynching in the American West. Throughout his analysis, Gonzales-Day underscores the persistent misrepresentation of these lynchings as examples of "frontier justice" or the unorthodox honour of the cowboy courts. Lynching in America is a fundamentally racialized crime and, resulting from the thousands of African Americans lynched in the Antebellum South, is most commonly (and understandably) perceived to be an issue of white violence against the black community.[349] However, Gonzales-Day argues that the persistent elision of information regarding the racist targeting and lynching of other ethnicities throughout the country has functioned to perpetuate a "false binary of race" in America.[350] Including detailed case studies and corrected statistics to demonstrate that the practice of lynching in the West was, in fact, also racially motivated, Gonzales-Day reveals that "guided by anti-immigration sentiments, the fear of miscegenation, a deep frustration with the judicial system, or in combination with white supremacy," Mexican, Indigenous and Chinese men made up the majority of lynch victims in the West.[351]

In fact, similar to the narrative of America's Manifest Destiny and the settler-colonial fantasy of Indigenous peoples' natural and inevitable disappearance, the very notion of "frontier justice" as a necessary, if gruesome, stage in the taming of the West is itself fundamentally racist.[352] Further, the concept of "frontier justice" conjures up images of a lawless West preceding the establishment of civil codes or judicial systems, but both Gonzales-Day and Pfeifer demonstrate that lynching continued to occur, rivaling or supplanting such systems, even when they were firmly in place.[353] Pfeifer argues that, from its earliest days, "vigilante justice, some of it quite organized and some quite spontaneous, became a seemingly ubiquitous feature of Gold Rush society," and that even after the full establishment and implementation of sophisticated legal systems, American settlers repeatedly asserted and demonstrated their self-proclaimed right

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[349] According to the Tuskegee Institute, at least 3,445 African Americans were lynched in the United States between 1882 and 1968. For more information see, Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs," 15 and *Without Sanctuary: Lynching Photography in America* (Santa Fe: Twin Palms, 2000).

[350] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West*, 13.

[351] Ibid., 3. Gonzales-Day describes in detail the slippages of the term "Mexican" being – like "Spaniard" – employed to refer to almost anyone of Spanish-speaking decent and equally invoked in reference to race, ethnicity or class (31-34).

[352] Indeed, the notion that America had a divinely ordained "manifest destiny" to expand across the continent, claiming, taming and industrializing the land, served as the ultimate, if illogical, justification for the attempted eradication of Indigenous peoples and the acquisition of their land and resources.

[353] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West,* 38-39; Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice,* 46.

to take justice into their own hands.[354] He argues, “Invoking elastic notions of popular sovereignty and republicanism,” white Americans on the frontier, “imposed racial and class codes and fashioned practices of repressive violence that would dominate the societies and cultures of the American South, West and Midwest into the twentieth century.”[355] On the Western and Midwestern frontiers, in particular, collective racialized violence, “stemmed from white Americans’ efforts to achieve a racial and cultural conquest of Native Americans and Hispanics that consciously supplanted recently established American criminal justice institutions as inadequate instruments for racial mastery.”[356] Following the initial period of settlement and warfare, vigilante violence against Indigenous peoples represented settler anxieties over anticipated retribution and was additionally justified according to dominant “agrarian republican ideology that asserted that Natives squandered abundant natural resources and hindered virtuous settlers from putting the land to productive, individual use.”[357] As such, Indigenous offenses, uprisings or resistance took on a larger meaning as a threat to American Manifest Destiny or “violations of social order by members of a purportedly nonproductive class against pioneer producers seeking to extend the benefits of American civilization and liberty.”[358] Extending from the initial period of colonial invasion and attempted genocide, Pfeifer argues, “white Americans alternated extralegal hangings of individual Natives with more widespread lethal collective violence that targeted entire Native communities.”[359]

What is more, as Gonzales-Day asserts, “Unlike the lynchings of African Americans in the South, these often brutal killings have been romanticized in popular and historical texts, comics, television, Westerns, and motion pictures.”[360] The near-mythic image of the gun-slinging cowboy claiming space and moralizing the West through sheer brute force has, in fact, become a foundational fantasy or origin story for the birth of the American nation, overwriting and glorifying the violent usurpation of Indigenous land. Although a very different type of image from the rest of the series, *der Wild West Show* (2006) [Figure 2.8] arguably best encapsulates the romanticism of frontier justice as well as the significance of photography to the lynching spectacle and its role in transforming atrocity into entertainment. The undated source image for

[354] Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice,* 64.
[355] Ibid., 2.
[356] Ibid., 46.
[357] Ibid., 48.
[358] Ibid., 48.
[359] Ibid., 48.
[360] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West,* 39.

the work was, in this case, a souvenir postcard, not from an actual lynching, but the restaging of one in a Wild West Show. Captioned in German, and therefore assumedly intended for an international audience, the image betrays the reach of popular fantasies of vigilantism and cowboy culture in the "untamed West."[361] *der Wild West Show* is, I would argue, a key image in Gonzales-Day's series, as it addresses both the popularity of the lynching spectacle and one of the clearest reasons that the history of lynching in the West has remained so under-acknowledged: the mythology and misrepresentation of frontier violence as justice.

Of course, some important distinctions do need to be made between the histories of lynching in America's western and southern states, as there was an undeniable specificity to the ritualized torture and savagery that targeted the black (primarily male) body in the Jim Crow South. Many scholars have shown that the grotesque spectacle of lynching was enacted as an unabashed assertion of a white supremacist society's power, privilege and authority over the black population following the end of slavery.[362] As Amy Louise Wood asserts, anxieties about racial mixing – in particular, interracial reproduction – became integral to both the spectacle of lynching and its justification.[363] Lynching was most commonly justified as retribution for a black man's alleged rape of a white woman, even when, in most cases, no such crime was committed or reported.[364] Mythologized in this way, lynching came to be understood not as a crime, but as a responsibility. Or, as Wood describes it, "a patriarchal duty through which white men restored their masculine dominance."[365] Indeed, she argues that, "the specter of violated white women lay at the center of prolynching rhetoric and instigated the most horrific lynching tortures and spectacles."[366] These rhetorical justifications functioned as diversions from the anger and anxiety

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[361] Touring variety shows such as Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show were immensely popular throughout the nineteenth century, encompassing skits and theatrical re-enactments of battles between Cowboys and Indians, with the former always winning. The shows were thus both a form of entertainment and an attempt to re-assure settler society of their safety and justification in occupying Indigenous land. For more information see: Rayna Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee: Playing Indian in America and Europe," *Folklore* 99.1 (1998): 30-55 and Louis, S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Shows* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2005).

[362] See, for example, Dora Apel, "Lynching Photographs and the Politics of Public Shaming," *Lynching Photographs* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press), 43; and Amy Louise Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North California Press, 2009):13; Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1912* (New York: Pantheon, 1998).

[363] Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle, 13.*

[364] Pfeifer argues that the lynching of Indigenous people was commonly justified by accusations that the victim had murdered a white person. Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justuce,* 48.

[365] Ibid., 7.

[366] Ibid. For more information on the centrality of gender and sexuality to America's history of lynching, see Dora Apel, "Lynching Photographs" and *Imagery of Lynching: Black Men, White Women, and the Mob* (New Brunswick,

of a white society confronted with the increasing social or economic success of previously enslaved African Americans; Shawn Michelle Smith describes lynching as "a form of racist terrorism and racialized economic warfare, a means of consolidating white supremacist nationalism, and a way of reinforcing segregation."[367]

While it is certainly important to distinguish the specificity of lynching in the South, Pfeifer argues that, unsurprisingly, "the victims of racially motivated lynching were as diverse as the targets of American racial prejudice," and acknowledgment of lynching's varied history is revelatory of the legacy and enduring effects of settler colonial racism and violence across the nation.[368] Indeed, the endemic racism that incited and allowed for the occurrence of these atrocities has arguably also contributed to their lack of subsequent attention or adequate acknowledgment. The time period confronted in Gonzales-Day's series, wherein the practice of lynching was inconceivably common across the nation, is but a single stage in a continuing crisis that began with the colonial encounter and has continued to effect the Indigenous, indentured and immigrant populations of North America ever since.

The spectacle of lynching became more elaborate and sensationalized over time: in the South, transformed into an ecstatic carnival of ritualized violence directed toward the degradation and destruction of the black body; and, across the nation, exacerbated by photography's production and prolongation of the spectacle. Indeed, spectacle lynchings – sometimes advertised ahead of time and attended by thousands of people – became highly popular, even commercial, events from which spectators would leave with both pilfered and purchased souvenirs, including scraps of the victim's torn and bloodied clothing, bone fragments, teeth, hair and, of course, photographs.[369] Primarily taken by professionals – and in later years, by Kodak-carrying participants or witnesses – lynching photographs and postcards circulated throughout the nation and expanded the reach of the lynch mob to include temporally and geographically distant spectators. Smith asserts, "[l]ynching photographs documented the consolidation of a white supremacist mob as they also performed it. When they circulated, they effectively increased the size of the mob and spread its reign of terror to a wider network."[370]

New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2004); Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs"; Hale, *Making Whiteness.*

[367] Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs," 15.

[368] Pfeifer, *The Roots of Rough Justice,* 2.

[369] For more information, see: *Without Sanctuary*, 14; Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs"; 25; Apel, *Imagery of Lynching,* 20-25; Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West;* Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle.*

[370] Smith, "The Evidence of Lynching Photographs," 24.

Lynching Photography

As Gonzales-Day's *Erased Lynching* series makes evident, by the late nineteenth century, photography had already become a significant, even constitutional, part of the lynching spectacle in both the American West and South. As photography expanded the event's audience, an added element of performance was incorporated into the sadism of the spectacle, the action often interrupted for the seizing of photo opportunities.[371] This pausing of the performance is evident in the images themselves, which rarely capture the chaos that would have characterized these brutal events and most often picture a calm and unemotional crowd posing with the burnt and bloodied remains of victims. While this is typically attributed to the technical limitations of the time, Wood argues that stasis was actually a strategic convention of lynching photography used to rationalize the actions of the mob and legitimate the lynching itself.[372] Despite a few notable exceptions, most lynching photographs depict the aftermath of the event, the perpetrators posing with their victims as if they are hunting trophies. The shared conventions of lynching and hunting photographs has, in fact, been firmly established and Wood suggests that "lynchings themselves often reenacted the hunt-and-kill ritual" and "the trophy snapshot of the hunter with his 'prey' memorialized the conquest."[373] Grounding any conflation between the two practices is again the assertion of masculinity. In a culture that celebrated hunting as "the marker and privilege of white manhood," Wood argues that the equation between racialized lynch victims and captured prey, "also served to reaffirm the heroic masculinity of the lynchers."[374] The upholding of this narrative depended upon the elimination of active violence and mayhem from the photographic record. As Wood suggests, "keeping the actual violence outside of the frame, the mob's posing for the camera… became instrumental in creating and perpetuating images of orderly respectable mobs."[375] Similarly, Tania Nicole Jabour argues that, capitalizing on

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[371] Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle,* 85.
[372] Ibid., 86.
[373] Ibid., 97. Evoking the conceptual and linguistic parallels between the camera and the gun, Wood notes the origin of "snapshot" as a British hunting term.
[374] Ibid., 98.
[375] Ibid., 86. Wood argues that the Victorian perception of photographs extended beyond faith in the images' objectivity or indexicality, encompassing a moralistic belief that photographs could disclose deeper truths lurking beneath the images' surfaces. She writes, in reference to the lynching of black men in the American South: "In this context, images of confident, restrained white men beside bodies of debased black men could validate the racist convictions of the white southerners who gazed on them not only because viewers assumed the visual accuracy of the surface images but because they believed that photographs made manifest interior truths about the essence of racial character" (85).

photography's "performative effect," documentation of the event served as its justification: "the construct of the lynching photograph – that of the documentation of the execution of a 'criminal' offered 'proof' that the hanging body in the image was indeed that of a criminal."[376]

Coinciding with a turn-of-the-century craze for picture postcards in America – the popular social medium of its time – photographs taken at lynchings were commonly produced as postcards either in photographic studios or eventually, in some cases, onsite with the aid of portable printing equipment.[377] The lynching photographer therefore occupies a particularly contentious position in the history, not only participating in, but also profiting from the spectacle. The manufacture and dissemination of lynching photographs and postcards is a foundational example of photography's long and ethically dubious history of documenting atrocity and human suffering. An ongoing tradition that has contributed to the medium's ambiguous ethics and which is implicated in assertions of photography's current state of crisis.

As I have argued, *Erased Lynching* is fundamentally a series about photography – about the contentious role of the medium and its more unscrupulous users, imaging and aestheticizing violence and atrocity. Indeed, as Gonzales-Day suggests, his mediation of politically or emotionally charged historical images redirects attention away from the already exploited suffering of the victims, and forces the viewer to become acutely aware of "the mechanisms of lynching and lynching photography."[378] While this is obviously apparent in the photographs that include crowds of spectators, I would argue, it is also evident in the more cryptic images, devoid of any peopled presence. As a final and concluding example, *Franklin Avenue (1920)* (2005) [Figure 2.9], might best encapsulate the argument, depicting nothing more than a rather unremarkable oak tree standing alone in a darkened cemetery in Santa Rosa, California, its location evidenced by a single tombstone faintly visible in the background. The source image for *Franklin Avenue*, a postcard dated 1920, was produced a number of years before the commercial availability of flashbulbs and Gonzales-Day contends that the light in the image must have come from either the use of magnesium flash powder or the glow of car headlights used to aid the actions of the lynch mob.[379]

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[376] Tania Nicole Jabour, "The Absence Becomes the Presence: Contextualizing the 'Compton Cookout' in Histories of Racial Violence, *Pros** 1 (Spring 2011), 28.
[377] Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle,* 107, 103.
[378] Gonzales-Day, "Artist Statement."
[379] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West,* 100-101.

The original image, included in Gonzales-Day's 2006 book, is startling in both its photographic clarity and its ghastly depiction of three hanged men suspended from an intricate architecture of rope assembled around the tree's branches. Bodies both twisted and strangely serene, each bound differently and in various stages of undress are rendered as clearly as if the image was taken in the middle of the afternoon. However, as the artist describes, "unlike a daylight image, it also produces a highly detailed record of the moss and lichen that clung to the trees [sic] branches."[380] It is these details, in fact, that become the focus of the artist's doctored image: *Franklin Avenue (1920)* is, at its core, an image of light and darkness and an old oak tree that became the unwitting witness to an all-but-forgotten history of violence and brutality. The contrast between the gruesome spectacle in the original image and the banal portrait of the tree in *Franklin Avenue* is uncanny, but in the series' accompanying book, Gonzales-Day reveals a series of erasures preceding his own intervention: the omission of the crowd, rumored to have included law enforcement officers; the likely pre-meditation of the event that would have allowed the photographer time to arrive and set up equipment at what was officially recorded as a fast and frenzied (read: unstoppable) event; and the historical obscurity of California's history of lynching that implies the enactment of "frontier justice" in a lawless West, despite the event's occurrence at a time when state judicial systems were firmly in place.[381]

Un-nuanced, the artist's intervention in the images could be interpreted as a form of repression itself: the removal of evidence from the image, the denial of historical atrocity. However, this act of photographic alteration also functions to shift the focus away from the victim, turning instead toward the perpetrators, participants and passive bystanders pictured in the images. As a result, the crowds themselves become the spectacle, captured in the camera's crosshairs, focused on by the imagined photographer in whose place the viewer now stands. Without the victims' (and, in some cases, the crowds') inclusion in Gonzales-Day's work, all that really remains for contemporary viewers is the camera's framing of the space. Indeed, spectatorship is unsettled in these images by the artist's archival intervention, disrupting or denying the viewer's capacity to see the spectacle. Spectators of *Erased Lynching* are implicated in the images with which they are confronted, enlisted to embody the camera's gaze and occupy the position of the photographer. As a result, viewers are made acutely aware of photography's

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[380] Gonzales-Day, *Lynching in the West,* 101.

[381] Ibid., 100-105. The victims, George Boyd, Terrance Fits, and Charles Valento*,* were, like the previous cases discussed, already being held in jail, accused of shooting and killing three police officers, when apprehended by the lynch mob.

presence at the scene and its role in the production and perpetuation of the spectacle, but are equipped with so little information as to what they are expected to see. I would argue that the visual frustration built into the *Erased Lynching* images is central to the conceptual and political potential of the series and its spectatorship. It is precisely the lack of visual information in, and the eerie quality of, the images, coupled with the series' title, that implores spectators to undertake more durational forms of engagement. In order to work through the enigma of the images, viewers are implored to watch closely, imagine what has been excised and attend to the ways that history haunts the photographs.

Using digital technologies to alter historical photographs, the *Erased Lynching* images collapse time in a conceptually commemorative gesture. The series interrogates the very structures of frontier racism that allowed the original crimes to be committed, compelling viewers to consider how they still resonate in contemporary society. Occupying the position of the photographer and made complicit in the spectacle, viewers are thus entreated to contemplate the political employment and ethical ambiguity of the medium, both historically and in the current moment.

Whereas photographic manipulation typically indicates a form of deception having taken place, it has been remarked that in Gonzales-Day's work, the removal of "evidence" from the photographs actually reveals an often-overlooked truth about the role of photography in the structuring and spectacle of violence and atrocity.[382] Photography itself becomes the subject of the work, exposed as atrocity's accomplice. Indeed, the artist's practice of tactical removal functions to shift the focus of exploitative archival images from victimhood to perpetration, transforming the historical photographs into contemporary objects and enlisting spectators to reflect on the legacy or endurance of oppressive regimes and their own positions within them. Being imaginatively placed in the position of the photographer implies an upsetting or unsettling of the typical viewing experience and necessitates a degree of self-reflexivity on the part of the spectator. Spectators are thus asked to confront both the images, as they appear, the various absences within them and the phantom presence of the once visible victims' bodies. It is the implication that something is missing in the awkward or empty frames that arguably enlists spectators to increase their attention. What is more, the strategic omissions in the images reflect

[382] See, for example, Hill, "The Camera and the 'Physiognomic Auto-da-fe" and Elize Mazadiego, "Conversation," *Pros**, 15.

and refer to the parallel exclusion of these historical events from national memory and their ethically ambiguous reconfiguration in pop culture portrayals of the Wild West.

Meryl McMaster: *Ancestral*

Employing a practice of addition, rather than erasure, Meryl McMaster, of Cree and Scottish descent, also undertook a process of archival intervention for her 2008-2010 series *Ancestral* [Figures 2.10, 2.12, 2.14, 2.6 & 2.17], performatively re-animating ethnographic images of Indigenous peoples to spectral effect. The series consists of composite portraits and self-portraits that layer historical and contemporary photographs of Indigenous people and enlist spectators to re-see in familiar ethnographic images, not traces of the disappeared, but assertions of Indigenous presence and perseverance. As such, *Ancestral*, like *Erased Lynching,* works to shift attention away from victimhood, in this case, towards resilience, resurgence or what Gerald Vizenor calls "survivance."[383]

For the production of the series, McMaster applied theatrical white makeup to her and her father's faces, necks and shoulders and then digitally projected ethnographic photographs taken by Edward Curtis and William Soule, as well as a handful of paintings by George Catlin (and, later, images of animals found online), onto their whitened skin.[384] Photographing their busts with the projections superimposed overtop, the resulting images appear as ghostly palimpsests in which the features of past and present models merge and interact with one another. For the most part, the contemporary sitters act as little more than canvasses or screens for the projected portraits, but as curator Cheyanne Turions has remarked, "something else happens around the eyes – the gaze of the living person penetrates through, vivifying the ghost image that rests atop the model's body."[385] The historical images are almost like paper masks or veils, draped over the living sitters, animated and enlivened by their eyes, as if brought back to life or transported through time. They are portraits of spectral presence, and spectres – according to Derrida – are

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[383] Combining "resistance" and "survival," Vizenor coined the term to imply, "more than survival, more than endurance or mere response; the stories of survivance are active presence." *Fugitive Poses: Native American Scenes of Absence and Presence* (Lincoln, NE and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 15.
[384] The first stage of the series, produced in 2008, consisted of 12 photographs of the artist herself, superimposed with projections of ethnographic portraits of Indigenous women. In 2009, McMaster added four new images of her father, Gerald McMaster, layered with projections of Catlin's paintings. Finally, in 2010, McMaster made another six images, using her father as a model, and projection images of animals found online. My discussion of the series focuses on the first two collections of images.
[385] Cheyanne Turions, "Close to Frostbite," *Meryl McMaster: Confluence* (Ottawa: Carlton University Press, 2016), 10.

revenants returned to make demands. They "disjoin the living present," seeking historical accountability and justice.[386] Berger argues, "Like the return of trauma, the ghost is propelled from one time to another; its presence is a sign of some traumatic disorder in the past… and is therefore a sign also that the present still suffers from that traumatic disorder."[387] The ghostly quality of *Ancestral* can, therefore, be understood as a plea to the spectator to see beyond the ethnographic clichés and colonial ideology guiding the original photographs' production. Indeed, as Turions argues, McMaster's appropriation of historical images and her layering of them with her own and her father's likenesses, provides a challenge to the mythology of Indigenous disappearance and represents, rather, "a symbolic manifestation of familial inheritance and cultural survival, connecting past to present."[388] Turions describes McMaster's aesthetic action as an expression of "self-articulation, a reparative practice that enlarges the historical narratives she has received through her experimentation with the speculative limits of identity."[389] And, indeed, identity is rendered uncanny in the *Ancestral* images, both assertive and in flux. Composites of times, ages, nations and individuals, the resulting portraits are of people who seem to exist outside of age or time.

Ancestral 1 [Figure 2.10], for example, depicts Curtis's *Hleastunuh—Skokomish Woman* (c. 1910) [Figure 2.11] superimposed onto McMaster's head and shoulders, the artist's youth overtaken by the creases and lines of the older woman's skin and the wisps of white hair framing her face. The artist's eyes, however, fit perfectly into the Skokomish woman's face, enhancing the solemnity of her expression and imbuing the portrait with a sense of emotional and psychological depth that, while present in the persons photographed by the likes of Curtis and his contemporaries, is often overlooked, as the images are so entrenched in primitivizing stereotypes. The original sepia-toned image from Curtis's Ninth Portfolio, transformed into a projection, cools to a spectrum of icy blues, silver and white, with a ghostly glow that stands out against the black background. The effect of McMaster's layering technique is a composite and constructed portrait of an unreal individual who bears little resemblance to either McMaster or the Skokomish Woman. Rather, *Ancestral 1* depicts a new being, born of the artist's spectral play with the coming together of two generations of photographic subjects. It is as if McMaster has

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[386] Derrida, *Spectres of Marx*, xviii-xix.
[387] Berger, *After the End: Representations of Post-Apocalypse* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 79.
[388] Turions, "Close to Frostbite," 11.
[389] Ibid.

offered herself as a vehicle for the Skokomish woman to enter and possess, a revenant from the past, brought into the present through the refraction of light and shadow and the projection of the past onto the present.

Spectral Unsettlement

The political and philosophical implications of haunting or spectral return as linked to historical accountability and justice have been analyzed in storytelling of all forms. Film critic Bliss Cua Lim, for example, describes the presence of ghosts or the signs of haunting in fantasy and horror films as "traces of untranslatable temporal otherness" or "*immiscible times* – multiple times that never quite dissolve into the code of modern time consciousness, discrete temporalities incapable of attaining homogeneity with or full incorporation into a uniform chronological present."[390] Spectres, according to Frederic Jameson, are "what makes the present waver."[391] Following Derrida, he explains: "Spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist or that the past (and maybe even the future they offer as prophesy) is still very much alive and at work, within the living present: all it says, if it can be thought to speak, is that *the living present is scarcely as self-sufficient as it claims to be.*"[392] As such, spectres are references to the unfinished, unaccounted for or inconceivable past – those events and atrocities that continue to reverberate in the present and future, often without due acknowledgment. What haunts settler colonial nations like Canada and the United States is the apocalyptic events of their origins: the violent occupation and seizure of Indigenous territories; the attempted genocide and death or cultural dissolution of Indigenous peoples. The present inherits the ghosts of the past and with that inheritance, according to Derrida, comes the burden of accountability. Indeed, for Derrida, justice is tantamount to accepting responsibility for, and shared existence with ghosts: "No justice," he argues, "seems possible or thinkable and *just* that does not recognize in its principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born."[393]

As Lim argues, the haunting presence, or, "spectral time," in Derrida's words, "calls us to a radicalized conception of historical justice," and "speaks of the present's failure to fulfill the

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[390] Bliss Cua Lim, *Translating Time: Cinema, the Fantastic, and Temporal Critique* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2009): 12. Emphasis in original.
[391] Frederic Jameson, "Marx's Purloined Letter," *New Left Review* 209 (Winter 1995): 38.
[392] Ibid. Emphasis in original.
[393] Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of Debt, the Work of Morning, and the New International* (New York: Routledge, 1994), xix.

expectations of the past."[394] But, in an important sense, implied in Derrida's assertion of accountability to both the dead and the unborn, spectres are not only remnants of the past. As Nick Peim writes, "The domain of the spectral belongs to what haunts and returns, something from the past as yet unfulfilled or unfinished. At the same time, the returning spectre or 'revenant' points toward the future."[395] Indeed, like his much discussed conception of the archive – the preeminent site of the past's preservation – spectres, for Derrida, are fundamentally anticipatory, calling into question the coming of the future and anticipating the future's response to the past. However unreliable a source, the archive is, for Derrida, a guard against forgetfulness: "It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow."[396] It is, no wonder, therefore, that Derrida insists, "the structure of the archive is *spectral*."[397]

This conception of a spectral archive is further reflected in Baer's notion of photography's disordered temporality, or the "split time" of photographs, ungoverned by a photographer's intentions. Indeed, Baer argues that according to the disjointed temporality of photographs, wherein the figures being pictured – particularly under conditions of atrocity or distress – "may be looking into [the] lens, but they are also seeing past this apocalyptic end… into a future from which they solicit a response."[398] Indeed, he argues that, like spectres, a photograph is an unruly object that "carries its referent into the uncharted future."[399] Accordingly, contemporary spectators of historical photographs like those appropriated and re-purposed by McMaster have a responsibility to acknowledge and account for the absent presence of the people photographed. This idea of spectral justice and intergenerational responsibility in spectatorship is, in fact, paralleled in Azoulay's conception of the civil contract at the core of the ongoing photographic encounter and the responsibility contemporary spectators bear to past photographic subjects. In order to engage in ethical and durational spectatorship of this kind, for Baer, it is necessary that "responsibility extends to the task of not readily assuming – even if negatively – the photographer's perspective."[400]

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[394] Lim, 179. Derrida quoted in *Spectres of Marx,* xx.
[395] Nick Peim, "Spectral Bodies: Derrida and the Philosophy of the Photograph as Historical Document," *Journal of Philosophy Education* 39.1 (2005): 74.
[396] Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 36.
[397] Ibid., 84.
[398] Baer, *Spectral Evidence,* 23.
[399] Ibid.
[400] Ibid., 24.

Indeed, distinct from Gonzales-Day's evocative alignment of historical and contemporary spectators in *Erased Lynching*, when encountering the re-animated ethnographic images, projected onto the artist and her father's bodies in McMaster's series, viewers are given the opportunity to re-see the images, not as reflective of the paternalistic ideology that sought the documentation of a vanishing race, but as expressions of resilience, persistence and presence. As Ellyn Walker argues, McMaster's layering technique works to produce "an *ancestry* of Indigenous pictorial resistance."[401]

Projecting Strength, Photographing Resurgence

Ancestral 9 [Figure 2.12] pictures McMaster effectively wearing the projection of Curtis's portrait, *Wishham Girl* (c. 1910) [Figure 2.13]. Imbued with the same ghostliness of the others, there is again a sense of discordant liveliness in the eyes. There's an eerie seamlessness to the merging of McMaster and the Wishham girl that probably results from the sitters – however separated by time – being closer to one another in age than in others of the *Ancestral* portraits. McMaster mimics the Wishham girl's pose, facing the camera head-on, with her head angled upwards, ever so slightly, so that spectators get the impression that she is looking down her nose at them. The bone pierced through the Wishham girl's nose extends from McMaster's nostrils and her necklaces appear to be clasped around McMaster's throat. There is also more of McMaster evident in *Ancestral 9* than in *Ancestral 1*, for example, as the artist's braided black hair, uncoated in white like the rest of her, falls in front of her shoulders and appears to lay overtop of the Wishham girl's beaded attire. The layering effect is thus enhanced and the resulting portrait displays the combined identities of two young women sitting for the camera more than a century apart. The expression born of their coming together imparts their shared strength, defiance and pride. If this is a portrait of a ghost, it is definitely the demanding, Derridian brand of phantom.

Similarly, in *Ancestral 4* [Figure 2.14], the artist shares the space with Curtis's *Cheyenne Woman* (c. 1910) [Figure 2.15]. The composite portrait effects a fierce and powerful expression, refusing to meet the viewer's eye, looking slightly off in another direction. The averted eyes in McMaster's work represents a departure from Curtis's original picture in which the sitter looked directly at the camera. Although distinct from *Ancestral 9*'s confrontational eye contact, this

[401] Ellyn Walker, "Representing the Self through Ancestry: Meryl McMaster's Ancestral Portraits," *Reconstruction: Studies in Contemporary Culture* 15.1 (2015): 13.

portrait also implies resistance, power, and something like aggressive indifference to the spectators' presence: a resistance to, or refusal to engage with, the spectator's gaze. Again, McMaster's braids disrupt the more simplified appearance of the two-dimensional projection being layered atop the artist's three-dimensional body in *Ancestral 9*, as the projected image is invisible on the artist's uncoated black hair. The white stage makeup, worn by McMaster and her father, carries a number of connotations beyond the necessity of transforming a human face into a blank screen or canvas. Walker suggests that the makeup "highlights the ways in which whiteness has been imposed on Indigenous bodies and their cultures, and how Indigenous peoples have survived and succeeded in spite of assimilation policies, segregation… and violence."[402] There is also a sense in which the use of the makeup so associated with theatre, costuming and performance is evocative of the theatricality and staging of early ethnographic images like those now projected onto the artist's body. Turions argues that as a result of the application of makeup, McMaster's identity is doubly disguised, rendered "difficult to read twice over: covered by makeup and projected upon."[403] In this conception, the projections are almost like masks donned for performative effect and animated by the wearer. Such a reading is perhaps most evident in *Ancestral 3* [Figure 2.16], wherein the projection is angled so that it is much less seamless than in other images and only partially covers the artist's face, her whitened jawline, chin and neck, as well as her unpainted ear and visible braid, revealing the various layers, stages, tactics and techniques involved in the making of the series. Where the projection falls on her face, it is just as animated as in the other images, creating an unnerving contrast with the un-enlivened portions of the sitter's skin. Again, it is as if McMaster is deliberately making evident the construction of the photographic encounter – the fact of a photographer's *making*, rather than *taking* of a picture.

While her reading of the theatricality and establishment of heritage in *Ancestral* is detailed and convincing, a crucial element of the series seems to go unnoticed in Turions and most other accounts of McMaster's series: the artist's development and claiming of lineage to an ancestry of Indigenous *women* and the power and strength that she presents when channeling them in the resulting portraits. The choice is significant, given the gendered violence of settler colonial policies, the enforcement of patriarchal systems as a replacement for often-matrilineal

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402 Walker, "Representing the Self through Ancestry," 5.
403 Turions, "Close to Frostbite," 10. Turions actually argued that a third tactic of obscuring the sitter's identity is evident in the anonymous naming convention throughout the series, as each piece is identified only by a number.

Indigenous governance and self-determination, and the devastating impacts of this legislative legacy on Indigenous peoples – and particularly women and girls – today. As Bonita Lawrence writes, “colonization has always been a gendered process,” for centuries having “specifically attacked the social status of Native women as a way of undermining the power of Native societies in general.”[404] Lawrence, among others has pointed to the critical role women play in cultural reproduction and transmission, literally giving birth to each new generation and very often serving as the primary purveyors of familial history and ancestral knowledge.[405] As such, it is no wonder that women became the targets of legislative control and statistical elimination; their power, value and independence representing significant obstacles for the imposition of European patriarchal governance and, by extension, territorial control.[406] In Canada, with Indigenous identity defined and controlled by the Federal Government according to the dictates of the 1876 Indian Act, the regulation of Indigenous “status” has been fundamentally gendered with status defined solely on the basis of patrilineal descent, undermining traditional matriarchal kinship patterns and the autonomy of Indigenous women.[407] Additionally, the Indian Act has always included a number of clauses according to which women could lose their legal status and be removed from their communities. Until the passing of Bill C-31, An Act to Amend the Indian Act, in 1985, section 12(1)(b) of the Indian Act specifically stated that if an Indigenous woman married a non-status man (whether Indigenous or not), she and all her descendants would be stripped of their status and the status of any child born out of wedlock could be “protested” by an Indian agent.[408] The effect of such policies, geared toward the eventual elimination of Indigenous presence and territorial claims, meant that instead of physical extermination, as Patricia Limerick

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[404] Lawrence, “Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity in Canada and the United States: An Overview,” *Hypatia* 18.2 (Spring 2003): 5.

[405] See also, Beverley Jacobs and Andrea J. Williams, “Legacy of Residential Schools: Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women,” *From Truth to Reconciliation: Transforming the Legacy of Residential Schools*. Eds. Marlene Brant Castellano, Linda Archibald, and Mike DeGagné (Ottawa: Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 2008): 119-142.

[406] My use of the term “statistical elimination” is a deliberate reference to Patrick Wolfe’s assertion that settler colonialism is governed by a logic of elimination, discussed at length in the first two chapters of this dissertation, as well as Juaneno/Jaqi scholar M. Annette Jaimes’ description of America’s system of calculating blood quantum as a process of “statistical extermination.” Jaimes, “Federal Indian identification Policy: a usurpation of Indigenous Sovereignty in North America,” *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance* (Boston: South End Press, 1992): 137.

[407] Jacobs and Williams, “Legacy of Residential Schools,” 122.

[408] See Lawrence, “Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity,” 23 and Jacobs and Williams, “Legacy of Residential Schools,” 122-124. Of course, the bestowing or removal of “status” is a fundamental disregard for, and overwriting of, the sovereign rights and self-determination of Indigenous nations. Dispossessed of status, in Canada, Indigenous people have no right to access housing or live on a reserve and lose all claims to the land. Most perplexing, however, according to the logic of the Indian Act, non-status – even non-Indigenous – women who married status men would gain status and legally become “Indians.”

argues, Indigenous peoples could effectively be "defined out of existence."[409] Referring to the repercussions of sexist legislation in the Indian Act, Lawrence writes: "Taking into account that for every woman who lost status and had to leave her community, all of her descendants also lost status and for the most part were permanently alienated from Native culture, the scale of cultural genocide caused by gender discrimination becomes massive."[410]

The gendered regulation of Indigenous identity has, in effect, threatened and damaged the cultural continuity and viability of Indigenous communities, specifically through the control and disavowal of ancestral ties and matrilineal inheritance. As Beverly Jacobs and Andrea J. Williams argue, in addition to erosions of familial systems as a result of the Residential School System, "Geographical dislocation and loss of connection to community in the past, continuing in the present, have been especially devastating as generations of women were forced from their home communities due to out-marriage."[411] As organizers of the Native Women's Association of Canada's (NWAC) *Sisters in Spirit* initiative, investigating the approximately 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada, Jacobs and Williams draw direct links between gender discrimination in the Indian Act, the displacement of Indigenous women from their communities and "a series of negative outcomes, including overexposure to violence and abuse, poverty, inadequate housing, homelessness, addictions and poor health."[412]

McMaster's symbolic production of an ancestry of strong Indigenous women in her composite portraits signals a defiance of the settler colonial regulation of identity and nationhood, projecting rather, an assertion of Indigenous female presence and empowerment. Her portraits – produced at a time when the Canadian Federal Government was resisting calls for a national inquiry into the staggering numbers of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across the country – depict alternative representations of a demographic that has come to be so deeply linked to systems of violence and victimization. Rather, *Ancestral* represents the

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[409] Patricia Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987): 338.

[410] Lawrence, "Gender, Race, and the Regulation of Native Identity," 9. With the passing of Bill C-31 in 1985, women who had lost their status as a result of "marrying out" were allowed to apply to have it reinstated for themselves and their children. This did not mean, however, that the reinstated women and children could move back to their reserves, as this was left up to the discretion of individual First Nations – in many cases, having internalized colonial logic of blood quantum and belonging – who suddenly found themselves in the position of having their populations significantly increased. What is more, the grandchildren of women who had their status reinstated were not eligible for status, thus simply delaying the statistical reduction of the Indigenous population by one generation. This was not changed until Bill C-3, the Act to promote gender equality in Indian Registration, passed in 2010.

[411] Jacobs and Williams, "Legacy of Residential Schools," 125.

[412] Ibid., 134. According to a 2014 RCMP report, 1,017 Indigenous women and girls have been murdered and 167 have gone missing between 1980 and 2012. Quoted in TRC, *Final Report*, 227.

resilience of Indigenous women and the continued transmission of strength and self-determination from one generation to the next.

Indeed, more than resilience or perseverance, the ancestral legacy claimed and performed by McMaster in these images arguably demonstrates resurgence, as theorized by Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamosake Simpson in *Dancing on our Turtle's Back.* Following Taiaiake Alfred's assertion that Indigenous futurity is dependent upon the reclamation and resurgence of culture-specific philosophies and practices, Simpson roots her understanding of resurgence in Anishinaabe thought.[413] Instead of reaction or resistance to colonial oppression, or state-sanctioned reconciliation, Simpson emphasizes "cultural generation and political resurgence" as the path forward for Indigenous peoples.[414] While she argues that such notions necessarily vary in different cultures and contexts, she insists that to be politically viable and mobilizing, "the process of resurgence must be Indigenous at its core."[415] Contextualizing her own perception of resurgence according to Anishinaabe epistemology, Simpson refers repeatedly to the integral role of women in the transmission of cultural knowledge and theory – a matrilineal intellectual legacy predating and surviving colonization. While respectfully refusing to impart sacred teachings outside of ceremonial contexts, Simpson provides a number of examples in which women are centered in Nishnaabeg cosmology and philosophy, drawing links between creation stories and the position of women as the carriers and receivers both of life and of cultural information. Citing and learning from the pedagogy of Nishnaabeg elder, Edna Manitowabi, Simpson highlights the roles of both elders, as keepers of knowledge, and young women – their apprentices – as "mother[s] to generations yet to be born."[416] As Manitowabi explains, "as a Grandmother, a teacher and a Great Grandmother… I must remember these teachings, wear them, and pass them on to the younger generation of women who are now coming into that power time as a new woman spirit."[417] Patriarchal colonial structures have, in many ways, eroded the power traditionally held by Indigenous women within their communities and Simpson highlights the importance of inter-generational connection and pedagogy as necessary to reassert female (and thus community) empowerment in spite of systemic violence and devaluation.

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[413] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back* (Winnipeg: ARP Books, 2011): 16-20. See also, Taiaiake Alfred, *Wasáse: Indigenous Pathways of Action and Freedom* (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2005).
[414] Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back*, 22.
[415] Ibid., 20.
[416] Edna Manitowabi, quoted in Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back,* 37.
[417] Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back,* 36.

Indeed, she displays a certain level of urgency and responsibility in her scholarship, identifying the ways previous generations attempted to resist the incursions of settler colonialism, by preserving and passing on the stories and systems of knowledge disallowed under imposed colonial regimes. Describing the importance of these teachings and the responsibility of current and future generations to honour them with action, she writes, "the stories explain the resistance of my Ancestors and the seeds of resurgence they so carefully saved and planted."[418] The remobilization of such teachings thus entails the embodied ancestral legacy and intellectual labour of women to perform resurgence as resistance. As Cree filmmaker, Georgina Lightning argues, Indigenous women and girls need to reclaim their centrality in cultural continuation, stating, "Next to Creator, we give life."[419]

McMaster's *Ancestral* series articulates, in visual form, the lineage and legacy that fuels resurgence as embodied in the kinship systems and intergenerational knowledge shared by Indigenous women. Utilizing her own body and face as the vehicle to transport the images of ancestors from past to present, the artist asserts the importance of these relationships that transcend time and place. Refuting patriarchal colonial logic and the damaging portrayal of Indigenous women as non-maternal, degenerate and disposable, McMaster implies indebtedness to her female ancestors. Indeed, rallying her ancestors' spectral presence and embracing their retained or renewed existence within and alongside herself, the artists' composite portraits display a sense of pride in community belonging and cultural continuity. Through her visual play with history and haunting, McMaster offers her ancestors the opportunity to take up space and retain a place in the unfolding of time, kept alive and carried forward by subsequent generations of Indigenous women and girls. By unsettling otherwise familiar images and opening the archive to further interpretation and interaction, McMaster's portraits are aesthetically symbolic of resurgence as attention to ancestry and adherence to traditional structures of interaction, inheritance and education.

A second stage of *Ancestral* involves the projection not of ethnographic photographs and not of images of women, but of earlier paintings made of Indigenous men by the Canadian artist George Catlin, according to a similar ideology of salvage and preservation during the mid-nineteenth century. For these four portraits, McMaster projected Catlin's vibrantly coloured

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[418] Simpson, *Dancing on our Turtle's Back,* 18.
[419] Quoted in Keavy Martin, "'This is the Beginning of a Major Healing Movement': A Conversation with Georgina Lightning," *Arts of Engagement: Taking Aesthetic Action In and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016): 230.

paintings onto the whitened face and torso of her father, the artist and curator Gerald McMaster.[420] For this collection of images, the idea of ancestry is thus personalized for the artist, but also, as Walker suggests, "represents an important intergenerational practice of collaboration amongst Indigenous artists today."[421] In the case of these works, the teachings transferred to the artist by her father, both as a parent and scholar, are thus implicated in the resulting images. Gerald McMaster becomes both the receptacle for this history of ethnographic painting and a potent symbol of resistance to the historically assumed impossibility of Indigenous perseverance guiding the production of such works. The two-dimensionality and superficiality of Catlin's painted subjects are replaced by the embodied performance of the contemporary sitter. Two generations of a single family have come together in the making of these images, attesting to the reality and strength of continued cultural renewal and resurgence.

The projected effect of Catlin's colourful paintings is vastly different than the photographs used in the earlier, more monochromatic images, and ultimately appear almost like paintings that have come to life. The insinuation of spectrality or anthropomorphic animation of still images therefore remains evident. *Ancestral 13* [Figure 2.17]*,* for example, pictures the artist's father superimposed with Catlin's 1832 painting *Stu-mick-o-súck (Buffalo Bull's Back Fat), Head Chief, Blood Tribe*. Because of his whitened skin and the full-colour projection, it is difficult to tell where the painting ends and the photograph begins. Instead, it is almost as if McMaster's father has *himself* been painted over; the only evidence of the projection's layering, visible in the small instances where the features of the photographic sitter and the painted portrait fail to line up perfectly. There is a stuttered effect at the nose and upper lip that make it look as if the photographer's hand was shaky or the sitter couldn't sit still. In these images, McMaster brings to life inanimate paintings made by a non-Indigenous ethnographic artist driven by a patronizing paradigm of salvage and preservation, assuming his paintings would be all that remained after the inevitable – and naturalized – disappearance of Indigenous peoples. By appropriating and re-animating these images, offering them living Indigenous bodies to adorn or inhabit and through which to contact or confront contemporary spectators, McMaster asserts the sovereignty and survivance of Indigenous peoples, despite centuries of colonial imposition and

[420] A member of the Order of Canada and currently Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Visual Culture and Curatorial Practice at OCAD University, McMaster has co-curated seminal exhibitions of Indigenous art, including the groundbreaking 1992 exhibition *Indigena: Contemporary Native Perspectives,* and was the first Indigenous curator to represent Canada at the Venice Biennale in 1995.
[421] Walker, "Representing the Self through Ancestry,"10.

attempted eradication. She challenges the "repressive authenticity" of ethnographic imaging and invites the ghosts of the past to re-enter the equation and make the present waver. Confronted with such images, spectators are effectively faced with spectral presence and implored to entertain the possibility that, as Jameson suggests, the present is not as stable or self-sufficient as it is assumed to be. If, as Derrida argues, justice and historical responsibility amounts to convening with ghosts and making space and time for the demands of the dead and unborn, works like *Ancestral* and *Erased Lynching*, in their insinuation of spectrality, require spectators' open, ethical and ongoing engagement.

Whereas it is the absences in Gonzales-Day's images that implore viewers to linger over the picture plane in an attempt to understand what has been removed from sight, spectators of *Ancestral* are presented with addition and augmentation, producing a similarly haunting indecipherability. McMaster's appropriation of ethnographic photographs in the making of her portraits, render the images both obtuse and uncannily familiar. To parse out the limits of each photograph in McMaster's performative portraits takes time and attention, and is effectively an exercise in watching history and ancestry unfold. The spectrality of the resulting images asks of spectators to be attuned to their multiple presences and absences, and to refuse the camera's compartmentalization of previously present peoples and events to unreachable temporal spheres.

In her notion of just or responsible spectatorship as attentiveness to the entirety of the photographic encounter, Azoulay argues, "[i]ntroducing the dimensions of time and movement into the act of watching stills is the foundation for the ethics of the spectator."[422] In fact, "still photographs," according to Azoulay, are not nearly as static or stationary as they appear but are, rather, *active*. She argues: "this moment of the photographic act, which is said to reach its end when incarnated in a final product, a print or a digital file, is in fact a new beginning that lacks any predictable end… The photo acts, thus making others act. The ways in which its action yields others' action, however, is unpredictable."[423] Beyond the closing of the camera's aperture, the ensuing life of the photograph involves encounters with any number of unknown subsequent spectators, decontextualized or *differently* contextualized display, as well as adaptation, augmentation or appropriation by artists and amateurs alike. The works of art discussed in this chapter, each incorporating or intervening in historical photographs, are demonstrative of the enduring life of archival images that continue to circulate despite altered interpretations and even

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[422] Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography*, 27.
[423] Ibid., 137.

altered appearances. In addition to the intervention of artists, a certain degree of responsibility rests with spectators, upon whom, I argue, it is incumbent to unsettle themselves and their assumptions when confronted with politically or ethically charged photographic images like those discussed in this chapter. As Azoulay asserts, "Photographs bear traces of a plurality of political relations that might be actualized by the act of watching, transforming and disseminating what is seen into claims that demand action."[424] This notion of remaining traces making demands is, indeed, reflective of Derrida's spectral justice.

Each of the works of art discussed in this chapter demand that spectators not take them at face value; each image reverberates with multiple temporalities, presences and absences. They command a certain amount of work or time spent by spectators to uncover their layered political implications. They demand of spectators a certain degree of understanding or, at least, a concerted *effort* to understand and to take responsibility both for what is visible and for what is not. Above all, they demand perceptive and cognitive effort – the contemplative labour required to affect an active shift from looking to watching – to make room for one's own implication in both the obvious and the unseen. This importance of effort and self-education is fundamental to Robinson's notion of intergenerational responsibility and his insistence upon the settler colonial public's duty to bear a greater share of the burden of knowledge, remembrance and "reconciliation." To accept or express intergenerational responsibility requires performing the necessary educative and emotional labour and refusing to contribute to the maintenance of ignorance or indifference. Re-making historical photographs into contemporary images through acts of appropriation and archival intervention, Bose, Gonzales-Day and McMaster each interrogate the ethically questionable history of photography and its employment in the service and spectacle of settler colonial violence and subjugation. As such, they disclose an ongoing crisis of contention – an impassable ethical chasm – in both the sustained state of settler colonialism and the medium of photography itself.

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[424]Azoulay, *The Civil Contract of Photography,* 25-26.

CHAPTER III
RE-STAGING THE PLAY OF HISTORY: SATIRE, MIMICRY AND MASQUERADE

Apsáalooke artist Wendy Red Star's 2006 series, *Four Seasons* [Figures 3.1-3.4], consists of four large-scale colour photographs of the artist's built dioramas, each representing a different season. Seated in the centre of each image, stoic and unsmiling as the stereotype demands, Red Star poses in an elk-tooth dress, accented with beaded accessories and an eagle feather fan. She sits on the ground, on rough grey carpet, white foam or bright green AstroTurf, surrounded by fake flowers, Styrofoam snowflakes, cardboard cutouts and plastic balloon animals; majestic painted backdrops, creased and faded from excessive use, lend each scene a laughable sense of depth. The images trade in clichés of the innate connection between Indigenous people and the natural world, while, outside of the materials that make up Red Star's clothing and accessories, little else in the images could ever be found in nature. *Spring* [Figure 3.1], for instance, depicts Red Star in a fabricated pastoral setting, with a cardboard coyote on one side and a fawn on the other; predator and prey unfazed by their unlikely proximity. Plastic flowers are scattered over the AstroTurf on which she sits, holding the camera's gaze with a slightly perturbed, otherwise inaccessible expression. Cloth butterflies perch on plastic pussy willows and a little pink bird alights on a discarded animal skull. The painted backdrop, tarnished by deep furrows and folds that catch and reflect the artificial light, pictures a faded mountain range towering over the manicured shores and calm surface of a lake or other waterway. The scene is at once absurd and familiar. It reflects both the stage sets in early photography studios and the lifestyle or habitat dioramas that remain common in natural history museums across the western world.

As European constructions, bound to the exploration, collection and display of exotic peoples, places and things, the histories of photography and dioramas are linked by their shared colonial legacy. Both have affiliations with anthropology, science, education and empire, and the paradoxical logic of preservation and annihilation, guiding colonial approaches to Indigenous peoples. In fact, Pauline Wakeham posits both photography and museum dioramas as examples of taxidermic representational structures, employed to reinforce white supremacist hierarchies of species and race and to assert colonial mastery over nature, time and territory "through the

preservation of the semblance of life in death."[425] Indeed, if the ethnographic photograph and museum diorama are historically and ideologically linked, they are but two parts of a triad, formed with the art of taxidermy: all three disciplines developed to satisfy "the artistic pursuit of imitating nature and the scientific enterprise of collecting and preserving natural history specimens."[426] However, Wakeham pushes the correlation between the three media even further, arguing: "If taxidermy denotes a material practice – the dissection, hollowing out, and restuffing of a corpse's epidermal shell – its connotative specters revive fantasies of white male supremacy in 'the sporting crucible'… intimately bound up with the colonial disciplining of both animal and aboriginal bodies."[427] Wakeham detects a "semiotic affiliation" between taxidermically preserved animals, Indigenous effigies in museum displays and the racialized subjects of ethnographic film and photography, thus positing taxidermy as a mode of representation extending beyond its literal form. Regardless of the media, she describes taxidermic representation as fundamentally proprietary, functioning to "reduce subjects to objects rendered accessible for collecting, studying and displaying."[428] The museum diorama, the taxidermied animal and the ethnographic photograph share a fixation with the manipulation and denial of time's passing, placing their subjects and stories in a space of prolonged stasis. Through the transmogrified temporal codes of taxidermic semiosis, all three media are therefore indicative of what Donna Haraway describes as attempts to "produce permanence, to arrest decay."[429] And, in the context of Indigenous peoples, representationally confined to a pre-modern ethnographic present, taxidermic depiction functions conceptually to forestall growth or development.

What is more, Wakeham remarks on the tendency within museum dioramas to place taxidermied animals in disconcerting proximity to plastic mannequins caricatured to represent "pre-historic" or "primitive" (primarily Indigenous or African) peoples. As such, she argues: "The tableaux are accordingly overwritten by colonial discourse's strategic conflation of the categories of animality and aboriginality – a discursive collapse that racializes native bodies and relegates them to a static space of primeval nature separate from the movement of history and the progressive temporality of Western culture."[430] Within this framework, she argues, "when

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[425] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 5-6.
[426] Ibid., 9.
[427] Ibid., 5.
[428] Ibid., 211; note 3.
[429] Quoted in Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 16.
[430] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 4.

taxidermically preserved animals and caricatured mannequins of aboriginal peoples are placed in such an intense proximity, the semiotic codes produced by these two technologies cannot remain separate."[431] They are equated, both visually and connotatively, by their sharing of space and, implicitly, time. "As a result, the stuffed animal and the plastic Indian are rendered interimbricated figures of extinction, the lost corpses of an atavistic past."[432]

Mocking this type of associative alignment in both her photographs and the dioramas they depict, Red Star replaces the stock mannequin with her living, breathing body and swaps out the taxidermied animals for their unrealistic effigies. Instead of the infinite stasis and strategic *allochronism* characteristic of both photo-ethnographic and dioramic fields of vision, the clear contemporaneity of Red Star's *Four Seasons* functions to inscribe a sense of temporal progression and liveliness in the visual narrative, in line with the series' cyclical title. In their bold colour, large scale and the artist's assertive presence, the images represent a distinct challenge to the traces of death and dispossession that haunt taxidermic modes of representation. The contemporary mobilization and mockery of colonial representational strategies in *Four Seasons* is, in fact, evident in each of the artworks included in this chapter.

Whereas the previous chapter concerned the work of artists who intervene directly in archival images in order to confront histories of physical and representational violence in settler colonial North America, in this chapter I examine artists, such as Red Star, who use strategies of satire, mimicry and masquerade to critique the assumed authority or authenticity of historical photographs. Addressing photography's role in the construction and representation of identities, the cementation of stereotypes and the expectation for, or solicitation of, Indigenous people to "play Indian" for primarily non-Indigenous audiences, I examine the work of contemporary artists, Da-ka-xeen Mehner (Tlingit/Nisga'a), Kent Monkman (Cree/Irish), and Wendy Red Star (Apsáalooke), as well early-twentieth century photographer, Horace Poolaw (Kiowa). All of these artists capitalize on and highlight the performative and productive role of Indigenous people, as both actors for the camera and – although historically less common– photographers themselves. In the case of the contemporary artists, Red Star, Monkman and Mehner all occupy the positions of both author and image, repeating and reinterpreting the ideological and aesthetic conventions employed by historical photographers and their sitters in order to upset the assumed power dynamic of the colonial photographic encounter and its persistent impact on reception and

[431] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 4.
[432] Ibid., 5.

perception in the present. The resulting photographs challenge both the ideology and authority of non-Indigenous colonial image-makers and the perceived one-dimensionality and stereotypical silence of Indigenous photographic subjects. And, all three strategically stage their images in ways that render ridiculous the colonial conventions of ethnographic representation, thus soliciting spectators to question more common portrayals. Indeed, employing tactics demonstrative of Raheja's notion of visual sovereignty, these artists expose spectators to the "often absurd assumptions that circulate around visual representations of Native Americans," as well as attending to the history of Indigenous peoples' complicity in – even production of – often disempowering or dispossessing structures.[433] As such, their work occupies what Raheja describes as a space "between resistance and compliance wherein Indigenous filmmakers and actors revisit, contribute to, borrow from, critique, and reconfigure ethnographic film conventions, at the same time operating within and stretching the boundaries of these conventions."[434]

Whereas the contemporaneity of Red Star's work is easily evident in the images' bright colour and large scale, Monkman and Mehner take the notion of mimicry to an entirely different level, masquerading their photographs *as* historical objects. For example, the photographs that make up Monkman's 2006 series, *The Emergence of a Legend,* are staged to parody early studio shots, and the physical photographs are deliberately manipulated to take on an aged appearance. By contrast, Mehner employed a dual process of mimetic performance and archival intervention – such as that described in the previous chapter – both imitating and appropriating found photographs for his 2009 series, *Reinterpretation*. Most significantly, in all three of these series, as in those described in the previous chapter, photography itself is foregrounded as a subject of the work, with Monkman and Mehner even picturing the photographic apparatus in their images, placed in the hands of the photographs' protagonists, and facilitating the series' narrative structures. Claiming and creatively redistributing authorial control in this way, the distinction between artist and object of visual consumption is complicated and common assumptions about the power imbalance of (specifically, ethnographic) portrait photography are called into question. Red Star, Monkman and Mehner all imply a sense of complicity in – even command over – the production of "Indian" identity and iconicity on the part of Indigenous role-players throughout

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[433] Raheja, "Reading Nanook's Smile," 1160.
[434] Ibid., 1161.

history.[435] Their work thus challenges the notion of repressive authenticity that Wolfe argues determines the standard according to which a person's Indigeneity continues to be measured and deemed inadequate. Furthermore, by picturing themselves wielding cameras in mock-historical photos, Monkman and Mehner evoke an alternative photographic history to that which is typically told. Whereas in previous chapters I referred to the relative rarity of Indigenous photographers in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries on account of the very real dangers facing Indigenous peoples at the time, I close this chapter by addressing some key exceptions and argue that, in addition to critiquing the photographic practice of non-Indigenous artists and ethnographers, the work of the contemporary artists examined also alludes to – is, in fact, indebted to – an under-acknowledged history of Indigenous photography. Taking the lead from the artists' retroactive focus, I therefore conclude this final chapter by examining a small collection of staged photographs produced by Kiowa photographer, Horace Poolaw, in the early twentieth century. The often-overlooked photographs are, I argue, demonstrative of the interweaving of Indigenous photographic and performative histories and function themselves as foundational expressions of critical and self-conscious visual sovereignty.

The employment of photography both as subject matter and medium in all of the series discussed in this chapter, combined with the artists' use of mimicry and masquerade, exposes its ethically ambiguous role in the production and perpetuation of colonial structures and stereotypes that continue to impact the social and political lives of Indigenous people in North America. In the hands of the artists discussed in both this and the previous chapter, the assumed power dynamic and discursive structures of colonial photography are destabilized, expectations are unsettled and spectators are called upon to account for the sovereign position of all performers and participants in a photographic encounter, including their own participation in an image's impact, endurance and evolution.

Taxidermic Semiosis and the Digital Diorama

In the introduction to her book, *Taxidermic Signs,* Pauline Wakeham describes a collection of dioramas at the Buffalo Nations Luxton Museum in Banff, Alberta as quintessential examples of taxidermic representation, briefly discussed in this dissertation's literature review. She points to a series of clichéd tableaux in which brown-skinned mannequins are arranged as if performing

[435] I am referring here to the stereotypical caricature of Indigeneity, or the "imaginary Indian" described by Marcia Crosby and discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation.

daily tasks, such as tanning hides or preparing food, and paired in many cases with taxidermied animals. Although the inclusion of preserved animal corpses in these types of museum displays has been common since the birth of the medium, Wakeham argues that historically, when paired with representations of human beings, the taxidermic specimens functioned merely as props.[436] In the case of the Buffalo Nations Luxton Museum, however, their status is rendered equal to that of the mannequins, occupying prominent positions as "active, agential bodies."[437]

As a prime example, she refers to a particular display, labeled "Ladies' Dance Outfit: Eagle Motif" [Figure 3.5], in which a mannequin dressed in beaded regalia (ostensibly the focal point of the scene) stands rigid and upright with her arms pinned to her sides and her vacant-eyed gaze trained forward. Directly contrasting the mannequin's awkward lifelessness, a much more animated taxidermied wolf is positioned in the foreground, with its head thrown back and its teeth bared, as if in mid-howl. The proximity of the two bodies, their uneven scale and lack of implied interaction, is ridiculous and unconvincing. So too is the purported focus of the vignette on the woman's attire, when she is clearly little more than a supporting actor for the wolf's scene-stealing performance. Indeed, Wakeham argues that the diorama takes a common museological assumption about the necessary and natural proximity of animal and Indigenous bodies in "authentic" portrayals of pre-contact life, to extreme and *unnatural* lengths.[438] She argues, "By constructing an equanimity and proximity between taxidermic animals and native mannequins as affiliated bodies locked in an intense symbiosis, these tableaux amplify the racializing codes inherent in this mode of exhibition."[439] The display reinforces social Darwinist and colonial hierarchies of race and species that align Indigenous peoples with animals as evolutionarily inferior to white Europeans. Furthermore, Wakeham suggests that dioramas such as those in the Buffalo Nations Luxton Museum do not only collapse the semiotic codes of animals and Indigenous people, but also conflate the representational technologies of taxidermic specimens and plastic mannequins, "in ways that erode the assumed distinction between which type of body – human or animal – is affiliated with which representational form."[440] The alignment is therefore reflective of the exploitative and discriminatory power relations that

[436] Of course, in this case she is referring specifically to the inclusion of taxidermied animals alongside effigies of Indigenous peoples. Wildlife dioramas consisting entirely of and centered around animal family or species groups are equally, if not more, common.
[437] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 3.
[438] Ibid., 1-3.
[439] Ibid., 3.
[440] Ibid., 4.

structure what Wakeham refers to as “the dioramic field of vision.”[441] She argues that by insinuating an intimate alignment between the taxidermied animal and the Indigenous effigy, “the tableaux amplify the colonial logic embedded in the structure of dioramic display, dramatizing a white supremacist narrative of evolution that fetishizes the supposed lost objects of primitive wildness.”[442]

Similarly, in “The Metaphoric Architecture of the Diorama,” Stephen Parcell describes dioramas as both metonymic of museums more broadly – in terms of ostensibly educational and preservationist potential – while also being the least didactic or scientifically rigorous mode of information presentation *in* the museum. Dioramas are, in his words, “high in evocation but low in information.”[443] As fabrications, by definition, he argues, they are composed according to fiction and imagination, rather than recorded fact, and that “appearance is more important than authenticity.”[444] Remarking on the diorama’s strained attempt to enliven the dead and inanimate, with its combination of carefully preserved taxidermied bodies, two-dimensional painted backdrops and entirely manufactured three-dimensional environments, Parcell writes, “The diorama’s strange, hybrid mode of representation lies somewhere between the fullness of a body and the flatness of an image – between presence and absence.”[445] Indeed, the composite form of the diorama makes its structure somewhat undefined. Parcel argues, “On the epistemological spectrum where histories and fictions are situated, the diorama occupies a middle position, somewhere between the absence of historical reproduction and the presence of fictional production.”[446] And, in fact, Parcell – perhaps inadvertently – locates the most revelatory or reflexive aspect of the otherwise ethically and scientifically questionable medium in this suspended state between fact and fiction. At least for the critical or thoughtful spectator, he suggests the creative license taken in the diorama’s composition, “reminds us that the history-versus fiction debate is not necessarily polarized; all histories tell a selective story, all fictions draw from history, and both provide peripheral benchmarks alongside our daily life.”[447] Indeed, the selective stories told in museum displays and other modes of colonial exhibition or making of

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[441] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs*, 5.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Stephen Parcell, “The Metaphoric Architecture of the Diorama,” *Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press), 196.
[444] Ibid., 187-188.
[445] Ibid., 196.
[446] Ibid., 206.
[447] Ibid., 207.

meaning are replete with fissures and fragilities that invite interested spectators to investigate further. As implied in Parcell's reading, it is the wavering of narrative that has the capacity to unsettle spectators and generate a more sustained and contemplative mode of interaction with the information presented.

What is implied in Parcell's argument, underlies Wakeham's: the fact that museum dioramas, regardless of any attempted self-reflexivity, are a Western invention designed to produce and preserve "a spectacle of otherness permanently paused for the fascinated surveillance of the white spectator."[448] As such, they fetishize death and disappearance – whether real, in the case of stuffed animals, or implied by inanimate effigies – and assert institutional ownership over taxonomy, history and memory. Representative of the overlying power structure of the institutions, these types of displays are thus also indicative of how, until recently, Indigenous people have been included in museum exhibitions: effectively as artifacts in themselves, rather than artists, curators or directors; and typically relegated to the realm of natural history, rather than fine art. It is, therefore, unsurprising that a number of Indigenous artists have taken up the diorama form and confronted the politics of traditional museum display and the conflicted relationship Indigenous people have with the institutions and their holdings.[449]

Wendy Red Star's *Four Seasons* is a perfect example, as the artist confronts the coeval histories of museum dioramas and photography, asserting agency and ownership over the images' production and the presentation of identity by both repeating and rejecting formal and ideological conventions of the two media. All four of the images retain the clichéd alignment of Indigeneity and animality, but in each case the relationship is comically reframed to foreground the ridiculous assumptions embedded in traditional images and exhibitions.

Wendy Red Star: *Four Seasons*

The cyclical temporal structure of Red Star's series is announced in its title, with the changing of the seasons implying growth, renewal and revolution. However, the actual passage of time through seasonal progression is rendered illusive in the images themselves, which sardonically reflect, rather, a timelessness or temporal suspension, evocative of the ethnographic

[448] Wakeham, *Taxidermic Signs,* 4.
[449] Other artists who have worked with the diorama format include Kent Monkman, whose photographic work will be discussed later in this chapter and Adrian Stimson (Blackfoot). Beyond the diorama form, other Indigenous artists whose work has interrogated museum collections and exhibition practices are James Luna (Luseño), Rebecca Belmore (Anishinaabe) and Jeff Thomas (Iroquois).

present or *allochronism* of anthropological representation. As previously mentioned, the suspension of time is, according to Wakeham, one of the core characteristics of taxidermic representation. Red Star is undeniably playing with traditional and stereotypical depictions of Indigenous people in both photographs and museum dioramas as frozen in time – preserved in an imagined state of uncorrupted authenticity. While the sets are different in each image, marking out the four seasons that occur over the course of a year, Red Star herself remains constant and unchanging. She wears the same clothing and footwear, regardless of the implied season, appearing equally comfortable seated on the snowy ground in *Winter,* as surrounded by blooming flowers in *Indian Summer*. While her poses vary slightly from image to image, as does the angle of her gaze – head-on in *Winter*, slightly sideways in *Spring* and *Fall*, and avoiding the camera in *Indian Summer* – she wears the same masked expression in every case. Her manner – while clearly imitative of the stoic stereotype – is powerful, defiant, controlled, and again, unchanging. The series asserts an apparent critique of the stasis and timeless authenticity expected of Indigenous people and repeatedly displayed in historical and popular culture depictions.

Beyond the temporal play at work in the series' title, Red Star appears to be making direct reference to one of the most famous collections of early dioramas, also titled *Four Seasons*, designed and produced by the "Father of Modern Taxidermy," Carl Akeley and his wife Delia in 1902 for the Field Museum in Chicago.[450] Akeley's *Four Seasons* was an intricately manufactured set of four dioramas, representing a family of white-tailed Virginia deer, as they changed and grew over the period of a year. As Mark Alvey describes, "It was a groundbreaking work, displaying in no uncertain terms Akeley's technical skill, his mania for detail and his commitment to naturalistic representation."[451] White-tailed deer, at the time, were believed to be on the brink of extinction – not unlike Indigenous people – so the skewed logic of early conservation and salvage fostered the killing and preservation of 16 endangered animals for the production of the diorama. The reference to Akeley's series that I argue is present in Red Star's title and diorama structure draws a parallel between the perception and treatment of wild animals and Indigenous peoples and the representation of both in preservationist media, such as dioramas

[450] Mark Alvey, "The Cinema as Taxidermy: Carl Akeley and the Preservationist Obsession," *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 48.1 (Spring 2007): 23.
[451] Alvey, "The Cinema as Taxidermy," 27.

and photography.[452] The taxidermic semiosis, described by Wakeham is thus given added weight in Red Star's work, as she mimics Akeley's famous scenes, with the focus placed on her as an Indigenous woman occupying the position originally held by the Virginia deer. Of course, deer also appear in Red Star's photographs – in all, except *Winter* – but are reduced to plastic and paper. The much-lauded accuracy and careful craftsmanship of Akeley's set designs are replaced with kitschy contemporary materials and his attempt to accurately record growth and evolution over time is bypassed by Red Star's unchanging appearance.[453]

Despite her inspiration and interaction with the historical stereotype, Red Star, as she appears in the images, cannot be likened to the costumed characters or "imaginary Indians" romantically portrayed by ethnographic artists. The fiction and fabrication of *Four Seasons* is limited to the manufactured diorama environments and the absurd interactions of varied species. In this sense, the series successfully articulates the self-conscious unreliability of diorama displays, described by Parcell. He argues, "Despite their obligation to credibility, diorama artists may stretch natural limits by portraying 'species situation[s] in nature which bring together an unusual diversity of animals that would avoid one another's presence at all other times.'"[454] This is certainly true of the Disney-like gathering of wolf, deer, rabbit and human in Red Star's *Spring*. What is more, Parcell refers to the detailed descriptions laid out in diorama building manuals as to how the natural world can be convincingly replicated with plaster casting, paraffin wax and liquid celluloid. He declares that outside of preserved animal corpses and the occasional use of real rocks or sand, the rest of a diorama is entirely manufactured, and its designer is essentially an illusionist. "Everything must appear real to the eye," he writes, "but not necessarily to the touch."[455] Indeed, he refers to the unacceptable breakdown of the illusion, arguing that the strange and improbable interplay between the three-dimensional foreground and flat backdrop – relying on metaphoric connections and spectators' suspension of disbelief – necessitates precise calculations and strategic execution: "the painting only needs to be

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[452] The links between taxidermy, dioramas and photography are fundamental to Akeley's legacy, as the three media went hand-in-hand, each supporting the success of the others. In fact, Akeley even invented and constructed an early motion picture camera, prized for its ease and mobility, to facilitate his fieldwork. Dubbed simply, the Akeley, these cameras were quickly taken up by documentarians and journalists and two were even used by Flaherty for the filming of *Nanook of the North* in 1922. See Alvey, "The Cinema as Taxidermy," 23.

[453] Widely recognized as the most well-crafted and visually accurate dioramas of their time, Akeley's *Four Seasons* included 17,000 handmade leaves, almost all of which were individually cast by Delia Akeley according to a method designed and patented by her husband. See Alvey, "The Cinema as Taxidermy," 27.

[454] Parcell, "The Metaphoric Architecture of the Diorama," 188.

[455] Ibid., 191.

convincing enough to oscillate between presence and absence – to be a painting or a vista. The same applies to the foreground: it only needs to be convincing enough to oscillate between a model and a terrain."[456] Indeed, he suggests that it is maintenance and attention to trickery that ensures a successful diorama, asserting, "The critical detail… is the edge where the background and the foreground meet. Dioramas are most compelling when the general transition zone is visible but the actual joint cannot be detected… Dusty surfaces cannot be permitted to give it away, and shadows cannot be allowed to fall onto the sky."[457]

Of course, Red Star's blatant rebuff of the perfected illusion, gesturing toward the fabricated nature of all dioramas, is, therefore, significant. The wear and tear on the painted backdrops and the comical use of inflatables and cardboard cutouts for animals, or Styrofoam and plastic for water, ice and earth, are direct refusals to play into the colonial fantasies that continue to perpetuate the exoticized containment and repressive authenticity of Indigenous people. In fact, the coming apart at the seams of Red Star's sets implies the manufactured nature of all taxidermic representation and ethnographic romanticism. What is more, while all around her are the kinds of chintzy reproductions of flora and fauna that could be purchased in discount emporiums, party supply stores and hobby shops, everything on Red Star's body was carefully constructed, not for the photograph, but for larger cultural practices and purposes. Uninfluenced by outsiders' skewed sense of authenticity, she is dressed, posed and poised according to her self-determined specifications and strategic decisions about how she wants to be presented and immortalized on film. In *Four Seasons,* Red Star wears her own elk-tooth dress, designed for ceremonial and powwow dancing, every accessory made with care and according to protocol. In fact, unlike the intended audience of publications such as *The North American Indian* or the spectators assumedly courted by museum dioramas, Apsáalooke viewers are privileged in *Four Seasons* as the audience for whom the symbolism of each motif and material in Red Star's regalia would be meaningful.

The portrait aspect of the photographs is thus an expression of self-determination and sovereign identification, amidst popular expectations and colonial fantasies of "authentic" Indigeneity, ambiguous temporality and pristine wilderness. Her reliance on cheap and garish materials, employed in the dioramas' construction, is not extended to her clothing or accessories. Rather, her contemporary presence and self-presentation exposes and underscores the kitschy

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[456] Parcell, "The Metaphoric Architecture of the Diorama," 204.
[457] Ibid.

tradition of diorama display. In fact, if her images are to be understood as modeled on historical precedent, it is a history of selective and self-determined projection to which she refers. Indeed, Red Star's centered presence in the photographs is reflective of the commissioned portraits of Indigenous leaders, ambassadors and delegates who visited photography studios in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, such as those used as the raw material in her series, *Medicine Crow and the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation* [0.5-0.10], discussed in this dissertation's preface. Red Star honours and follows her predecessors' lead of conscious intent and careful selection for her self-immortalization in film. While this aspect of Indigenous people's historical relationship to the camera is often overlooked, with attention focused instead on the adventurer-ethnographers – the predator-preservationists – or the assumed exploitative relationship between anthropologist and subject of study, the history of Indigenous people performing for the camera is much more productive and extensive. Exhibiting a sense of visual sovereignty, I argue that it is precisely this history of self-determined and empowered photographic performance to which Red Star focuses her attention in both *Four Seasons* and, later, *Medicine Crow and the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation*. In addition to her expansive statement on the history of dispossession, misrepresentation and commodification of Indigenous peoples, Red Star engages with a counter-history of defiance, resilience and resurgence that is available for spectators of both historical and contemporary images, who wish to look beyond the clichéd and limited canon of photo-colonialism, seeking out more obscure images or more expansive analyses and unsettling or unraveling their understanding of more familiar photographic representations.

In "Reading Nanook's Smile," Michelle Raheja demonstrates the capacity to which "visual sovereignty" can have implications for broader political struggles, arguing, "this strategy offers up not only the possibility of engaging and deconstructing white-generated representations of indigenous people, but more broadly and importantly how it intervenes in larger discussions of Native American sovereignty by locating and advocating for indigenous cultural and political power both within and outside of Western legal jurisprudence."[458] Indeed, her chosen terminology implies an assertion on the part of artists and filmmakers of autonomy, self-governance and self-determination. She argues, "Sovereignty is an ontological and philosophical concept with very real practical, political, and cultural ramifications."[459] But, like "decolonization," "sovereignty" is also a loaded, overused, easily misunderstood and – in the

[458] Raheja, "Reading Nanook's Smile," 1161.
[459] Ibid., 1163.

context of Indigenous peoples' political autonomy – fundamentally contradictory term. According to Raheja, visual sovereignty carries a capacity for "reimagining Native-centered articulations of self-representation and autonomy that engage the powerful ideologies of mass media, but that do not rely solely on the texts and contexts of Western jurisprudence."[460] Rather, she claims, "Because visual sovereignty arbitrates in the broader world of indigenous sovereignty, but is not always directly involved in political debates that determine Native American survival and livelihood… there is more room for narrative play."[461] Insisting that the remove from legal pursuits does not mean that visual sovereignty is entirely separate or disinterested in political debate or activism, she further asserts that, "visual sovereignty intervenes in larger discourses on indigenous sovereignty, but employs a different set of tactics."[462]

When considering *Four Seasons* in conjunction with *Medicine Crow and the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation* Red Star's interest in projecting Apsáalooke self-determination becomes apparent, but remains dependent upon spectators' open engagement and attention. The same is true of her commitment to critiquing the *mis*representation and exploitation of the sovereign assertions of her ancestors. Whereas the criticism in *Medicine Crow and the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation* is relatively self-evident – her commentary literally written on the images – the complexity of *Four Seasons* is in the fine line the artist straddles between playing *into* and playing *against* stereotypes. Her assertion of self-determination is paired with her awareness of the codes of representation within which she works, and the risk she runs of repeating or reinforcing stereotypes or clichés. Indeed, devoid of any apparent pathos or solemnity, there is a joyful, almost celebratory quality to the images, particularly evident in their bright and bold colour. While not necessarily or immediately legible to all viewers, the celebration, I argue, is of Apsáalooke sovereignty and identity; it is an affirmation of self-determination despite, and in defiance of, the enduring forces of history, photography and the politics of representation.

Both of Red Star's series display an affinity for humour and playfulness – tactics that are evident, to some extent, in all of the works discussed in this chapter – and demonstrate artistic and cultural resilience, as well as the potential to unsettle spectators' aesthetic experience. By asserting her contemporaneity and inverting the traditional structure of both museum dioramas

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[460] Raheja, "Reading Nanook's Smile," 1163.
[461] Ibid., 1165.
[462] Ibid.

and similarly staged colonial photographs, Red Star dissents from the standard narrative that posits "authentic" Indigeneity as incompatible with contemporary life. Rather than fixated in the past, Red Star's portraits depict presence and, arguably, futurity. Her wearing of contemporary regalia testifies to her heritage by celebrating its perpetuation, evolution and vibrancy. By displaying the beauty of both change and continuity in cultural expression, Red Star insinuates ever-evolving existence, rather than confinement to the past. For peoples whose basic existence has long been targeted for destruction via physical, conceptual and structural means, the mere expression of future existence is a radical and defiant act.

The contemporaneity and futurity expressed in the series is, in fact, central to the various works examined in this chapter. Each of them, I argue, has the capacity to direct spectators' attention to the flawed logic and damaging effects of repressive authenticity rooted in colonial representation, and photography in particular. Richard Hill argues, "As an artistic strategy, inversion has the potential to illuminate and challenge the visual conventions that police social hierarchies. When power relations are turned on their head we have the opportunity to suddenly see that some behaviours we take to be natural and necessary are merely conventional – and perhaps not in our interest."[463] Red Star, Monkman and Mehner employ strategies of humour and irony, aesthetic masquerade and archival intervention to upset dominant narratives and unsettle expectations, re-examining Indigenous people's performative and productive roles in the history of photography.

Building a Legend

From a distance, *The Emergence of a Legend* [Figures 3.6-3.10] appears to be a collection of five antique tintypes, each barely bigger than a standard postcard, picturing exoticized "Indians" posing against painted backdrops. Sometimes exhibited in small ornate frames, the images appear worn and damaged from age and poor storage; they are discoloured, torn around the edges and stained from dampness and mould. Their small size necessitates spectators' intimate engagement and, upon closer scrutiny, the camp and contemporaneity of the photographs is revealed. In each image, the artist's two-spirit alter ego, Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, performs "Indianness" in recognizable, yet rearticulated, ways. Her poses mimic or make reference to different periods and players in over a century of Indigenous performance. Or,

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[463] Richard Hill, "Drag Racing (Dressing Up White) and the Canon Upside Down: Inversion in Contemporary Art and Visual Culture," *The World Upside Down=Le monde à l'envers* (Banff AB: Walter Phillips Gallery, 2008), 56-57.

more specifically, in the history of Indigenous performers "playing Indian" for primarily non-Indigenous audiences. In five fictitious vignettes, the series parodies the evolution of "Indian" entertainers from travelling shows to the big screen, documenting the emergence of an imagined legend: a time-travelling, two-spirit trickster figure invoked to unsettle the authority of historical images and nuance well-worn frontier myths.

Pictured in profile and styled, according to the artist, to reference the characters in George Catlin's mid-nineteenth century "Indian Gallery," *Miss Chief, Hunter* [Figure 3.6] strikes a predatory pose and readies an arrow drawn from her Louis Vuitton quiver.[464] Pairing a feathered headdress with fringed buckskin and heeled platform shoes, she embodies a collision of colonial fantasies and absurd stereotypes, simultaneously playing the roles of Indian princess, warrior and chief. Slightly more demure in a domestic interior, *The Trapper's Bride* [Figure 3.7] depicts Miss Chief surrounded by the spoils of the fur trade and reimagined as an actor in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show, which toured the United States and Europe in the 1880s. According to Monkman, her hybrid identity is here signaled by the juxtaposition of her European dress with the feathers in her hair and the painted marks on her face, thus highlighting her role as a mother of the Métis nation.[465] *Miss Chief, Vaudeville Star* [Figure 3.8], mimics a famous photograph of Penobscot actor, dancer, and writer, Molly Spotted Elk (Molly Nelson), who made a living from her Indigenous identity in the early decades of the twentieth century, performing on the stages of Paris and New York. Pointing to the immediate popularity of "Indian" subjects at the birth of the movie industry, *Cindy Silverscreen* [Figure 3.9] pictures an imagined silent film star, whose stage name reflects those so often adopted by or imposed upon Indigenous actors, like Harold J. Smith, known as Jay Silverheels, who played Tonto in the 1950s television series, *The Lone Ranger*. And, finally, *Miss Chief, Film Director* [Figure 3.10] blurs the line between performer and producer, with Miss Chief stepping behind a hand-crank camera, wielding a megaphone and

[464] Catlin's Indian Gallery was a collection of the artist's painted portraits of Indigenous peoples produced during his excursions into their territories, as well as various artifacts appropriated along the way. Catlin toured Europe with his gallery, delivering public lectures in the 1830s. Along with his visual art, Catlin left an abundance of personal writing about his time in America. Both his paintings and writings have been the inspiration for much of Monkman's work in a variety of media.
[465] Kent Monkman, "Artist Statement," http://www.kentmonkman.com/limited-editions/jwjqf1ul7fd0lr8mp1wz3wwczdfu3p. Accessed, August 30, 2018.

posing against a backdrop of Monument Valley, the quintessential setting of the Hollywood Western, in which Indians were ever-present, yet Indigenous actors few and far between.[466]

Critic David McIntosh has suggested that, taken as a collection, the photographs narrate the "clear trajectory of Miss Chief's relationship to mechanical reproduction… as she moves from object of photographic representation to simultaneous subject and object of her own photographic gaze."[467] While most of the images are constructed to fulfill or imitate scopophilic desires of contained exoticism, in *Film Director*, Miss Chief, herself, acquires the power to record and begins to upset the colonial dynamic that posits the Indigenous "other" as object of the ethnographic look. The film director's power and authority is made theatrically evident in her painted face and confident posture – muscular shoulders squared, with one hand on her hip and the other in ready anticipation to call the scene into action – as well as her veritable arsenal of directorial and recording equipment. There is defiance in her eyes, as she faces forward, but angles her look ever so slightly to avoid the spectator's eye, posing proudly in platform heels, beaded breastplate and floor-length sequined loincloth designed to emulate the stripes of the iconic Hudson Bay blanket.[468] Replete with references, at times explicit and at others obscure, *Film Director* is by no means unique within the series: each image is layered with satirical gestures, tongue-in-cheek allusions and a queer brand of playful politics. All of the images are, in effect, marked by a threefold process of sexual, cultural and temporal drag or masquerade: Monkman is cross-dressed as Miss Chief; although of Cree ancestry, he is "playing Indian" in stereotypical and exaggerated costumes not strictly representative of his (or any) specific cultural heritage; and the twenty-first century images are manipulated to appear ancient and – by extension – *authentic*. Despite their self-reflexive fictionalization, it could be argued that the photographs are no less staged than those produced by colonial ethnographic photographers in the previous century. The figure in each image is set against a fabricated backdrop – a stage curtain, pastoral landscape, or indiscernible wilderness scene. The appropriation and inversion of colonial stereotypes, along with the deliberate damage to the images, paradoxically signifies their fake age and authenticity.

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[466] In his artist statement, Monkman refers in particular to the 1956 western, *The Searchers*, directed by John Ford, which, despite its immense popularity, is also widely recognized as one of the most violent and degrading films toward Indigenous people of all time.

[467] McIntosh, "Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, PostIndian Diva Warrior, in the Shadowy Hall of Mirrors," *The Triumph of Mischief*, Curated by David Liss and Shirley J. Madill (Hamilton: Hamilton Art Gallery, 2007), 37.

[468] The Hudson Bay blanket has come to be known as a symbol of both Canadian heritage and the attempted genocide of Indigenous peoples, owing to the deliberate dissemination of blankets infected with smallpox to Indigenous communities in the eighteenth century.

The Emergence of a Legend engages with – is, in fact, indebted to – the history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people playing Indian for various purposes, both on and off camera, and draws crucial links between photography and performance. What is more, I argue that the series alludes to a lengthy history of Indigenous peoples' conscious – even calculated – participation in both art forms, undermining, to some extent, the assumed exploitation and imbalance of power associated with performative or photographic colonial encounters. Indeed, across a broad range of work, Monkman's artistic production, sometimes depicting and sometimes in collaboration with Miss Chief, directly engages with the historical construction of "Indian" identity in North America and its perpetual re-articulation in popular culture and national mythology. Specifically targeting the dual and contradictory program of extermination and preservation – and of assimilation and differencing – that characterized Canadian and American "Indian affairs" in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, Monkman and Miss Chief re-enact history in ways that level, reinvent or ironically reverse the playing field. Using satire, masquerade and mimicry to unsettle and offer alternative interpretations of historical images, *The Emergence of a Legend* functions to re-direct the conversation away from the authorial colonial photographer and the objectified Indigenous performer to address the potential complicity, agency and autonomy of all participants and perspectives. Miss Chief is presented as yet another actor in a long line of Indigenous performers and producers, both famed and forgotten, both demeaned and subversive. Increasing the character's complexity, Miss Chief's influences and inspirations are not limited to the more challenging or progressive performers, but also include seemingly superficial or rote embodiments of stock stereotypes. The history under examination is therefore neither glorified nor sanitized, nor is it uncritically condemned. Rather, Miss Chief channels the complexity of a truly perplexing and enduring phenomenon that has been and remains so central to North American national and cultural identities. To demonstrate the extent to which Monkman's performance and deployment of Miss Chief is both an act of historical or archival intervention – such as that described in the previous chapter – and an expression of resurgence and visual sovereignty, the following discussion investigates the historical and ongoing practice of "playing Indian," examining the way Monkman and Miss Chief address both its exploitative and surreptitiously empowering potential. Additionally, I argue that by way of Miss Chief's queer identification and imaginative capacity for time travel – reflective even in the material condition of the photographs – the series

functions to disrupt dominant historical narratives, unsettle expectations and assert a sense of Indigenous futurity.

Playing Indian

In her book, *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience, Policing the Boundaries of Modernity*, Lynda Jessup argues that the best avenue for interrogating standard historical representations of Indigenous people as stoic and passive victims of colonization is to investigate their participation in the performing arts. She claims that innumerable barriers made Indigenous people's access to fine arts during the modernist century – which she defines as the period between 1860 and 1960 – nearly impossible, and always complicated by a constructed divide between "authentic" and "modern." Rather, Jessup suggests, "performance, not graphic or plastic art, was the available space for Native artistic production and performance that offered the most favourable site for Native negotiations of the dominant culture's images of Indians as pre-modern, degenerate, and vanishing."[469] Whether posing for ethnographic artists or performing primitivism as part of a burgeoning tourist industry, "playing Indian" became a viable and even lucrative option for peoples whose very existence was under constant attack. As Jessup writes, "For many Native people, 'playing Indian' – which involved a surface denial of their own modernity – was one of the few readily marketable commodities" available.[470] What is more, she suggests it provided one of the only arenas in which the expression of Indigenous culture or customs – however fabricated or mediated – was tolerated by colonial society. Indeed, the insatiable desire of colonial audiences to see Indigenous performers "playing Indian" is arguably the clearest and most perverse example of the colonial paradox of preservation and eradication discussed at length in Chapter One.

In her article, "The Tribe Called Wannabee," Cherokee scholar Rayna Green argues that the performance of "playing Indian" is "one of the oldest and most pervasive forms of American cultural expression."[471] Similar to Wakeham's conception of taxidermic representation or Wolfe's notion of repressive authenticity, Green posits playing Indian as predicated on the destruction, disavowal or elimination of Indigenous people, asserting that the performance

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[469] Lynda Jessup, *Antimodernism and Artistic Experience: Policing the Boundaries of Modernity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 40.
[470] Ibid., 41.
[471] Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee," 30.

"depends upon the physical and psychological removal, even the death, of real Indians."[472] Tracing the earliest incarnations of such a performance to colonial curiosity and co-optation of Indigenous identity, Green argues that the most disturbing aspect of the history is that it has not only been European colonizers and other settlers who have made a habit of playing Indian – although the history of such cosplay is lengthy and undying – but that, from the earliest days of settlement, Indigenous people themselves have been expected to play the part.[473] While this is most clearly evident in the transporting of Indigenous people back to Europe for the entertainment of colonial audiences, or displayed in World Fairs and in Wild West Shows, Indigenous people have also been asked to play Indian for the photographs – and later, films – which were showcased and circulated as authentic portrayals of primitive cultures on the verge of collapse.

The anthropological trope of denying present existence to Indigenous people through the construction and taxonomy of the ethnographic "Indian" – what Wakeham has described as temporal genocide – is parodied in *The Emergence of a Legend*. Monkman's theatricality disguises his contemporary Cree identification behind Miss Chief's mask of pan-Indianism to produce a series of images both in line and completely at odds with the fantasies of frontier mythology. Appropriating common colonial techniques and over-indulging in the stereotypes attributed to the iconic Indian, Monkman-as-Miss-Chief highlights the carefully constructed scenarios that were offered to non-Indigenous audiences as actual accounts of frontier life and "material vestiges" of a vanishing race.[474] Re-playing the common strategies of costuming and furnishing photographic subjects with stereotypical attire and props, Monkman further manipulates the images to appear antique by wrinkling and tearing the photographic paper and moistening it to produce a mouldy aesthetic.[475] The result is a collection of photographs of an imagined Indian who most certainly never existed, but whose claims to authenticity can barely be considered inferior to the claims made by some colonial ethnographic photographers. The temporal tampering at work in these images functions in two crucial ways: the incongruity between the physical appearance of the material photographs and the clear contemporaneity of their subject matter works to reveal the photographs as twenty-first century products. In addition,

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[472] Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee," 31.
[473] Ibid., 30.
[474] My use of the term "material vestiges," comes from Susan Sontag's 1977 *On Photography* in which she claims: "While painting… is never more than the stating of an interpretation, a photograph is never less than the registering of an emanation" (154).
[475] McIntosh, "Miss Chief," 37.

by aligning fabrication, manipulation and fantasy with an object that *appears* antique, the work effectively suggests that photographic representation and images of otherness must always be viewed with certain suspicions, regardless of their historic date of production. Indeed, Monkman's strategic production and exhibition of contemporary images as overtly "past," parodies the very process of *allochronism* that Fabian describes, and insinuates the continued invisibility of Indigenous communities and concerns in North America today. His work thus repeats the deeply ingrained tendency among settler society to cherish and uphold the image or iconicity of "Indians," over the lives and rights of Indigenous people. By mixing cultural signifiers from a variety of nations and imagined identities, Miss Chief further parodies the practice of ethnographic photographers like Curtis and the directors of Hollywood westerns, and makes evident the fact that she is not performing or expressing her Indigeneity, but rather is unabashedly "playing Indian."

The perpetuation of the "Indian" image as simulacra for contemporary Indigenous people is of course a blatant example of the denial of coevalness, as it situates the living people parodied in a suspended past state.[476] One of the earliest and arguably most successful stages for such a dramatization of the colonial encounter and the inspiration for the enduring presentation of all Indigenous peoples as a singular "Indian" *type* was Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Touring North America and Europe for over four decades, the impossibly successful theatrical performances staged by frontiersman Frederick "Buffalo Bill" Cody began as a forum for bringing to life Cody's adventures in the Wild West. Originally performed by a cast of wigged and costumed white actors in red face, by the late 1870s, Cody began employing Indigenous prisoners of war, recently released from military incarceration.[477] Like Curtis and other ethnographic entertainers, Cody costumed his Indigenous actors to mimic the Indians of popular imagery, so that regardless of nation or cultural custom, every Indian wore a Plains-style headdress, whooped and hollered the same war cries and greeted one another "with the upraised right forearm, saying 'how' in an abasement of the Sioux greeting 'hau.'"[478] Indeed, as Jessup reveals, by the late nineteenth century, popular opinion was that the Plains nations in the west were "the only 'real' Indians left in North America."[479] Significantly, the popularity of Wild

[476] Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 31.
[477] Louis S. Warren, *Buffalo Bill's America: William Cody and the Wild West Shows* (New York: Alfred K. Knopf, 2005): 190.
[478] Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee," 39.
[479] Jessup, *Antimodernism*, 49.

West shows – both Buffalo Bill's and the countless other touring troupes of the time – was not limited to live performances, as the shows were "accompanied by a mass dissemination of graphic representations that lingered on in the visual environment."[480] These consisted of promotional posters and pamphlets, souvenir postcards (such as the source in image for Gonzales-Day's *der Wild West*, discussed in the previous chapter), and professional studio photographs, including the famous set of images featuring Buffalo Bill and Sitting Bull produced by William Notman Studios in Montreal [Figure 3.11]. Frequently reproduced, the Notman Studio photographs are remarkable for their sheer awkwardness, as the two actors – each in full regalia – stand in front of a generic painted backdrop, scattered hay at their feet, with their hands clasped together on the barrel of a rifle. The absolute incongruence of their poses is striking: Buffalo Bill stands erect, his left leg jutted forward and his head high and deliberately angled just to the left of the camera, the direction toward which he also vaguely gestures with his right hand. Displaying none of Cody's bravado, Sitting Bull's other arm hangs loosely at his side, his shoulders slightly slumped and his eyes trained neither toward the camera nor in the same direction as Cody. Rather, his gaze is downturned and seeming wholly uninterested in events taking place.

The arbitrary and imaginary Indian, romantically suspended in contact-era casting, preserved in paint and celluloid, and made famous by Buffalo Bill became the prototype for the Hollywood Indian – the cowboy's necessary nemesis, destined to lose the battle and vanish into a legend kept alive in westerns, Boy Scout rituals and children playing "Cowboys and Indians."[481] Miss Chief mimics the image of the imaginary Indian so concretized in popular consciousness by the stereotypical caricature constructed in nineteenth-century scientific and visual culture and glorified in mainstream movies throughout the twentieth century. More specifically Miss Chief is directly modeled on pop icon Cher, who, in claiming to be part Cherokee, capitalized on the popularity of Indians during her "brilliantly orchestrated 'halfbreed' phase."[482] The title song of Cher's 1973 album, *Halfbreed*, laments the hardship of a young girl accepted by neither her Cherokee community nor white society as expressed in the song's opening lines:

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[480] Jessup, *Antimodernism*, 45.
[481] Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee," 39-40.
[482] Liss, "Kent Monkman: The Wild West Lives Again," *The Triumph of Miss Chief,* Curated by David Liss and Shirley J. Madill (Hamilton: Hamilton Art Gallery, 2007), 103.

My father married a pure Cherokee
My mother's people were ashamed of me
The Indians said I was white by law
The White Man always called me "Indian Squaw"

First performed on the stage of her popular variety show, *Sonny and Cher,* the narrative lyrics of the song are only one aspect of the artist's carefully choreographed "halfbreed" persona. Dressed like a Las Vegas showgirl performing Indianness, with her skin tinted an obnoxious shade of orange, costumed in a dramatic feathered headdress and dazzling beaded bra-top – an outfit closely copied in *Miss Chief, Vaudeville Star* – Cher straddles a Pinto steed, bareback and barefoot and belting out her purportedly personal tale of woe (Figure 3.12). Rather than exhibiting the sartorial and cultural history of the Cherokee Nation, the aesthetic adopted and expounded by Cher is fabricated and fashioned after the Hollywood construction of Indianness. The infamous and extravagant war bonnet she wears is not a facet of Cherokee dress, but is, of course, culturally associated with Plains nations, such as the Lakota and Sioux.[483] What is more, within the nations that did make and wear feathered headdresses of this style, they were reserved for specific ceremonial purposes, fashioned according to strict protocol and worn solely by men. While the headdress may not be customary for all Indigenous cultures, this popular myth produced and proliferated by the movie industry worked to conflate all Indigenous nations with a singular Indian image, spurring an enduring tourist industry that often debases the sacred significance of dress and custom for popular appeal.

In the production of his theatrical alter ego, Monkman appropriates Cher's take on the movie Indian and further embraces the "halfbreed's" hybridity and cultural commodification in his performance as Miss Chief. There is little question of Miss Chief's inspiration; her full name is "Miss Chief *Share* Eagle Testickle," and her physical impersonation undeniable. The reasons for this emulation go beyond the irony of an Indigenous artist parodying a famed white woman's outlandish Indian caricature. It is also relevant that Cher, herself, has been a cherished icon of the LGBTQ2 community for decades, particularly as a muse for male-to-female drag performers. Unconnected from her own gender identity or sexual orientation, Cher's caché with the queer community is largely a result of her over-the-top stage persona and extravagant performance of femininity in excess. With a deep voice and commanding stature, highly sexualized cabaret-style

[483] Green, "The Tribe Called Wannabee," 37-39. In addition to Cher's costume, the video recording of her *Halfbreed* performance includes a number of other elements that are culturally incongruous with her identification as Cherokee, such as West Coast style totem poles in the background.

costumes and bold stage makeup, Cher embodies a camp gender ideal. In his performances as Miss Chief, Monkman draws on these aspects of Cher's aesthetic, to express both Miss Chief's hybrid gender *and* cultural identity.

Throughout *The Emergence of a Legend*, however, homage is not only paid to Cher, but also to various female Indigenous performers throughout colonial history. The characters portrayed in each photograph imply a lineage of women who set the groundwork for the emergence of both Cher and Miss Chief. In Monkman's photographs*,* Miss Chief dons an extravagant and misplaced headdress as both *Hunter* and *Vaudeville Star,* with the latter closely mimicking Cher's costume in her television performance of *Halfbreed*. However, as previously noted, *Vaudeville Star* is actually modeled on a promotional photograph of Penobscot performer, Molly Spotted Elk (born Mary Alice Nelson) from the early twentieth century [Figure 3.13]. The evolution from Molly Spotted Elk to Cher to Miss Chief is thus demonstrative of the incredible traction this type of eroticized and overblown "Indian" image has held in popular culture for at least a century. Similarly – going back even further in time – Monkman describes *Miss Chief, Hunter* as his reinterpretation of the characters toured about and painted by George Catlin for the artist's highly subjective "Indian Gallery" – notably the same collection of images that Meryl McMaster drew on for part of her *Ancestral* series, discussed in the previous chapter. The icons selected by Monkman for *The Emergence of a Legend* illustrate the enduring presence and popularity of the imaginary Indian image, and signal the often under-acknowledged role of female performers in this history. It is also noteworthy that Monkman references both the progressive and more problematic actors in this history, highlighting the lives of Indigenous performers such as Molly Nelson and Sitting Bull, who negotiated troubling expectations and assumptions while sustaining or advocating for some level of self-determination, alongside seemingly less-self-conscious celebrities such as Cher. In this way, Miss Chief addresses the multifaceted history of playing Indian, displaying a canny awareness both of its harmful and objectifying effects, as well as the ways in which the practice has been exploited for more progressive purposes.

Referring to the historical practice of playing Indian, Jessup suggests, "It is common for writers to rather simplistically condemn early twentieth-century Native performances of Indianness as sell-outs expressive of complicity with the repressive structures of both sexist and colonialist domination."[484] However, in an assessment reflective of Raheja's notion of visual

[484] Jessup, *Antimodernism*, 58.

sovereignty, she argues “complicity is not necessarily complacency.”[485] The economic independence and increased mobility afforded Indigenous actors performing in travelling Wild West shows, for example, offered opportunities to intervene in racist discourses and subvert the already ambivalent narrative constructed around Indigenous eradication and colonial settlement. At its most basic, “the directness and immediacy of live performance confronted audiences with the fact of the Native performers’ contemporaneity and bodily co-presence.”[486] Indeed, the tactic retains relevance for artists such as Monkman and Red Star, who confront the visual culture of the vanishing Indian and the failure of the propagandistic prophesy to come to fruition by asserting their contemporary presence *as* Indigenous people. Referencing Homi Bhabha’s notion of colonial mimicry, Jessup argues, “Native performers exploited the twists and ambivalences of antimodernist sensibility through reverse appropriations of the stereotype.”[487] Whether on stage or for the camera, the economic incentive to “play Indian” for colonial audiences at a time when Indigenous peoples’ livelihood was under constant threat, made performance a viable – even desirable – option.

Jessup further argues that, “in choosing to play the fictive or negative roles pre-scripted for them, performers also subverted these roles by revealing their shallowness and the arbitrary nature of the signs of Indianness.”[488] And, in fact, she cites Molly Nelson’s stage persona, Molly Spotted Elk, as a prime example. Spending much of her career, performing stereotypes in erotic and exploitative productions in the United States, Nelson eventually managed to make an artistic name for herself in Europe where she choreographed her own dances, showcasing Penobscot, rather than pan-Indian, performative customs.[489] Referring to Nelson’s diary entries, included in the 1995 biography, *Molly Spotted Elk: A Penobscot in Paris*, published by Bunny McBride, Jessup suggests that the freedom Nelson found in Performance “allowed her to reformulate her

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[485] Jessup, *Antimodernism*, 50.
[486] Ibid., 40.
[487] Ibid., 41.
[488] Ibid.
[489] Nelson wrote extensively about her experiences performing as Molly Spotted Elk in both the press and her personal diaries, and described the differences she found in American versus European audiences. In her earliest days in Paris she wrote, “I have found already that [Europeans] appreciate real expressions and Indian art,” whereas most Americans are “satisfied with a dancer bedecked in feathers, making war-whoops and leaping aimlessly about with savage gestures to the beat of a torn torn.” (Quoted in Jessup, 56). Of course, the difference she perceived in the two audiences needs to be contextualized by the ambivalent identity of a relatively recently formed settler nation, compared with the distance European audiences would have felt toward circumstances in America. Nelson’s diaries further reveal her awareness of how the popularity of primitivism at the time contributed to her European success, and the patronizing element of her societal acceptance.

personal identity, to recover elements of authenticity from her heritage, and to add dimensionality to the cardboard popular-culture images of Indianness."[490]

Monkman's direct homage to Molly Spotted Elk, popular entertainer and outspoken commentator on Indigenous concerns – a woman who both exploited her Indigeneity for economic and political gain, and pushed back against the limitations of Indian exoticism – is a firm expression of visual sovereignty. Her conscious complicity in the repetition of colonial myths has had a lasting impact on both the perpetuation of stereotypes and the self-expression and sovereignty of multiple generations of Indigenous artists. What is more, Nelson's impact on performing and visual culture was not limited to Vaudeville, a fact that, I argue, is also referenced in *The Emergence of a Legend.* Nelson arguably makes a second, if subtler, appearance in Monkman's series, as *Cindy Silverscreen*, posing in a photography studio for a professional portrait.[491] In addition to her stage success, Molly Nelson starred as Neewa in the 1930 silent film, *The Silent Enemy,* set in the Canadian Northwest, and dramatizing an ailing Ojibwa community's struggle to secure enough food before the onset of winter. A film deeply committed to the narrative of the vanishing Indian and repeatedly mislabeled as an ethnographic documentary, *The Silent Enemy* has also been praised for its entirely Indigenous cast and employment of Indigenous consultants, artisans and crewmembers throughout the filming process, as well as its more sensitive, culturally specific portrayal of Indigenous people than most of the films made in ensuing years.[492] In Monkman's photograph, *Cindy Silverscreen* is set against a painted backdrop of a snowy landscape – a nod, I argue, to the film which was famously shot on location during the harsh winter months in northern Ontario. However, instead of a weakening pre-contact Neewa on the brink of starvation, *Cindy Silverscreen* poses in floor-length fur coat and a bejeweled headdress, signaling her modernity and her celebrity. She flaunts her wealth and status as a successful film star in command of the situation. The presentation of *Cindy Silverscreen* in fashionable, modern dress further implies the fictitiousness of the characters played by Indigenous actors, so often promoted as authentic or ethnographic.

If *The Emergence of a Legend* represents a visual chronology of Indigenous performance, furnishing the actors with a greater sense of agency and artistic control, this is nowhere more

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[490] Jessup, *Antimodernism*, 58.
[491] This suggestion is my own interpretation, as neither the artist nor any other critic has mentioned the link, but for a number of reasons here described, I would argue that the reference is almost undeniable.
[492] Even today, the film is listed as a "documentary" on the popular website, IMDB (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0020405/).

evident than in *Miss Chief, Film Director*. The final image in the series pictures Miss Chief in typical style, with a series of references to the golden days of the Hollywood western, not least of which is the backdrop of Monument Valley. In addition to the location, Miss Chief wears a beaded headband, directly alluding to the costuming of screen-styled “Indians.” Indeed, in his documentary, *Reel Injun: On the Trail of the Hollywood Indian*, Montreal-based Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond reveals that the headband was produced and utilized out of necessity in the filming of westerns. Diamond’s documentary traces the history of the Hollywood Indian through interviews with film scholars, actors and industry insiders who all assert that the headband was employed for the sole purpose of keeping long braided wigs affixed to actors heads during high-speed horse chases and boisterous battle scenes. The decision to include the headband in the image of *Miss Chief, Film Director* is thus a calculated move intended to highlight the power of the culture industry in the invention of taxonomic types. However, in keeping with the series’ modus operandi, other elements of the image point to the longer history of Indigenous performance, such as the appearance of the nineteenth century motion picture camera. The mixture of film eras referenced in the image speaks to the enduring popularity of Indians in the industry since its birth, as well as the shared links between early ethnographic “documentaries” and popular fictional cinema.

Of course, the truly subversive act in the image is the depiction of Miss Chief in a position of power and authority, controlling the camera, rather than being the object of its gaze. Her role could be interpreted as recognition of the many under-credited Indigenous directorial assistants, interpreters and interlocutors necessarily employed by photographers and filmmakers throughout the history of anthropological and popular entertainment. It could also imply the productive and creative role of performers, too often interpreted as powerless puppets in an exploitative industry. Indeed, if the image – like the series as a whole – affords a more expansive reflection of the history, it also points to the present and future of Indigenous art production. In *The Emergence of a Legend*, as in countless other works in a variety of media, Monkman offers Miss Chief as an eternal figure – a time travelling troublemaker existing at all points, in all places – and therefore as much a harbinger of the future as an interventionist in the past. Miss Chief’s symbolic capacity for time travel, coupled with her affirmation of Two-Spirit identification, compels spectators to revisit historical narratives and visual records to account for the repression – even erasure – of Indigenous worldviews and gender and sexual politics in the production and performance of “Indianness.” The refusal or suppression of difference, like the

denial of coeval existence, has long been deployed as a representational instrument of structural genocide. To underscore this aspect of Monkman's work, the following discussion examines the centrality and illusory character of both time and gender identity in *The Emergence of a Legend* to account for the artist's critique of recorded history and assertion of Indigenous futurity.

Time Travel and Queer Identity

In the burgeoning field of Indigenous science fiction, Grace L. Dillon argues that Indigenous authors have proven uniquely equipped to develop a culturally relevant subset of slipstream, or genre-blending speculative fiction, because of the centrality of nonlinear space-time to many Indigenous worldviews.[493] Dillon argues, "Native slipstream thinking… has been around for millennia," and informs much of the storytelling, art and film production of Indigenous authors who infuse their work with "time travel, alternative realities and multiverses, and alternative histories."[494] As opposed to classical literary or cinematic tales of time travel that often encompass the disruption or reversal of history to either romantic or dystopian ends, "Native slipstream exploits the possibilities of multiverses by *reshaping* time travel."[495] Rather than necessarily movement back and forth in time, Dillon argues, "Native slipstream views time as pasts, presents, and futures that flow together like currents in a navigable stream."[496] Her theory is echoed in Bliss Cua Lim's notion of temporal multiplicity in fantasy and horror films, reflecting Indigenous spirituality and political critique in Hong Kong and the Philippines. As introduced in Chapter Two, Lim argues that supernatural and speculative fiction introduces plural and heterogeneous temporalities – often discredited as primitive or superstitious – into the otherwise linear narrative structure of cinema, effectively exposing the limitations of "modern time consciousness," or quantifiably progress-driven teleological time.[497] Indeed, she argues that

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[493] Grace L. Dillon, "Imagining Indigenous Futurisms," *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press), 2-4. As Dillon argues, there really is no clear or satisfying definition of slipstream in the larger literary sphere, and the term "often becomes a catchall for speculative writing that defies neat categorization," 3. Dillon developed her notion of Native slipstream by piecing together various attempts to categorize slipstream, by authors such as Victoria de Zwaan, who focuses on the disruptive and experimental aspects of slipstream as pushing the boundaries of both science fiction and fantasy, a well as Damien Broderick's suggestion that slipstream overturns expectations and destabilizes prejudice and other preconceived ideas. Native slipstream, she argues, shares these elements, but is noteworthy for its reflection of an Indigenous worldview and limitless perception of time.

[494] Dillon, "Imagining Indigenous Futurisms," 4,3.

[495] Ibid., 4. Emphasis added.

[496] Ibid., 3.

[497] Lim, *Translating Time*, 10.

fantastic narrative has, at its core, "a propensity towards temporal critique."[498] Politicizing the genre, she insists that teleological time "has a profound affinity to both the temporal logic of colonialism, a linear, evolutionary view of history that spatialized time and cultural difference, and to the preemptive workings of contemporary capitalist governance, which dreams of foreclosing futurity."[499] Non-linear fantastic narratives strain against this logic, "unhinging the unicity of the present by insisting on the survival of the past or the jarring coexistence of other times."[500] Extending Dillon and Lim's examinations of literature and film to Monkman's performative photography, I suggest that Miss Chief's inhabiting of multiple space-times, both materially and conceptually, in *The Emergence of a Legend*, can be viewed as an example of slipstream storytelling that is oriented toward the future, as much as the past. Indeed, slipstream, according to Dillon, "allows authors to recover the Native space of the past, to bring it to the attention of contemporary readers, and to build better futures."[501] The insinuation bears resemblance, in fact, to both Derrida's notion of spectral justice and Robinson's assertion of the necessity for contemporary citizens and spectators to accept intergenerational responsibility for the perpetuation of settler colonial structures.

The co-presence of multiple temporalities within the series extends from Miss Chief's inhabiting of different periods across the span of the century to the disjuncture between the physical appearance of the photographs and the date of their production, and to the presence of a clearly contemporary figure in what appear to be much older environments. Furthermore, all of the images in the series are disguised as Daguerreotypes, despite the different periods referenced, from the time of Catlin's European tours, shortly after the technology's invention, to the filming of Hollywood westerns a century later, when it would already have become obsolete. Even the camera pictured in *Miss Chief, Film Director*, is an anachronistic apparatus more in line with what would have appeared *in* the westerns of the time, than what would have been used to shoot them. The images' temporal play, therefore, cannot be reduced to the simplicity of present objects masked as past. Rather, the series weaves together numerous temporalities, such as described in Dillon's estimation of Native slipstream. Indeed, the motion picture camera, like so many elements of each of the images, are representative of what Lim terms "untranslatable temporal otherness," or "*immiscible times* – multiple times that never quite dissolve into the code

[498] Lim, *Translating Time*, 12.
[499] Ibid., 13.
[500] Ibid., 11.
[501] Dillon, "Imagining Indigenous Futurisms," 4.

of modern time consciousness, discrete temporalities incapable of attaining homogeneity with or full incorporation into a uniform chronological present."[502] The presence of immiscible times, for Lim, is a direct affront to the colonial logic and dominance of modern time consciousness, which "epitomized by the ideology of progress served as a temporal justification for imperialist expansion."[503] Rather, the reverberation of disparate times in what is typically presumed to be a single stable present, "discloses the limits of historical time, the frisson of secular historiography's encounter with temporalities emphatically at odds with and not fully miscible to itself."[504]

The implication of Miss Chief's time travel forces a review of the history and its surviving visual culture. As I have argued, the series refers to an often under-acknowledged lineage of female Indigenous performers and producers. In addition, Miss Chief's queer identity further reflects the pre-colonial presence and subsequent silencing of non-binary, gender and sexual identities within Indigenous communities. Engaging tactics of camp mimicry and parodic subversion, Monkman's cross-dressed performance as Miss Chief complicates heteronormative constructions of gender and sexuality, demonstrating the fundamental hybridity of imaginary Indians. While drag is popularly understood as the masquerading of one gender as another – and typically within a male/female binary system – Miss Chief's self-identification as Two-Spirit adds further significance to the performance by expounding her queer consciousness and refuting Euro-American systems of classification altogether. In fact, Monkman's drag amounts to more than cross-dressing and acknowledgment of the performativity present in all expressions of gender identity, to reveal the ways in which gender and sexuality have been produced and policed in specifically racialized terms throughout colonization and settlement.[505]

In "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations," Elizabeth Freeman posits "temporal drag," as a method of transgressive performativity that engages with queer theory's dismantling of gendered and sexed types, but is also strategically associated with "retrogression, delay, and

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[502] Lim, *Translating Time*, 12.
[503] Ibid.
[504] Ibid., 2.
[505] Chris Finley argues that heteronormativity and heteropatriarchy are fundamental to the logic of colonialism and must be acknowledged as such. He claims, "Taking sexuality seriously as a logic of colonial power has the potential to further decolonize Native studies and Native communities by exposing the hidden ways that Native communities have been colonized and have internalized colonialism." In "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body (and Recovering the Native Bull-Dyke): Bringing 'Sexy Back' and Out of Native Studies' Closet, *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature*, Eds. Justice, Rifkin and Schneider (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2011): 33. See also Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005).

the pull of the past upon the present."[506] To highlight her point, Freeman articulates the divide between one's identification as, for example, "lesbian" or as "queer," asserting that "it often seems as if the lesbian feminist is cast as the big drag, drawing politics inexorably back to essentialized bodies, normative visions of women's sexuality, and single-issue identity politics."[507] In contrast, Freeman's notion of temporal drag signifies "a mode of embodiment" that can connect "queer performativity to disavowed political histories."[508] She argues that such an act of registering a sense of "chronotopic disjunctiveness"[509] on the surface of one's body can potentially articulate a "*temporal*-transitivity" that does not necessitate the destruction of historical signifiers of identity or political positions.[510] Temporal drag thus takes up the "multitemporal aspect of camp" to both reclaim the past and to highlight its effects on the present.[511] The retention of problematic and outdated stereotypes that threaten to impede the project of queer critique in temporal drag is not dissimilar from Monkman's strategic rearticulation of racialized colonial tropes in *The Emergence of a Legend.* Effectively dressing his photographs in temporal drag and taxidermically preserving an alternative image of Indianness, Monkman-as-Miss-Chief produces a form of visual and conceptual time travel that re-introduces the allochronic imaginary Indian into the present. As a result, the "Indian" of the perpetual past is updated through the refusal of easily categorized gender, racial or cultural classification and thus enters the present, revealing the arbitrariness and absurdity of colonial identity construction, while also arguing against the physical and ideological policing of Indigenous gender and sexuality.

Gendered stereotypes pervaded the colonial construction of Indianness and were predicated on the establishment and advancement of new world national identities that asserted Indigenous otherness as a threat to Euro-North American cultural cohesion. Fear mongering was a common tactic that posited Indigenous men as animalistic sexual predators, prone to poaching white settler women for sexual satisfaction and enslavement.[512] At the same time, a concerted effort was made in *both* popular culture and political legislation to effectively emasculate and

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[506] Freeman, "Packing History, Count(er)ing Generations," *New Literary History* 31.4 (Autumn 2000): 728.
[507] Ibid.
[508] Ibid., 729.
[509] Ibid., 732.
[510] Ibid., 729.
[511] Ibid., 732.
[512] This tactic of spreading fear about the sexual predation of Indigenous men has obvious and equally racist parallels with the fabricated allegations of the rape of white women by black men as justification for lynching in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. See Chapter Two for more information.

infantilize Indigenous men be stripping their civil rights and autonomy and, in Canada, legally rendering them wards of the state.[513] In contrast, a fantasy of the sexual availability and flirtatiousness of Indigenous women was propounded in visual and literary culture as well as political and popular consciousness.[514] It has been persuasively argued that the trope of passive and easily penetrable Indigenous women functioned metaphorically to justify the colonial occupation of land as well as the habitual violence committed against Indigenous women and girls.[515] Thus, in addition to the consequences of social stereotyping and repressive authenticity, colonial ideology resulted in a direct attack upon the gender identity and sexual lives of Indigenous people in North America. Colonial governments in both Canada and the United States enacted programs to drastically reconfigure traditional gender roles and familial structures in order to conform to Euro-American social ideals.[516] Restricting hunting rights and forcing Indigenous men into agricultural labour – a role traditionally assigned to women in many nations – and the attempts to enforce a heteronormative nuclear structure on Indigenous families functioned, in many cases, to "destroy the core of matrilineal societies… and to forcibly reorient Native cultures to patriarchal property-based models."[517] In addition, as discussed in the previous chapters, the establishment of missionary and residential schools that forcibly removed children from their cultural communities on the pretense of civilizing and assimilating the youth, undertook an aggressive program of re-education that included molding Indigenous children to the hetero-patriarchal ideals of European society. Indeed, Chris Finley has argued for recognition that "heterosexism and the structure of the nuclear family need to be thought of as a colonial

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[513] As discussed in Chapter Two, the Indian Act in Canada both legislated the reorganization of Indigenous community and family formation according to a patriarchal system and legally made Indigenous people "wards of the state." Therefore, whereas Indigenous men may have been represented in popular culture as physically strong and virile – up to the point of their supposedly inevitable defeat – they were rendered *politically* impotent.

[514] See Elizabeth Bird, "Savage Desires: The Gendered Construction of the American Indian in Popular Media," *Selling the Indian: Commercializing and Appropriating American Indian Cultures*, eds. Carter Jones Meyer and Diane Roger (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001): 62-98, and Nancy Marie Mithlo, "'Our Little Indian Woman': Beyond the Squaw/Princess," *'Our Indian Princess': Subverting the Stereotype* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2008): 1-14.

[515] David Heath Justice, Mark Rifkin and Bethany Schneider, "Introduction," *Sexuality, Nationality, Indigeneity: A Special Issue of* GLQ. Eds. Justice, et al. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 10. See also Rayna Green, "The Pocahontas Perplex: The Image of Indian Women in American Culture," *Massachusetts Review* 16.4 (1975): 698-714.

[516] For more information, see: Justice, Rifkin and Schneider, "Introduction;" Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2006); Sarah De Leeuw, "Intimate Colonialisms: The Material and Experienced Places of British Columbia's Residential Schools," *The Canadian Geographer* 51.3 (Autumn 2007): 342.

[517] Justice, Rifkin and Schneider, "Introduction," 18.

system of violence."[518] Not surprisingly, the assertion of heteronormativity was, at its most blatant, enacted to eradicate any evidence of gender identification other than male or female, as these categories are conceived according to Euro-American patriarchy.[519]

Although largely erased from the writing of history until the past two or three decades, Indigenous communities were not all structured along a male/female binary system prior to colonization and were thus perceived as deviant by European colonizers. The unabashedly derogatory term, *berdache* – originating from a Persian title referring to slave youths, but extended to deride the position of "kept boys" in homosexual relationships – was applied to individuals who did not easily fit heteronormative categorization.[520] *Berdache* was employed by settlers disturbed by the unorthodox practices of some Indigenous nations in which it was perceived that men would dress in women's clothing, take on women's roles within the community and often partake in "same-sex" romantic partnerships or marriage.[521] The extraordinarily demeaning word has obviously fallen out of favour and has been most predominantly replaced with the still somewhat controversial term, "Two-Spirit."[522]

While Two-Spiritedness does not necessarily infer homosexuality, same-sex relations became the defining characteristic for colonizers. Rather, a Two-Spirited person is characterized by the possession of both male and female characteristics or consciousness. While Two-Spirit identity today has been reclaimed by a number of Indigenous people – many of whom identify as gay, lesbian, queer or transgender – the historic deference afforded two-spirited people prior to colonization has been fundamentally shaken.[523] In much of his work with or depicting Miss Chief, Monkman engages with the history of colonial war waged on Indigenous sexuality and gender. Miss Chief self-identifies as Two-Spirit and through her roles in performance and film,

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[518] Finley, "Decolonizing the Queer Native Body," 32.
[519] Justice, Rifkin and Schneider, "Introduction," 18.
[520] Terry Goldie, "Queer Nation?" (Toronto: Robart Centre for Canadian Studies, 2000), 9.
[521] The term same-sex does not necessarily apply to relationships involving Two-Spirit individuals as Two-Spirit always already destabilizes the construction of single sex (male or female) identification.
[522] The term "Two-Spirit" was proposed by queer Indigenous people at the Third International Gathering of American Indian and First Nations Gays and Lesbians in Winnipeg in 1990, as both a replacement for the derogatory term *berdache* and a displacement of anthropological authority that had functioned to define and describe Indigenous people as ethnographic subjects. The editors of *Queer Indigenous Studies* recount that the term was colloquially in use on reserves and reservations, in urban Indigenous communities and by various Indigenous-led organizations before it began gaining traction within academia and eventually circulating more widely among settler society. (Driskill, Finley, Gilley and Morgensen, "Introduction," 12-13).
[523] Indeed, Terry Goldie has argued that the greatest consequence of colonial aggression against traditional gender and sexual structures has been the rampant homophobia present within Indigenous communities today and the lack of respect afforded Two-Spirit individuals. "Queer Nation?" 10.

sets herself the task of educating both historical figures and contemporary spectators on the sacred position of Two-Spirited people in Indigenous history and current cultural life. Her self-identification and pride functions as both a critique of problematic structures and a progressive intervention in current systems of interaction and acceptance. "To interrogate heteronormativity," according to the editors of *Queer Indigenous Studies: Critical Interventions in Theory, Politics, and Literature,* "*is* to critique colonial power," and is thus integral to the imperatives of decolonization or anti-colonialism.[524]

In both ideological and material ways, Monkman's series temporally complicates the construction of Indianness as well as assumptions about Indigenous sexual identity. Through the re-appropriation of cultural and social stereotypes born of colonization and the amalgamation of such disparate signifiers upon the surface of a single body, Miss Chief is offered as a multi-temporal and hybrid representational figure. I suggest that a reading of the series according to Freeman's concept of temporal drag and Dillon's description of Native slipstream can advance an understanding of the queer performativity at work in Monkman's images, which rely heavily on the manipulation of time and temporal significance. In material ways, *The Emergence of a Legend* arguably goes above and beyond the temporally subversive potential of camp performance described by Freeman, extending also to the physical manipulation of the photographs themselves. By overtly faking the images' age and authenticity, Monkman essentially queers the traditional production of images manufactured for ethnographic and entertainment purposes through the active denial of coevalness. Indeed, the series speaks to the temporal dysfunction at the very heart of ethnographic research and representation, as well as the fantasy central to playing Indian, and its contribution to ideological and concrete attempts to restrict Indigenous presence to the past, threaten present existence and forestall future survival. The images that make up *The Emergence of a Legend* are fundamentally fictional, but their convincing retrogressive disguise – enhanced by their small size – requires added attentiveness on the part of spectators to fully appreciate their layered temporalities. Spectatorship of the series thus necessitates durational engagement – a willingness to watch images and allow them to unfold and expose their fundamental heterogeneity. Upon close reflection, the series further implies a similar sense of fantasy and fabrication to be at work in the production of *historical* photographs and other performative images from the past. In this sense, the series has the potential to defy or unsettle expectations and, by extension, spectatorship.

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[524] Driskill, et al, "Introduction," 217.

Performative practices such as those undertaken by Monkman incorporate elements of specifically Indigenous historical and social identification into queer critique. By reclaiming Two-Spirit identification, Miss Chief insists upon the project's pertinence to the specific history of Indigenous people in North America. Furthermore, the aesthetic devices employed in *The Emergence of a Legend* can be understood both as assertion of queer performativity that illuminates the historical construction of Indianness and as a visual intervention in the established photographic frontier that directly confronts the temporally unsound structure of colonial representation. By engaging in a process of fabricated photographic documentation that depicts and disseminates an updated image of the imaginary Indian in similarly taxidermic ways as its historical precedents, Monkman-as-Miss-Chief evinces the temporal entrapment of ethnographic photography, producing contemporary images of a contemporary Indigenous actor in a phantasmagoric past. Queering and subverting the process, Monkman and Miss Chief present a subject historically and often still denied access to the colonial narrative – a powerful, non-binary provocateur who is both offered up for scopophilic consumption and furnished with the means to write and record from her own perspective. Miss Chief's time travelling, epoch-spanning trickery re-animates the past and implies a sense of endlessness or eternal existence; if she has always been present, she will persist to exist in the future. Indeed, the incorporation of multiple temporalities in *The Emergence of a Legend* is evident in a number of the works examined in both this and the previous chapter.

Da-ka-xeen Mehner, *Reinterpretation*

Tlingit multi-media artist Da-ka-xeen Mehner's 2009 *Reinterpretation* [Figures 3.14-3.17] series includes four images produced through a combined process of archival intervention and mimetic performance, by which the artist doubled and reversed found photographs, digitally splicing his own body into the historical photographs to appear as the mirrored image of a man suspected to be his hereditary ancestor. The resulting images picture two people living a century apart, yet sharing a single photographic frame. The appropriated photographs, which Mehner came across while scrolling through museum archives online, were produced by the Alaska-based studio Case & Draper at the turn of the twentieth century and depict a man identified by a phonetic variation of the artist's name, Da-yuc-xeen. Captioned in different images as "Old Chief," "Shaman" and "Witch Doctor," the original photographs all picture Da-yuc-xeen in a single studio set, posed against a rather abstract painted backdrop, assumedly intended to imply

snowdrifts or rock crests. In each image, the same fur pelts cover the floor and the same collection of objects are arranged around the room – albeit in different configurations – regardless of the image's title and the role Da-yuc-xeen is labeled as playing. Mehner has said of his encounter with the original images, that he felt a need to deconstruct the colonial narrative and identity of Da-yuc-xeen, and reconstruct his poses with important updates.[525] He argues, "By mirroring [these images], I attempt to reflect both the truth and fiction of this history… What is fact and what is false in our photographic history taken by others is vague."[526]

In Mehner's reinterpretations, the artist appears opposite his predecessor, separated by a century, yet parroting his pose in mirrored relief and seamlessly enveloped in their shared setting, except the centre of each image in which the reflections come together to kaleidoscopic effect. Mehner has described the mirrored format as reflective of the bilateral form-line design structure of Tlingit carved screens.[527] As such, his interventions function as a re-inscription of Tlingit aesthetics and expression into the representation of Da-yuc-xeen and the collection of appropriated artifacts and accessories pictured in Case & Draper's photographs. Nevertheless, the original studio backdrop – vague in its evocation of northern terrain – is rendered even more illegible in *Reinterpretation;* doubled and fanned out in Mehner's images the background takes on an other-worldly, almost psychedelic appearance that shares little with the clean lines and precision typical of Northwest coast design. It appears instead like a vortex signifying the temporal collapse at work within the images and the physically impossible coexistence of the two men.

A number of slight differences betray the temporal divide between the two figures, and testify to Mehner's conscious self-presentation. Instead of the bone and rattle with which his ancestor had been equipped, Mehner holds the tools he uses on a daily basis: a large-format camera, given to him by his uncle, the renowned photographer Larry McNeil, a portable voice recorder, and his own handmade adz.[528] While the images have been altered to make it appear as if he is adorned, for the most part, with the same accessories as Da-yuc-xeen, Mehner's basic wardrobe, consisting of jeans, sneakers and a leather jacket his mother gifted him for his

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[525] "Da-ka-xeen Mehner, Tlingit/N'ishga," interview with Catherine Cooper, *Contemporary North American Indigenous Artists* (Winter 2011): http://contemporarynativeartists.tumblr.com/post/17476254148/da-ka-xeen-mehner-tlingitnishga
[526] Ibid.
[527] Ibid.
[528] Ibid.

wedding, are also visible underneath.[529] The inclusion of these objects – which would have been obviously discordant with the original photographer's vision of authenticity – is particularly significant, considering the lengths to which ethnographic photographers historically went to avoid or remove any evidence of contemporaneity from their images. The inclusion of Mehner's tools cause a historically unacceptable collapse of temporal spheres, but also begs the question as to what objects or evidence of modernity – what of Da-yuc-xeen's personal effects – were excised from Case & Draper's earlier photographs.

Similar to Red Star's commitment to authentic and assertive self-representation in an environment defined by illusion and fabrication, Mehner's *Reinterpretation* highlights his self-identification and individuality among and against the romantic trappings of colonial fantasies and the common reduction of Indigenous cultures to didactic stereotypes. The artist's close attention to the original images in his re-staged emulations reflects an investigative approach to Case & Draper's photographs and Da-yuc-xeen's potential role in or exclusion from their composition. Indeed, Mehner has made clear choices as to which aspects and accessories he would retain and which we would replace. Spectators are left to consider the proposition made by various Indigenous artists and scholars, discussed in Chapter One, that "looking beyond" easy assumptions and stereotypes – *watching* historical photographs for reverberations of spectral presence – can generate attention or respect for the photographed subject, rather than mere adherence to the photographer's limited vision. Despite his temporal remove, Da-yuc-xeen is rendered *as* present as Mehner in each image. In this way, *Reinterpretation* shares much with Meryl McMaster's *Ancestral*, discussed in the previous chapter.

Of course, the shared hereditary aspect of both series is displayed in the links drawn between the artists as image-makers and their ancestors – whether assumed in Mehner's case or imagined in McMaster's – as photographic subjects, and also in the reference to close relations and inspirational predecessors in the field. Whereas McMaster enlisted her father, well-known artist and curator Gerald McMaster, to act as a screen for the projections of more distant ancestors, Mehner made the conscious decision of posing in each image with the camera given to him by his uncle, Larry McNeil. Both artists thus pay homage to their artistic lineage and the foundational labour of prior generations to make space for their work. As such, they highlight the history and legacy of Indigenous producers, performers and cultural workers from distant to recent ancestors – a lengthy lineage that is rarely accounted for in either the broader settler

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[529] "Da-ka-xeen Mehner, Tlingit/N'ishga,"

colonial narrative or in mainstream (primarily non-Indigenous) coverage of contemporary Indigenous art.[530] Another, equally noteworthy connection between *Ancestral* and *Reinterpretation* is the artists' use of their own bodies and identities to function as mediums or vehicles for the transportation of their ancestors from the past to the present, re-animating their images with renewed relevance and symbolically embodying the process of intergenerational transmission, fundamental to cultural survival. Furthermore in both cases, the inescapably colonial vision of the original photographers is overwritten by the contemporary artists' initial act of appropriation and subsequent authorship of the updated images.

The act of reclamation performed in *Reinterpretation* is most actively asserted in Mehner's captions and copyright distinctions, stamped on the finished photographs in white block letters to mimic the format of the originals. In the process of flipping and mirroring Case & Draper's portraits the original captions are reversed and rendered difficult to read – their legibility intentionally sacrificed for Mehner's updated titles. *The Thlingit Artist 001* [Figure 3.14], for example, pictures Da-yuc-xeen and Da-ka-xeen each seated on a cedar bark basket, wearing traditional Chilcat robes, woven from cedar bark and mountain goat wool, their cryptic, inaccessible gazes directed into middle distance. On the bottom right, in reversed text, the original caption reads, " Old Chief Da-yuc-xeen/Copyright 1906 by Case & Draper," while on the left, under Mehner's portrait, is written, "The Thlingit Artist Da-ka-xeen/Copyright 2007 by Da-ka-xeen." In another image, *Reflection 001* [Figure 3.15], wherein the mirrored sitters have removed their robes, but wear equally inaccessible, unsmiling expressions, "The Thlingit Sha-man Da-yuc-xeen/Copyright 1906 by Case & Draper" is replaced with "The Thlingit Artist Da-ka-xeen/Copyright 2007 by Da-ka-Xeen." This continues across the four photographs and, in each case, Case & Draper's ownership of the images, as well as their assignment of roles, as

[530] As discussed in Chapter Two, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson writes extensively on the importance of kinship and intergenerational cultural transmission in *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence, and a New Emergence*. Indeed, kinship, lineage and inter-generational training are given concerted attention in the work of many Indigenous artists, writers and academics, but have consistently been given short shrift in most non-Indigenous writing *about* Indigenous artists. This discrepancy was implicitly addressed in the groundbreaking Summer 2017 "Kinship" issue of *Canadian Art,* edited by Lindsay Nixon (Cree), in which – among other radical moves –no written English or French appeared on the cover, with even the magazine's title appearing in Cree syllabics. Demonstrative of the various departures taken in the special issue's pages, the cover performed a sort of productive alienation of typically privileged settler spectators. Expanding upon this initial shift, implicit within much of the writing included in the magazine was the honouring of a kinship system, damaged, but not severed by centuries of targeted settler colonial violence and destruction. The refusal to succumb to the assault, like the assertion of Indigenous futurity is, I argue, also evident in the artists' work discussed herein and represents a powerful and subversive expression of resilience and survivance.

varied and as generic as "chief" and "shaman," to a single man, is overwritten by Mehner's intervention, self-identification as artist and updated date and copyright claim.

There is particular poignancy to the image *Alone with his Thoughts 001* [Figure 3.16], in which again "Sha-man" has been replaced with "Artist." Da-ka-xeen and Da-yuc-xeen each crouch on one knee, holding their respective tools in their hands and facing one another. As in all the images, there is no implied interaction between the two and their gazes remain downcast and distant, with their heads slightly bowed, as if looking into the face of, even communicating with, an anthropomorphic sculpture, a few feet in height, situated in close proximity to each man and angled as if engaged in a conversation. In fact, holding his recording devices, Mehner appears almost to be interviewing the form, listening intently and respectfully, with his camera at his hip. It is interesting that the title and caption of the original image refer to the man's solitude, alone with his thoughts, when he seems very much to be engaged in some manner of dialogue, however one-sided. As a result of the disjuncture between caption and composition, the image takes on an almost comic element that is doubled in Mehner's reinterpretation. Unlike in the other images in the series, in *Alone with his Thoughts 001,* part of the floor beneath the fur blankets, is exposed at the point where the two images meet. The strange effect that appears at the centre of all the images is therefore heightened in this case, as the artist has obviously had to add to and invent aspects of the original to accommodate intervention. Because of the shapes made by the blanket's folds, visible on the bare floor, the reflected images are imbued with the appearance of a Rorschach print. And, where the floor is exposed, so too is the edge of the backdrop, bringing to mind Parcell's critique of unsuccessful dioramas as those that betray their own illusion. Parcell argues, "A photo of a well-built diorama looks exactly like a photograph of a real landscape."[531] And, while Mehner's appropriated photographs were not of dioramas in the strict sense, they were of staged studio scenes, encompassing the out-of-context display of peoples and cultural artifacts, dependent upon spectators' belief in the illusion of authenticity.

The slight tweaks made in his reinterpreted staging of the scenes, as well as the definitive shift in their captions is most apparent in *Native Photographer 001* [Figure 3.17]. In the original found photograph, Da-yuc-xeen is pictured crouching over a woman lying on her back, draped in the same material as covers the floor, with her right arm raised to her head and one of her breasts exposed. Captioned, "Native Witch Doctor {Shaman} Healing a Sick Woman," the scene depicts Da-yuc-xeen holding a rattle over her abdomen and appearing to blow into one end of a bone,

[531] Parcell, "The Metaphoric Architecture of the Diorama," 197.

while the other end hovers just inches above her nipple. Contemporary viewers of the image, particularly when seeing it among a collection of others, all clearly staged and set within the same studio, are left to wonder who this woman was and how she perceived her role in the scene. Was there any need other than ingrained assumptions about the sexual availability of Indigenous women, or about the equation of primitivism and nakedness that necessitated her partial nudity? How much input might the sitters have had on the composition of the image? There is definitely an air of the taxidermic in this photograph, perhaps even more so than in the others. While there may not actually be stuffed animals in the shots, as in some of Wakeham's diorama examples, the "sick woman's" proximity to pelts, furs and bones, appears indicative of her animalism. As evidenced in the before-and-after photographs of Thomas Moore discussed in Chapter One, wherein fur and hide were used to mark out the pre-assimilated boy's "savagery," eventually overcome and replaced with more "civilized" materials, such as marble, stone and cotton, the tactic of material proximity was not an uncommon occurrence in staged colonial photography.[532]

In Mehner's updated image, captioned, "Native Photographer {Artist} Photographing a Woman," the scene is decidedly different, although the only change made – outside of the actor, of course – is the replacement of Da-yuc-xeen's bone and rattle with Da-ka-xeen's camera and timer. In Mehner's image, the woman's otherwise inexplicable nudity is given purpose, as the artist leans over her body, looking into his camera, with the lens pointed directly at her bare chest. Her raised arm, instead of signifying perhaps a headache or dizziness when playing the "sick woman," here reads as intentional and seductive, as if she is posing for an erotic or fashion photograph. Looking at Mehner, as he studies the woman's exposed body through the lens of his camera, spectators become aware of the photographer's prying eye – an implication of invasiveness that is suggestively extended to the photographers of all ethnographic images purporting to offer viewers unmediated access to the bodies and lives of others. At the very least, it clearly expresses what was otherwise implicit in the original image – that the woman's exposed body served little narrative purpose, other than the arousal of interest. Mehner's hand-held camera, therefore, functions as a surrogate for Case & Draper's large-format lens and for all the cameras employed to document the "dying race" at the turn of the twentieth century.

There is of course, a significant difference, however, in the camera being controlled by Mehner. He assumes the photographer's power to represent, rather than accepting his conventional role as object of the gaze. Whether actively shooting, or keeping his camera ready

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[532] See Milloy, *A National Crime*, and Racette, "Haunted."

and waiting, the capacity to record remains evident in each image, and an alternative story capable of being told. Indeed, similar to Monkman equipping Miss Chief with a motion picture camera and megaphone in *Film Director*, Mehner reverses the roles of typical photographic encounters in the colonial period. This, coupled with the various tactics and techniques employed by both artists to costume their images as historical objects, unsettles spectators' expectations and points suggestively to the under-acknowledged history of Indigenous photographers throughout the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. While a nod to this history of Indigenous image-*makers* is certainly evident in Monkman's series, the performance of identity and Indigeneity – or "Indianness – is definitely the central focus of *The Emergence of a Legend*. In contrast, Mehner's wielding of the camera in each of his self-portraits, his reference to his uncle's photographic legacy, and his self-identification as "Thlingit photographer" in the images' captions, combined with the technical act of archival intervention, all imply a deliberate engagement with the history of Indigenous photography. As has been previously noted, the legacy of early Indigenous photographers has been largely left out of the history of photography, of colonial representation and even of contemporary Indigenous art. The artists examined in this chapter, however, are as indebted to the under-written history of Indigenous photographers as they are to the over-exploited history of Indigenous people as performers and subjects of the photographic gaze. By way of conclusion, therefore, the following section briefly examines this legacy, with a final case study focused on the work of early-twentieth century Kiowa photographer, Horace Poolaw. Renowned primarily for his "documentary" images, I focus on a subset of his oeuvre, that I argue is exceptional for its mischievous and self-reflexive depiction of Indigenous people "playing Indian" for the camera.

Indigenous Photographic Legacy

In "Returning Fire, Pointing the Camera: Aboriginal Photography as Resistance," Sherry Farrell Racette argues, "despite being relegated to the social and economic margins, excluded from Canadian citizenship and institutions for much of the twentieth century, First Nations, Inuit and Métis people have engaged with the camera."[533] As has been demonstrated, Indigenous people were solicited as photographic subjects as soon as the technology was introduced, but significant barriers limited the professional success of Indigenous photographers in the industry's earliest decades. This does not mean, however, that there is no history of Indigenous

[533] Racette, "Returning Fire," 70.

photographic production before the mid-twentieth century. Rather, Racette argues, “Aboriginal people have a historical relationship with two distinct bodies of photography: the ethnographic salvage project (and its subsequent dissolution into popular culture) and the emergent genre of family photography.”[534] Both, she asserts, “have been critical locations for photography’s role in defining standards of authenticity, beauty, and normality, and have simultaneously been sites of erasure and agency.”[535] As has been described, the obvious and most dominant role of Indigenous people in the ethnographic salvage project was as locus of the camera’s gaze. However, from the Indigenous assistants working for ethnographic and documentary photographers and filmmakers, as interpreters, interlocutors, models and cultural consultants, to others who acquired the technology of their own accord, “in addition to being sought by the lens, [Indigenous people] were sometimes beside the camera and occasionally behind it.”[536] While not entirely absent, there were very few professionally successful Indigenous photographers in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, particularly in Canada, wherein “more oppressive legislation… together with the profound poverty of the early reservation and post-resistance era, severely restricted entrepreneurial efforts,” a tradition of family- and community-based amateur photography developed among Indigenous peoples across the continent.[537] This genre of photography is remarkable, above all, because, in addition to controlling the images’ production, Indigenous people were both their primary subjects and their intended audience. Of course, these photographs offer a more candid – indeed, more “authentic” – view of the people, environments and activities pictured, than could the intrusive eye of the outside image-maker, and it is precisely that vantage point that would have made the images, in many cases, unreadable or undesirable to non-Indigenous audiences. Rather than chasing a fantasy of pre-contact pan-Indian cultural purity, the work of early Indigenous photographers documented the current existence and experiences of communities under considerable stress and displaying both adaptation and resistance.

In “Returning Fire,” Racette focuses on the work of four men: George Johnston (1894-1972, Tlingit), Peter Pitseolak (1902-1973, Inuit), James Brady (1908-1967, Métis), and Murray

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[534] Racette, “Returning Fire,” 71.
[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid., 72.
[537] Ibid., 74.

McKenzie (1927-2007, Cree-Métis).[538] Veronica Passalacqua has written of others, working between 1890 and 1920, primarily in the United States: Richard Throssel (Cree/Métis/Scottish). Jennie Ross Cobb (Aniyunwiya), and Benjamin Haldane (Tsimshian). Indeed, Passalacqua argues that there is a more prominent legacy of Indigenous photographers in the United States in these early decades, owing in part to the more prohibitive legislation in Canada as well as to the inclusion of photography in the curriculum of Carlisle Industrial School in Pennsylvania as early as 1906.[539] Operating simultaneous to non-Indigenous ethnographers, surveyors and government agencies, all of these photographers "appropriated the camera, which had become the critical sign and instrument of the intrusive outsider, and turned it to their own purposes."[540] Racette argues that in some cases, these photographers' intentions bore some similarity to those of ethnographic image-makers participating in the salvage project, driven as they were by a desire to document changing traditions for the benefit of future generations.[541] There were, however, two significant differences that must be accounted for: The first was their interest in representing *the present,* unromanticized or historicized, and of *novelty, change* or *transformation* as it occurred. The second, of course, was that the intended audience was future generations of *Indigenous* viewers. Indeed, pointing in particular to the work of Peter Pitseolak, Racette argues, "He envisioned a time when Inuit life would be dramatically altered, and he sough to document the present and recent past for his own descendants – projecting his own time forward into a living Inuit future."[542] Racette's assertion of the forward-looking gaze of Pitseolak's camera is critical, as it directly opposes the underlying imperative of the salvage paradigm to confine and preserve Indigenous peoples in the past, by asserting the future existence of Inuit in the face of continuing cultural or structural genocide. The work of Pitseolak and others was thus foundational for the historical expression of Indigenous survivance and futurity that is evident in the work of the contemporary artists examined in this dissertation.

A noteworthy repetition throughout Pitseolak's immense body of work is the frequent inclusion of the camera in his photographs [Figure 3.18]. Indeed, Racette argues, "His

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[538] Racette refers to a number of other photographers, such as George Simpson McTavish (1834-1893), who she argues could be identified as the first Canadian photographer of Indigenous ancestry, as well as George Hunt (Scots-Tlingit), Richard Throssel (1882-1993, Métis) and Alexander Upshaw (Absaroke), all of whom worked with and learned from Edward Curtis.
[539] Passalacqua, "Finding Sovereignty through Relocation," 21-22.
[540] Racette, "Returning Fire," 74.
[541] Ibid., 76.
[542] Ibid.

relationship with his camera was an expression of reciprocal identity construction."[543] He not only appropriated the technology, but also *indigenized* it, "as previous generations had incorporated cloth, guns, and steel traps into their world."[544] She writes: "He wrapped his camera in caribou hide and, through physical manipulation and experimentation, acquired intimate knowledge and the capacity to make the camera Inuit."[545] The camera, in turn, became an important part of Pitseolak's identity, and he included it in a number of self-portraits, as well as portraits of others. In doing so, he presents the camera and the taking of photographs, as just another of the technologies and Inuit practices recorded for future generations. Racette argues that the ambitious documentary projects undertaken by Indigenous photographers throughout the twentieth century represent a powerful counter-narrative to photo-colonialism and testify to "the degree to which they seized the camera and were empowered by it."[546]

The tradition of artists picturing themselves with their tools is as old as the genre of self-portraiture itself – whether in photography, painting or any other medium – and is of course a central aspect of Mehner's *Reinterpretation.* While it cannot be known whether Da-yuc-xeen selected the rattle and bone with which he is furnished in Case & Draper's photographs, or if he would have felt these tools defined him, Mehner's decision to pose with his camera in each image is significant. As previously noted, this aspect of the series, paired with the artist's intervention in the historical archive is of utmost importance. Case & Draper's photographs were produced within the first decade of the twentieth century and Racette and Passalacqua, among others, have revealed that, by that time, the camera had been adopted into Indigenous communities across the continent and put to work in the service of self-representation. Of course, like the alarm clock erased from Curtis's *In a Piegan Lodge,* discussed in Chapter One, the camera would have lacked the perceived "authenticity" expected by non-Indigenous audiences and would not have been included in a set of photographs such as those depicting the Tlingit Shaman/chief/witch doctor. Mehner's inclusion of the camera in his augmented images, appearing at first glance as historical photographs themselves, thus conflicts with expectations and calls on spectators to reconsider the historical narrative with which they are familiar.

Equally significant is Mehner's choice of what camera to include. The artist holds neither the newest digital camera, such as the one he might have used to make his self-portraits, nor one

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[543] Racette, "Returning Fire," 76.
[544] Ibid.
[545] Ibid.
[546] Ibid., 79.

that would have been in use at the time Da-yuc-xeen was photographed. Rather, he pictures himself with the camera received from Larry McNeil. As a result, McNeil himself is invoked in the image, as a third generation represented in the frame. McNeil, as noted, is himself a foundational figure in contemporary Indigenous photography, exhibiting since the early 1980s and having had a profound impact on subsequent generations of Indigenous artists, not least of whom his nephew. An early adopter of digital technology, McNeil became known for his incorporation of computer graphics and his embracing of digital editing techniques in work that he describes as equally influenced by Tlingit aesthetics, irony and narrative traditions.[547] His work is also deeply political, satirical and preoccupied with documentary and storytelling. The lineage paid homage to in Mehner's series is thus extensive, and refers to the performative *and* productive participation of the artist's recent and distant ancestors in the field of photography over the course of a century. What is more, *Reinterpretation* raises a number of issues around representation and agency, particularly in photographic encounters. It is impossible to know the extent of Da-yuc-xeen's input or collaboration in the production of the original photographs, or the incentive for his participation. The implied ethnographic character of the photographs is intended to limit such questions, as if the photographs – while obviously staged – were objective records. In contrast, Mehner's series displays no anthropological or documentary aspirations beyond playful parody. Rather, *Reinterpretation*, like *The Emergence of a Legend*, is fundamentally *performed*, insinuating the performative nature of photography in general. As such, I argue that Mehner's work – like Monkman's and Red Star's – is as indebted to the history of Indigenous performance and the practice of playing Indian as it is to the ethnographic images the artist critiques. This, paired with his reference to the legacy of Indigenous photographers – from McNeil to more distant predecessors – displays a unique perspective on an under-examined branch of photography's history.

It is no surprise that the existing or acknowledged photographs produced by early Indigenous photographers would be primarily read and celebrated for their documentary function. The legacy of self-representation – of individuals, families and communities – that Racette describes, is an invaluable resource and display of visual sovereignty. But equally generative and worthwhile of contemplation are, seemingly more rare, Indigenous-made

[547] Christopher Schnoor, "Tonto and the Raven; Larry McNeil and the Politics of Representation," *Boise Weekly* (December 2004): 2-3. Interestingly, in terms of his influence on Mehner, much of McNeil's work centres around his community and family heritage, including a 2002 project focused on his Tlingit namesake, Xhe-Dhe, an ancestor living in the same period as Da-yuc-xeen, entitled *Tee Harbor Jackson.*

performative photographs from the period, less often highlighted in discussions of these early photographers' work. Racette does touch on Pitseolak's "methodically premeditated and staged" images, the careful posing of his sitters in specific spaces, and the tools or accessories included in the frames.[548] Indeed, her discussion of his concerted effort to record the camera alongside other vital aspects of Inuit life is a testament to this performativity and to the assertion of Indigenous agency in identity construction. This is, of course, a tactic that Mehner also employs. Another, more theatrical example, can be found in the work of Kiowa photographer Horace Poolaw, a branch of whose output, I argue, speaks directly to the expectation and strategic complicity of Indigenous people to perform Indianness, even at the risk of undermining their autonomy or self-determination. His work, with which I will close this chapter, serves as a useful and foundational example of the non-complacent complicity of historical actors described by both Jessup and Raheja.

Horace Poolaw (1906-1984) is probably one of the best-known and most successful professional Indigenous photographers of his time, producing upwards of 2000 images over his 40-year career and, providing an extensive record of Kiowa community life from the mid-1920s through the 1970s.[549] Poolaw produced a wealth of photographs of and for his family and community, while remaining keenly aware of market demand and settler society's interest in Indianness. His representations of Kiowa life during the politically and economically fraught decades of the twentieth century have garnered much attention and, until the last decade or so, have been examined according to a rather reductive framework of a "culture in transition."[550] More recent studies of the photographer's work have attempted to overcome these limited assumptions, but do still focus primarily on the "documentary" aspects of his output. A fascinating subset of Poolaw's work, however, was included in Laura Smith's 2008 doctoral dissertation and subsequently examined in greater detail by Hadley Jerman, in her article "Acting for the Camera: Horace Poolaw's Film Stills of Family, 1925-1950."

What Jerman terms "film stills" can only be described as such in the sense that Monkman's *Emergence of a Legend* could be considered a collection of film stills: they are staged photographs of theatrical scenes, implying, but not actually belonging to, an existing

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[548] Racette, "Returning Fire," 76.

[549] Laura E. Smith, "Obscuring the Distinctions, Revealing the Divergent Visions: Modernity and Indians in the Early Works of Kiowa Photographer Horace Poolaw, 1925-1945" (Doctoral Thesis, Indiana University, 2008), 2.

[550] Smith, "Obscuring the Distinctions," 7. Smith cites a number of examples, published well into the 1990s that describe the artist's work as documenting a transformation of Indigenous life from "traditional" to "modern," sustaining, in many ways, the myth of the vanishing Indian, effectively assimilated out of existence.

dramatic production. Poolaw's "film stills," taken intermittently over a period of at least 25 years, primarily picture his brother and sister-in-law, the Vaudeville stars, Lucy "Watawasso" Nicolar and Bruce "Chief" Poolaw, posed as if frozen in moments of dramatic action and dressed in their stage costumes. A key example is the 1929 photograph of Bruce Poolaw, in headdress and beaded vest, gazing up at Lucy Nicolar, seated on a bluff, just slightly above his head [Figure 3.19]. Remarking on scholars' and curators' usual avoidance or dismissal of these images, Jerman suggests, "Because their subject matter revolves around performed Indian identity, such photographs could be misconstrued as reinforcing stereotypes."[551] However, she argues this interpretation fails to acknowledge the satirical and self-aware element of the images and their interaction with the booming industry built around playing Indian, with which all Indigenous people, to some extent, had to contend. Jerman writes: "Poolaw's dramatically posed images, rich in implied narrative, seem to converse with and comment on Western myth and Indian identity as portrayed in film during the early and mid-twentieth century."[552] Indeed, the implied drama in the photograph of Bruce and Lucy on the bluff is comical, at best. As Smith describes, the composition "recalls many of the romantic scenes of early silent films where cocky braves woo lovely Indian maidens."[553] She argues that such films typically told the tale of ill-fated lovers and affairs that ended in at least one party's suicide – often the result of a "Lover's Leap" in which "beautiful Indian maidens leap to their death when their love for their braves is thwarted for some reason or another."[554] The suggestion of tragedy is laughable in Poolaw's scene, as the two are mere inches from one another and Nicolar could hop off the bluff into her lover's arms with very little risk: "Unlike the tragic ending for Indian couples in many Hollywood films and folktales, this couple is dynamically and confidently posed as they come together, suggesting a positive future."[555] Therefore, Poolaw and his actors appear to be re-writing the narrative and satirizing the drama of tragic tales so popular with settler and foreign audiences as thinly veiled allegories of Indians' eventual disappearance.

Concentrating on the artist's experiences on film sets in his youth, Jerman herself is somewhat dismissive of the suggestion – such as that put forward by the artist's daughter Linda

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[551] Hadley Jerman, "Acting for the Camera: Horace Poolaw's Film Stills of Family, 1925-1950," *Great Plains Quarterly* 2684 (Spring 2011): 106.
[552] Ibid.
[553] Smith, "Obscuring the Distinctions," 154. Smith suggests that it could also reference the couple's popular Vaudeville act in which they performed a song entitled, "Indian Love Call."
[554] Ibid.
[555] Ibid.

Poolaw – that these “self-consciously posed”[556] scenes resulted from his interaction with Lucy Nicolar and his brother’s love of Vaudeville.[557] The dismissal is primarily in the service of Jerman’s own conception of the photographs as evocative of “film stills,” but ends up equally limited in its rejection of Vaudeville – and of Nicolar’s influence – as inspiration. Rather, I would argue the images respond to the multifaceted field of Indigenous performance, from photography to film, stage to screen, and intimate interactions within the tourist industry.

While it is unsurprising that documentary-style photographs taken by Indigenous photographers would be more candid, less staged and less theatrical or romanticized than those taken by non-Indigenous ethnographers, it is equally unsurprising that these photographers would exploit and interrogate the field of performative photography and the practice of playing Indian. Poolaw’s staged photographs do exactly that: they interact with the many branches of Indian performance; they capitalize on the stage success of “Watawasso” and Bruce as “Indian Princess” and “Chief;” and they satirize American audiences’ obsession with imagined authenticity. Both of the Poolaw brothers, in fact, demonstrate a keen awareness – and exploitation – of the fact that the dress and traditions of the Kiowa people were precisely those on which the Hollywood Indian was based. For example, Poolaw produced a great many photographs of Kiowa people wearing feathered headdresses in a variety of contexts, some in keeping with cultural customs and others most certainly not. While Smith demonstrates that this was, in part, the result of shifting mores, political restructuring and a relaxation of cultural taboos in the interwar period, some of Poolaw’s portraits betray more theatrical, critical or satirical intentions.[558] In addition to community leaders and veteran warriors, for example, he also occasionally pictured women and even children wearing war bonnets, as well as men whose positions did not warrant the honour. An undated photograph of Bruce Poolaw, for instance, pictures the actor – who had served no leadership or military role – in an absurd pose of

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[556] Linda Poolaw, quoted in Jerman, “Acting for the Camera,” 106.

[557] Jerman, “Acting for the Camera,” 106-108. Poolaw witnessed the filming of two motion pictures in Kiowa territory: *Old Texas* (1916) and *The Daughter of Dawn* (1920). Assisting his mentor George Long during the filming of *The Daughter of Dawn*, then fourteen-year-old Poolaw posed for preparatory film stills and, Jerman suggests may even have taken some photographs himself (115).

[558] Smith, “Obscuring the Distinctions,” 22-23. By the 1930s Native Americans had gained citizenship and Smith argues, “federal policies were beginning to support indigenous self-government and cultural revitalization rather than suppression” (22). Asserting their identity, as well as their leadership roles within the community, a younger generation of Kiowa leaders and influencers began wearing the war bonnet at important events as a symbol of political and cultural resurgence, even if they had not acted as warriors or earned the right in the traditional sense. While Smith points to some inter-generational friction about this shift in custom, she argues that a number of the photographs taken by Poolaw at the time, imply that “the older tribal taboos on the wearing of the bonnet had relaxed at least among some of the younger men” (23).

exaggerated masculinity, bare-chested, with his head held high in what can only be a mock portrayal of the pop culture Indian brave [Figure 3.20]. He wears a long feathered headdress that falls well below his waist and beyond the limits of the picture plane, along with the same beaded armbands that appear in the "film still" with Nicolar, previously described. Smith suggests the image is at once a parody of the hyper-masculine Indian warrior and intended as a rebuff of the more common tactics of infantilizing and emasculating Indigenous men in both popular culture portrayals of the defeated Indian warrior and political policies that undermined Indigenous sovereignty. She argues that in this instance, "the actor and the photographer enhance the male sexuality of the feather war bonnet, while also referencing the stoic facial expression of the Hollywood Indian."[559] Either way, she suggests the Poolaws are poking fun at the often-contradictory stereotypes surrounding Indigenous gender and sexuality.

Similar suggestions could be made regarding Poolaw's photographing of women wearing war bonnets; in particular, Lucy Nicolar, who appears in a 1932 portrait that bears a number of similarities to the one taken of Bruce, but to very different effect. In the image, Nicolar poses straight-backed with her head cocked at a similar angle as Bruce, her hands clasped in front of her and a massive, feathered headdress trailing almost to the ground. Nicolar's costuming here is further complicated, as she herself was not Kiowa, but Penobscot, and therefore, as Smith contends, it was "not only culturally incongruous for Nicolar to portray herself in such a manner, but also unconventional in terms of gender."[560] Yet, like Molly Nelson, Nicolar was certainly accustomed to wearing war bonnets, as she frequently incorporated them into her Vaudeville costumes. Indeed, she often performed not only in a war bonnet, but dressed head-to-toe in men's fringed buckskin attire – a costuming that has been attributed as much to her feminism and involvement in the women's movement as to her stage persona [Figure 3.21].[561] Of course her play with the role of Indian male – and Poolaw's documentation of it – can be read as much as a parody or critique of the gendered stereotypes constructed around Indigenous masculinity as Bruce's. For Smith, Poolaw's portrait of Nicolar is demonstrative of the photographer's interest in exploring the gender transgressions and performative power of women at the time, as well as "popular theatre where indigenous cultural rules were frequently broken."[562] Remarking on the

559 Smith, "Obscuring the Distinctions," 24.
560 Ibid., 28.
561 Ibid. See also Bunny McBride, "Lucy Nicolar: The Artful Activism of a Penobscot Performer," *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives,* Theda Perdue, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001: 148.
562 Smith, "Obscuring the Distinctions," 31.

strength and confidence evident in the portrait, Smith argues that it is a “convincing portrayal of indigenous female authority, though not as prescribed by Kiowa culture. Rather, the terms for her expression of power are better considered as derived from her professional and personal experience.”[563] Indeed, there seems to be something deeper at work in Poolaw’s depiction of Nicolar than in the more obvious satire of Bruce’s portrait or of the two Vaudeville stars posed together. Across all of the images here discussed, there is certainly an awareness of, and commentary on, the Indian of popular culture and the Indigenous actor’s role in bringing the character to life.

A similar interest – and, indeed, a similar tactic – is evident in the work of contemporary artists, such as those discussed in this chapter. There are clear links or parallels to be drawn between Monkman’s *The Emergence of a Legend* and the theatrical photographs produced by Poolaw in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Poolaw’s life and career spanned the years in which the iconic Indian was concretized in travelling shows, silent films, Vaudeville, and eventually Hollywood. Monkman and Miss Chief re-enter each of these stages of history to interrupt and engage with the camp costuming and performative embodiment of Indigenous stereotypes. That is not to say that Monkman was directly influenced by Poolaw’s work, but that both artists were inspired by and responding to the tendency – or the expectation – of Indigenous people to perform the reductive role of “the Indian” in this manner, and the occasional strategic complicity of some in the act of ironic appropriation and signification.

Similarly interrogating Indigenous people’s participation in colonial representation, Red Star’s elaborately constructed dioramas, pictured in *Four Seasons,* turn the tables on the taxidermic preservation of Indigeneity in museum display and the presentation of anthropological knowledge. The contrast between her ridiculous repetition of certain stereotypes and her refusal to be relegated to an ethnographic present, in particular, is a defiant affirmation of self-determination and cultural futurity. By suggestively mimicking the clichéd stoicism of the imaginary Indian on her own terms, she implies a similarly sovereign performance to have been played out by Indigenous photographic subjects before her. She aligns herself with a lineage of informed and agential photographic subjects, who used their position in front of the camera as a performance of identity and self-determination, thus insinuating the potential power of any and all participants in the types of photographic encounters with which contemporary spectators are commonly confronted.

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[563] Smith, “Obscuring the Distinctions,” 32.

Mehner's series similarly demonstrates the performative aspect of this photographic history: the theatricality expected of and embodied by Indigenous people throughout history, either sitting for a photographer or otherwise typifying expectations of Indigeneity and authenticity for largely non-Indigenous audiences. In the source images for *Reinterpretation*, taken by Case & Draper, Da-yuc-xeen was enlisted to perform a handful of different roles and identities that would be popularly familiar to settler or distant spectators. His singular identity as a Tlingit man was apparently considered inadequate, unless that Tlingit man was rendered archetypal as shaman or chief. As in any of these historical photographs of people who are no longer living, it is virtually impossible to determine how much agency or autonomy Da-yuc-xeen may have possessed in the encounter and how much of his performance was self-generated versus dictated by the photographers. In fact, this seems to be one of the questions with which Mehner, himself, has grappled and which defines so many of his own decisions regarding his photographic intervention. Mehner also performs multiple roles in *Reinterpretation*: he acts as model, photographer and editor; he imitates his ancestor and he performs his own identity. His careful parroting of Da-yuc-xeen's poses could be understood as a further reference to Northwest Coast formline design – an art defined by innovation through imitation – and its expression of lineage and familial or clan allegiance. And, again, Mehner does not limit these alignments to his potential affiliation with Da-yuc-xeen, but also to his uncle and mentor, Larry McNeil. As such, Mehner, like Monkman and Red Star, refers to and aligns himself with more than a century of Indigenous performers and photographers – of Indigenous peoples' enlistment and complicity in the practice of playing Indian – highlighting the often overlooked potentiality and productivity of such acts as expressions of self-determination, presence and perseverance.

A certain amount of work is left to spectators, confronted with these images, either imitating or intervening in the historical archive. With expectations undermined and a clear commentary presented on the limited representation of Indigenous peoples from contact to the contemporary moment, these works solicit spectators to examine the role of photography in producing and perpetuating a dramatized and reductive image of "Indian authenticity" as yet another means of forestalling Indigenous autonomy and futurity. Confronting this legacy, both materially and conceptually, Red Star, Monkman and Mehner engage tactics of satire, mimicry, parody and masquerade, unsettling expectations, asserting Indigenous authorship and imploring viewers to reconsider both the history and potentiality of photographic representation.

CONCLUSION

Although photography's documentary capacity has long been called into question, particularly since the introduction and proliferation of digital technology, Ariella Azoulay argues that photographs still constitute "invaluable historical documents."[564] As historical records, however, photographs are unreliable, incomplete and often illegible; their truth claims are easily corrupted and commonly misleading. Azoulay, therefore, admits that, "Photographs are not objects of easy investigation."[565] Nevertheless, she maintains that part of the photograph's value remains its evidentiary function. She writes: "The photograph is evidence of an *event* – the taking of a photograph, the event of photography."[566] What is more, she describes the moment of the photograph's production as only the first step in a potentially endless series of encounters: "This event is an invitation for yet another event – the viewing of the photograph, its reading, taking part in the production of its meaning."[567]

Throughout my discussion both of historical photographs and their contemporary re-mobilization, I have similarly addressed the open-ended and durational life of photographs, as well as their limitless capacity for appropriation, alteration and reinterpretation. I have referred to the ethical instability of the medium, due, in part, to its historical employment for violent or repressive purposes, as well as the friction existing between the photograph as fixed object and its often-uncontrollable mobility and malleability. As a result, I have described the responsibility required of spectators to account for the participants and parameters of the original photographic event, and to accept their own role in present and future iterations of the image and the ideologies it might represent.

As has been demonstrated, the history of photography in Canada and the United States is inseparable from the history of colonial settlement and the subjugation – including the attempted elimination – of Indigenous peoples. Photographs produced in the context of settler colonialism, regardless of what they picture or by whom they were taken, and whether viewed by Indigenous, settler or foreign audiences, remain products of settler colonialism and, according to Azoulay's expanded definition of both photography and catastrophe, should be approached as images of

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[564] Ariella Azoulay, "Potential History: Thinking through Violence," *Critical Inquiry* 39.3 (Spring 2013): 556.
[565] Ibid. Emphasis added.
[566] Ibid.
[567] Ibid.

atrocity.[568] Photographs produced in this context bear significant and persistent political weight and have been responsible for perpetuating the subjugation of Indigenous peoples, as well as the entrenchment of misinformation among settler society. As such, they do indeed constitute invaluable historical documents through which to confront and come to terms with the enduring legacy and contemporary maintenance of historical injustice.

This dissertation has attempted to address the question of how contemporary artists are confronting this history in their own photographic practice and examine the impact of their work for current ethical, aesthetic and ontological understandings of the medium. I have structured my argument around three central claims, addressing the representational, historical and ethical dimensions of the contemporary works under investigation: (1) By confronting and communicating with historical photographs depicting, obscuring or merely produced in conditions of atrocity, these artists demonstrate the historical roots of ongoing contemporary catastrophe; (2) engaging photography as both subject matter and medium, their work exposes the ethical ambiguity of much photographic production – whether visually explicit or strategically obscure – produced in the service of violence, oppression and genocide; and (3) challenging expectations and established narratives, their work solicits spectators to engage in a form of responsible, self-accountable and unsettled spectatorship. Rather than simply condemning photography as atrocity's accomplice, however, the artists discussed each seize upon and renew the political potential of the medium, highlighting alternative histories, enacting present dissent and gesturing affirmatively toward the future.

The strategies employed by these artists from *archival intervention* to *satire, mimicry and masquerade*, function to re-animate and enliven historical photographs, effectively transforming them into contemporary objects and exposing their continued relevance in the present. Spectators are thus invited to *watch* this transformation unfold and to engage in a more durational form of spectatorship than is typically associated with still images. By taking the time and confronting the multi-temporality encompassed in the works, I have argued that viewers are afforded an opportunity to position and even unsettle themselves in response to the information with which they are presented. In some cases, this may be the result of technical trickery and the overturning or destabilizing of expectations, such as in Monkman's *The Emergence of a Legend*, wherein the images are disguised as antique objects, but with a contemporary twist. It could be due to the

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[568] As discussed in this dissertation's literature review, Azoulay perceives any photograph produced in conditions of catastrophe or disaster to be an image of atrocity, by fact of the context in which it was created.

visual illegibility of altered images, through processes of removal, as in Gonzales-Day's *Erased Lynching,* or layering, as in McMaster's *Ancestral.* In other cases, it might be the collision of past and present exhibited in single images, such as in Mehner's *Reinterpretation*, wherein the artist shares the photographic frame with his long-dead ancestor, or Bose's *here you go canada, ask me another stupid question* and Red Star's *Peelatchiwaaxpáah/Medicine Crow (Raven) & the 1880 Crow Peace Delegation,* wherein historical photographs are annotated by the artists to account for the information obscured in the original images.

In all of these examples, I have argued that spectators are solicited to acknowledge their personal implication in ongoing settler colonial structures – as the inheritors of trauma or privilege, or both. I have therefore asserted the ethical potential of concerted, contemplative and unsettled spectatorship to engender a sense of what Dylan Robinson terms intergenerational responsibility. This could amount to the affirmation of futurity – self and cultural survivance or resurgence – on the part of Indigenous spectators, or to the acceptance of intergenerational perpetration on the part of settlers. Indeed, describing photographic encounters as microcosmic of civil interaction more broadly, Azoulay suggests that intervention in the constituent violence at work in the event of photography – through thoughtful and durational spectatorship – affords viewers the opportunity to claim their universal and inherent right "not to be a perpetrator."[569]

In a suggestion, almost as controversial as her campaign to redirect the focus of perpetration from outward aggression to complacency or inaction, Azoulay argues, "Forgiveness facilitates a bridge between an unforgivable past and a possible future."[570] Importantly, however, she does not suggest that perpetrators should be granted forgiveness, but rather, that they should be given the opportunity to acknowledge and accept that their perpetration is, in fact, unforgivable.[571] In this sense, she argues that forgiveness, or the shared recognition of its impossibility, "can be one possible form of potentializing the constituent violence and giving new shape to the relations between those who were tied by it."[572] Indeed, reflective of both Derrida's notion of spectral justice and Robinson's description of intergenerational responsibility, so central to my own argument, Azoulay uses the term "potential history" to describe the unresolvedness of the past – with its unanswered emergency claims and unaccounted for atrocities. She argues that contemporary participants in the photographic event

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[569] Azoulay, "Potential History," 574.
[570] Ibid.
[571] Ibid., 5.
[572] Ibid., 574.

need to "extract from the past its unrealized possibilities as a necessary condition for imagining a different future."[573] Fundamental to the notion of unsettled spectatorship proposed in this project, is the acceptance rather than abandonment of the past and the commitment to recognizing the intergenerational effects and spectral traces – the immiscible times, to use Bliss Cua Lim's term – that interrupt and undermine the idea of an unburdened homogenous present leading to an equally absolved future. Indeed, as Azoulay argues, "Life with a future can be possible only upon understanding that the future is inseparable from the past, not partitionable."[574]

Throughout this project, I have referred to the Indigenous future imaginary evident in the work of contemporary artists who use photography to investigate the historical roots of contemporary catastrophic conditions. The suggestion that looking toward the future is even remarkable is, in fact, a testament to the conditions of crisis caused by what Azoulay terms "regime-made disaster" or "civil distress" – the state's enlistment of one (usually the dominant or privileged) population of a society to systematically oppress another, with almost unconscious perpetuity. Evident in policies of aggressive assimilation, family and community interruption, and territorial dispossession, the relentlessness of settler colonialism and structural genocide – with its eliminatory orientation – has endeavoured, above all, to foreclose the possibility of Indigenous futurity. As a result, future-oriented assertions of resilience, resurgence or self-determination, as articulated in the work of the artists here discussed, are in themselves radical and defiant anti-colonial acts. Upsetting expectations and addressing the longevity of atrocity, these artists expose a protracted catastrophe in contemporary society, rooted in the events of colonial settlement, and an equally enduring crisis of conscience afflicting photography. The broad scope of their work, engaging multiple temporalities and implicating spectators encompassed in the ever-expanding breadth of the photographic event, demands an equally unsettled and subversive response.

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[573] Azoulay, "Potential History," 566.
[574] Ibid., 5.

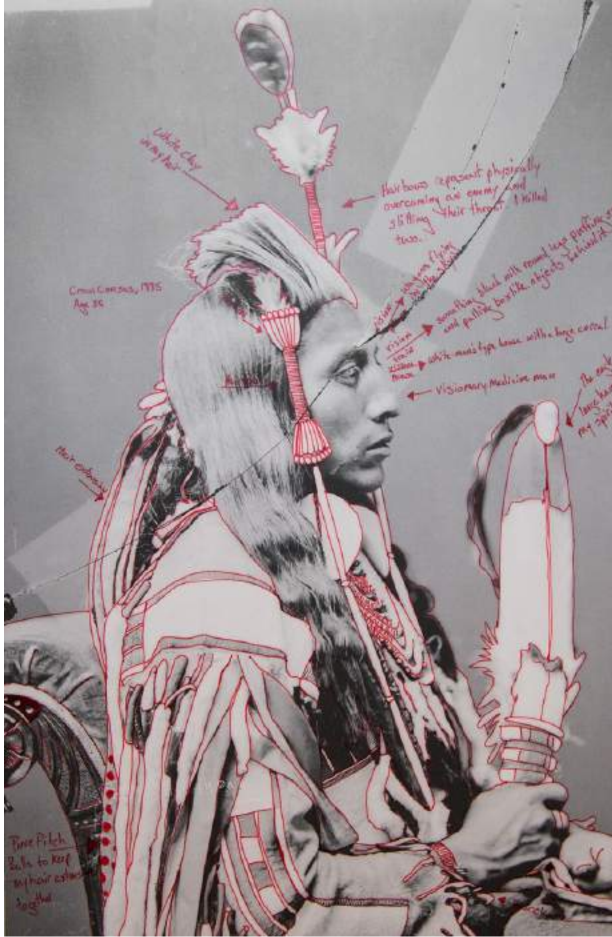
[Figure 0.1] C.M. Bell, *Medicine Crow*, 1880

[Figure 0.2] C.M. Bell, *Old Crow,* 1880

[Figure 0.3] C.M. Bell, *Pretty Eagle*, 1880

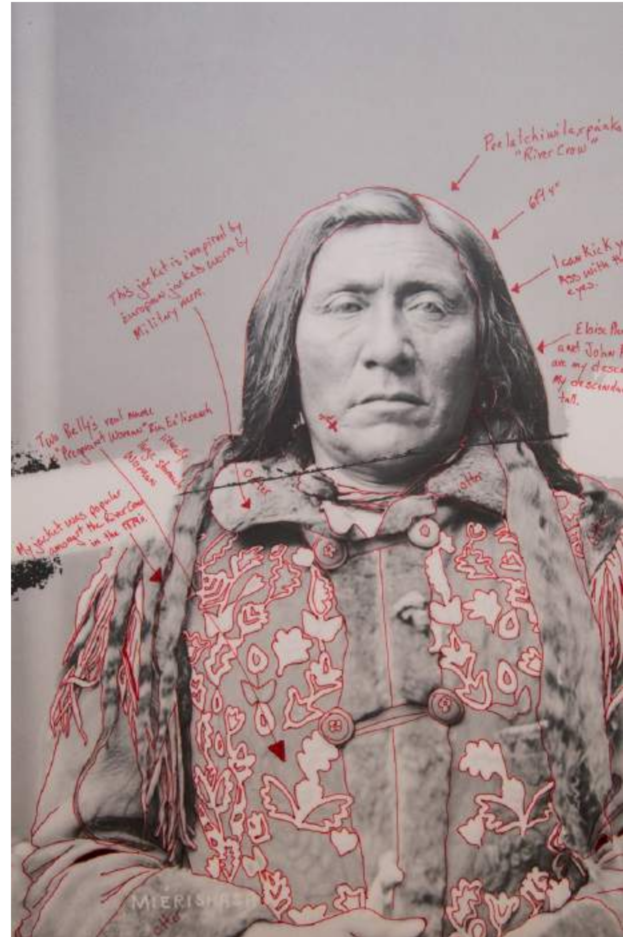
[Figure 0.4] Honest Tea First Nation Organic Peppermint Tea, est. 1999

[Figure 0.5] Wendy Red Star, *Peelatchiwaaxpáash/Medicine Crow (Raven)*, 2014, artist-manipulated digitally reproduced photography by C.M. Bell, Pigment Print on Archival Photo-Paper, 24 x 16.45 inches



[Figure 0.6] Wendy Red Star, *Peelatchiwaaxpáash/Medicine Crow (Raven)*, 2014, artist-manipulated digitally reproduced photography by C.M. Bell, Pigment Print on Archival Photo-Paper, 24 x 16.45 inches

[Figure 0.7] Wendy Red Star, *Peelatchixaaliash/Old Crow (Raven),* 2014, artist-manipulated digitally reproduced photography by C.M. Bell, Pigment Print on Archival Photo-Paper, 24 x 16.45 inches



[Figure 0.8] Wendy Red Star, *Bia Eélisaash/Large Stomach Woman (Pregnant Woman)/Two Belly,* 2014, artist-manipulated digitally reproduced photography by C.M. Bell, Pigment Print on Archival Photo-Paper, 24 x 16.45 inches

[Figure 0.9] Wendy Red Star, *Déaxitchish/Pretty Eagle,* 2014, artist-manipulated digitally reproduced photography by C.M. Bell, Pigment Print on Archival Photo-Paper, 24 x 16.45 inches

[Figure 0.10] Wendy Red Star, *Déaxitchish/Pretty Eagle,* 2014, artist-manipulated digitally reproduced photography by C.M. Bell, Pigment Print on Archival Photo-Paper, 24 x 16.45 inches

[Figure 1.1] *The Medicine Man*, Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge Reservation, published January 3rd, 1891, Trager & Kuhn Photography (Denver Public Library, Western Collection)

[Figure 1.2] *Chief Spotted Elk (Bigfoot)*, Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge Reservation, published January 3rd, 1981, Trager & Kuhn Photography (Denver Public Library, Western Collection)

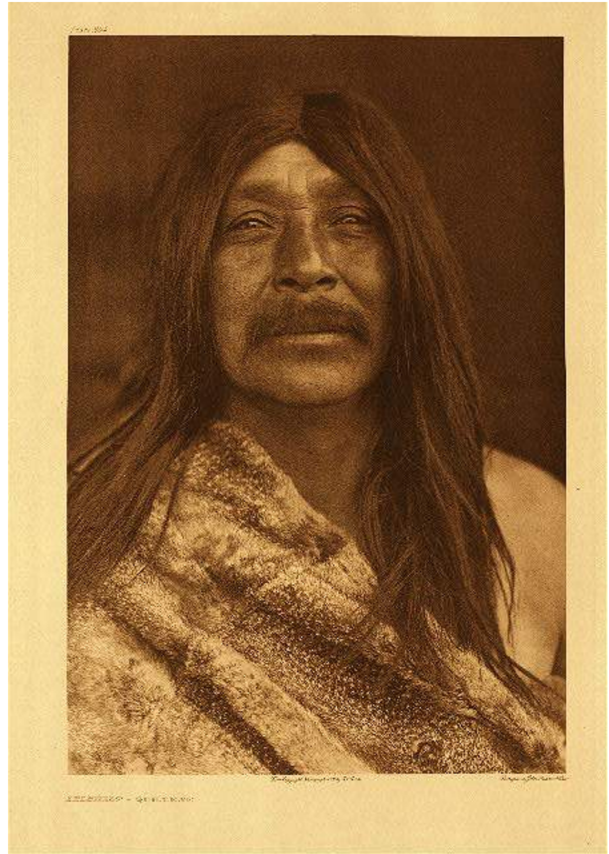
[Figure 1.3] *Scene After the Battle*, Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge Reservation, published January 3rd, 1891, H.A. Johnson, (Denver Public Library, Western Collection)

[Figure 1.4] *Burial of the Dead at the Battle of Wounded Knee, S.D.,* Wounded Knee, Pine Ridge Reservation, published January 17th, 1891, Northwest Photography Co., Trader & Kuhn (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division)

[Figure 1.5] Edward S. Curtis, *Oasis in the Badlands*, c. 1906 – 1930

[Figure 1.6] Edward S. Curtis, *Shot in the Hand – Asparoke*, c. 1906 - 1930

[Figure 1.7] Edward S. Curtis, *A Chief's Daughter – Nakoaktok*, c. 1906-1930

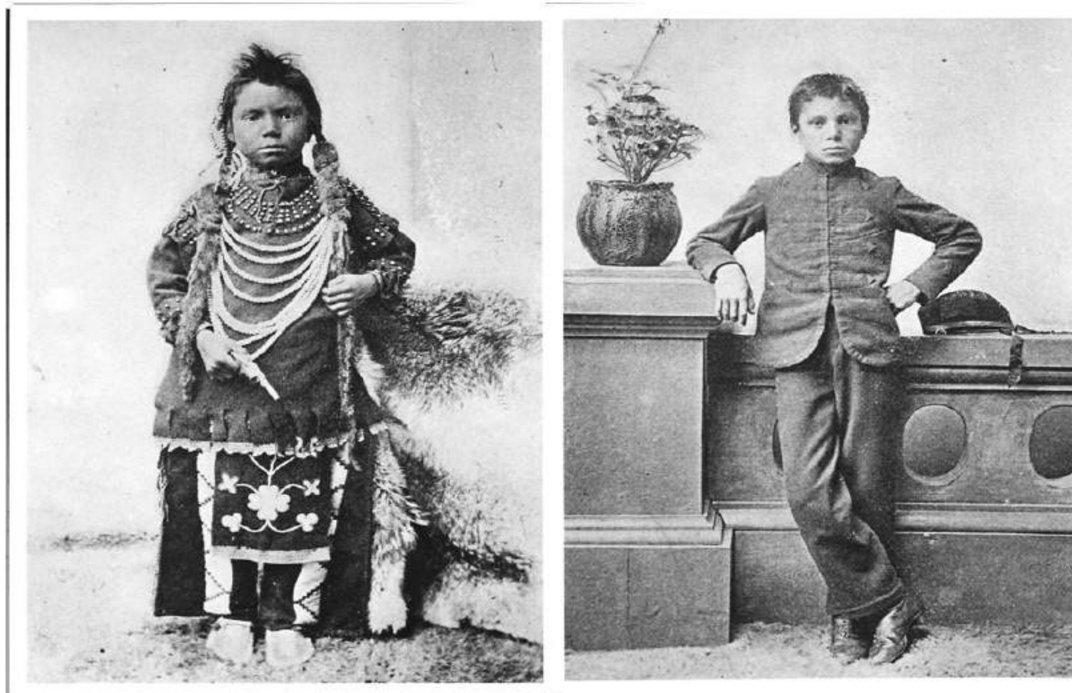


[Figure 1.8] Edward S. Curtis, *Lelehalt – Quilcene*, c. 1906-1930

[Figure 1.9] Edward S. Curtis, *In a Piegan Lodge,* 1910, photo-negative (Library Archives of Canada)

[Figure 1.10] Edward S. Curtis, *In a Piegan Lodge,* 1910

[Figure 1.11] Oliver B. Buell, *View of Qua'Appelle Industrial School in Lebret, SK*, 1885 (Library Archives of Canada, PA-11875)



[Figure 1.12] Photographer unknown, *Thomas Moore: Before and After Tuition at the Regina Industrial School*, 1896

[Figure 1.13] *St. Paul's Indian Industrial School, Students and Staff,* Middlechurch, c.1901 (Library Archives of Canada)

[Figure 1.14] Photographer unknown, *Aboriginal students and staff assembled outside the Kamloops Indian Residential School, Kamloops, BC*, 1934

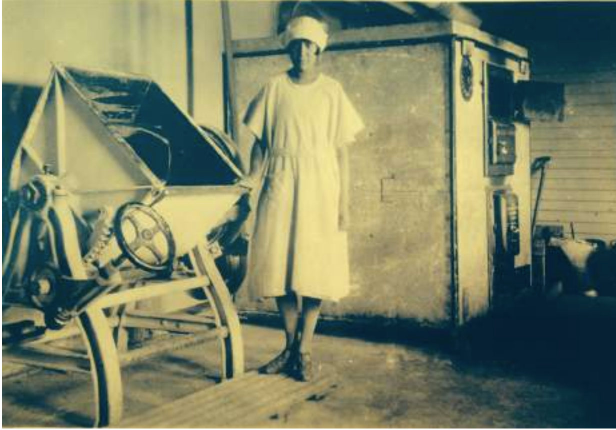
[Figure 1.15] F. Royal, *Nurse takes a blood sample from a boy at Port Alberni Residential School, BC,* 1948 (Library Archives of Canada MIKAN 3604277, 4111770)

[Figure 1.16] F. Royal, *A Department of National Health and Welfare nurse supervises the collection of saliva samples from boys at Port Alberni Residential School, BC*, 1948 (Library Archives of Canada MIKAN 3604275, 4063368)

[Figure 1.17] Photographer unknown, *Students at All Saints Indian Residential School in Lac La Ronge, SK, carrying firewood*, c. 1925

[Figure 1.18] Photographer unknown, *School Band at Qu'Appelle Industrial School in Lebret SK*, c. 1930 (Library Archives of Canada PA-023091)

[Figure 1.19] Ernest Maunder, *The School Cricket Team at Battleford Indian Industrial School, SK*, 1895 (Library Archives of Canada PA-182265)



[Figure 1.20] Alice Constance Dunn, *Girl in Laundry Room, St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC*, c. 1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.9.305. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

[Figure 1.21] Alice Constance Dunn, *Stacking Lumber, St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC,* c. 1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.10.322. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

[Figure 1.22] Alice Constance Dunn, *Girls Exercise Class, St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC*, c. 1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.9.5. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

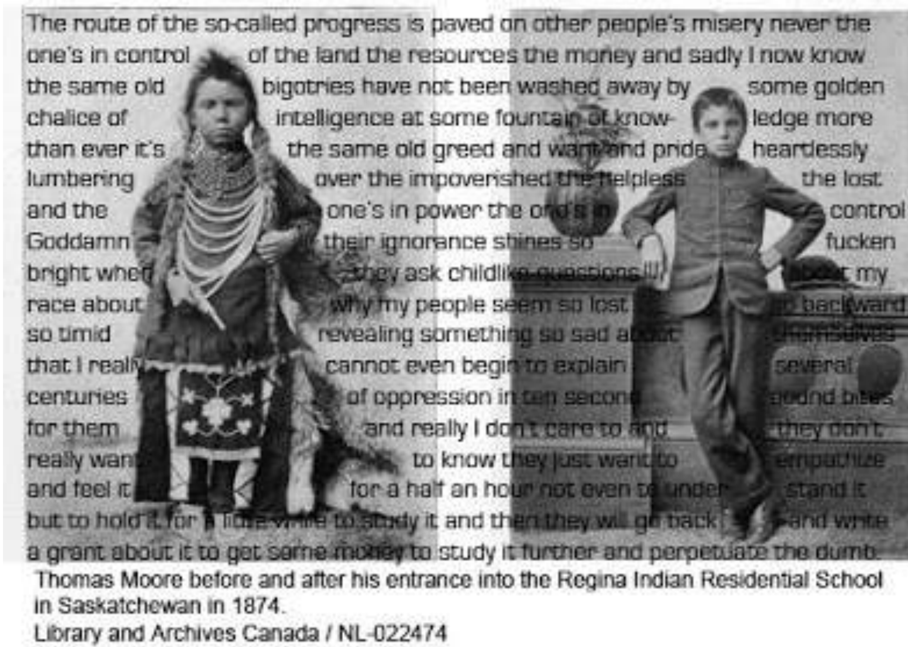
[Figure 1.23] Alice Constance Dunn, *Girl in Uniform at St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC*, c.1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010. 81.10.215. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

[Figure 1.24] Alice Constance Dunn, *Boys at St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC,* c.1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.10.125. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

[Figure 1.25] Alice Constance Dunn, *Aboriginal Boys as "Indians," St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC*, 1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.9.1.23. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

[Figure 1.26] Alice Constance Dunn, *Aboriginal Boys as "Indians," St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC*, 1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.9.1.25. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall

[Figure 1.27] Alice Constance Dunn, *Aboriginal Boys as "Indians," St. Michael's Residential School, Alert Bay, BC*, 1924, *McCord Museum, Montreal,* M2010.81.9.24. Photographic reproductions: R. Bishop-Stall



[Figure 2.1] Chris Bose, *here you go canada, ask me another stupid question,* 2009, digital collage

[Figure 2.2] Chris Bose, *The Apology,* 2011, film still

[Figure 2.3] Chris Bose, *The Apology,* 2011, film still

[Figure 2.4] Ken Gonzales-Day, *The Wonder Gaze*, 2006-present, wallpaper installation, size variable

[Figure 2.5] Ken Gonzales-Day, *Water Street Bridge,* 2004, lightjet print mounted on cardstock, 3.8 x 6 inches

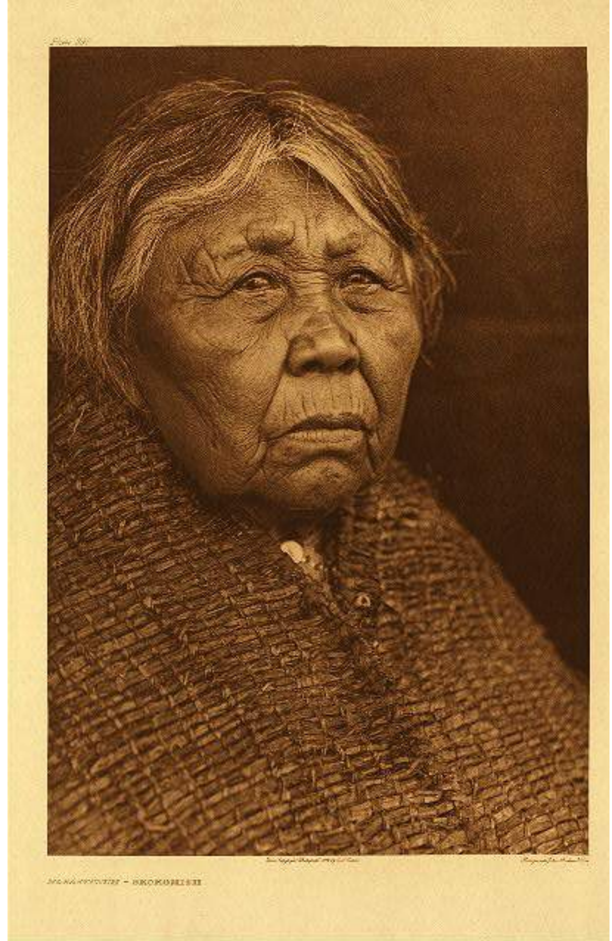
[Figure 2.6] Ken Gonzales-Day, *Tombstone, 1884*, 2006, lightjet print mounted on cardstock, 3.8 x 6 inches

[Figure 2.7] Ken Gonzales-Day, *Disguised Bandit*, 2004, lightjet print mounted on cardstock, 3.8 x 6 inches

[Figure 2.8] Ken Gonzales-Day, *der Wild West*, 2006, lightjet print mounted on cardstock, 3.8 x 6 inches

[Figure 2.9] Ken Gonzales-Day, *Franklin Avenue*, 2006, lightjet print mounted on cardstock, 3.8 x 6 inches

[Figure 2.10] Meryl McMaster, *Ancestral 1*, 2008, digital chromogenic print, 40 x 30 inches

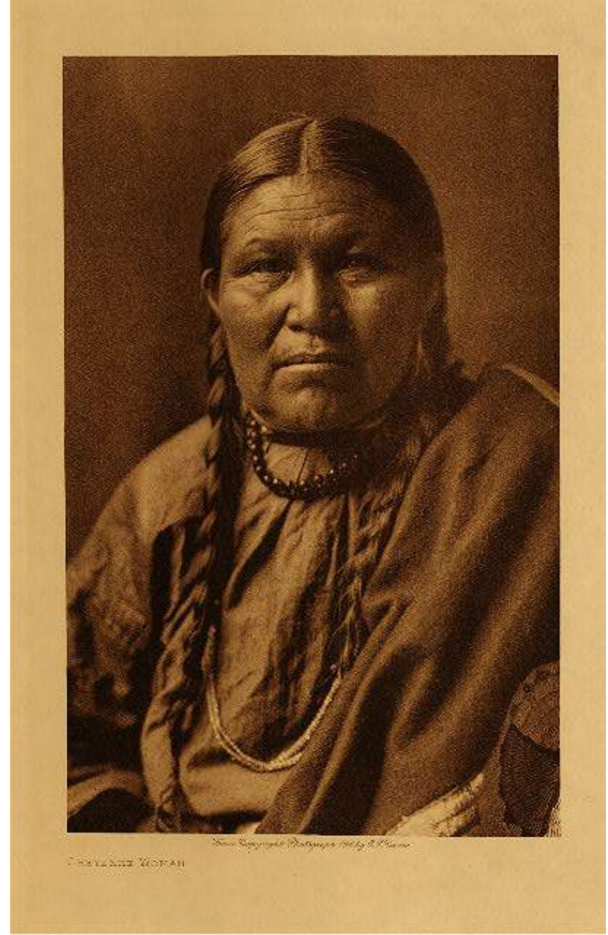


[Figure 2.11] Edward Curtis, *Hleastunuh—Skokomish Woman*, 1912, photogravure

[Figure 2.12] Meryl McMaster, *Ancestral 9*, 2008, digital chromogenic print, 40 x 30 inches

[Figure 2.13] Edward Curtis, *Wishham Girl*, 1910, photogravure

[Figure 2.14] Meryl McMaster, *Ancestral 4*, 2008, digital chromogenic print, 40 x 30 inches



[Figure 2.15] Curtis, *Cheyenne Woman*, 1910, photogravure

[Figure 2.16] Meryl McMaster, *Ancestral 3,* 2008, digital chromogenic print, 40 x 30 inches

[Figure 2.17] Meryl McMaster, *Ancestral 13*, 2009, digital chromogenic print, 40 x 30 inches

[Figure 3.1] Wendy Red Star, *Spring (Four Seasons)*, 2006, archival pigment print on Museo silver rag, 90 x 94 cm / 35 x 37 in

[Figure 3.2] Wendy Red Star, *Indian Summer (Four Seasons)*, 2006, archival pigment print on Museo silver rag, 90 x 94 cm / 35 x 37 in

[Figure 3.3] Wendy Red Star, *Fall (Four Seasons)*, 2006, archival pigment print on Museo silver rag, 90 x 94 cm / 35 x 37 in

[Figure 3.4] Wendy Red Star, *Winter (Four Seasons)*, 2006, archival pigment print on Museo silver rag, 90 x 94 cm / 35 x 37 in

[Figure 3.5] “Ladies’ Dance Outfit: Eagle Motif,” Buffalo Nations Luxton Museum, Banff, AB, c.2006

[Figure 3.6] Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief, Film Director* (*The Emergence of a Legend*), 2006, chromogenic print on metallic paper, 4.5 x 6.5 in / 16 x 13.25 in

[Figure 3.7] Kent Monkman, *The Trapper's Bride* (*The Emergence of a Legend*), 2006, chromogenic print on metallic paper, 4.5 x 6.5 in / 16 x 13.25 in

[Figure 3.8] Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief, Vaudeville* (*The Emergence of a Legend*), 2006, chromogenic print on metallic paper, 4.5 x 6.5 in / 16 x 13.25 in

[Figure 3.9] Kent Monkman, *Cindy Silverscreen* (*The Emergence of a Legend*), 2006, chromogenic print on metallic paper, 4.5 x 6.5 in / 16 x 13.25 in

[Figure 3.10] Kent Monkman, *Miss Chief, Film Director* (*The Emergence of a Legend*), 2006, chromogenic print on metallic paper, 4.5 x 6.5 in / 16 x 13.25 in

[Figure 3.11] William Notman & Son, *Sitting Bull and Buffalo Bill*, Montreal, 1885, silver salts on glass, gelatin dry plate process, 17 x 12 cm, McCord Museum

[Figure 3.12] Cher, *Halfbreed* performance, video still, c.1973

[Figure 3.13] Molly Nelson as "Miss Molly Spotted Elk," c.1920

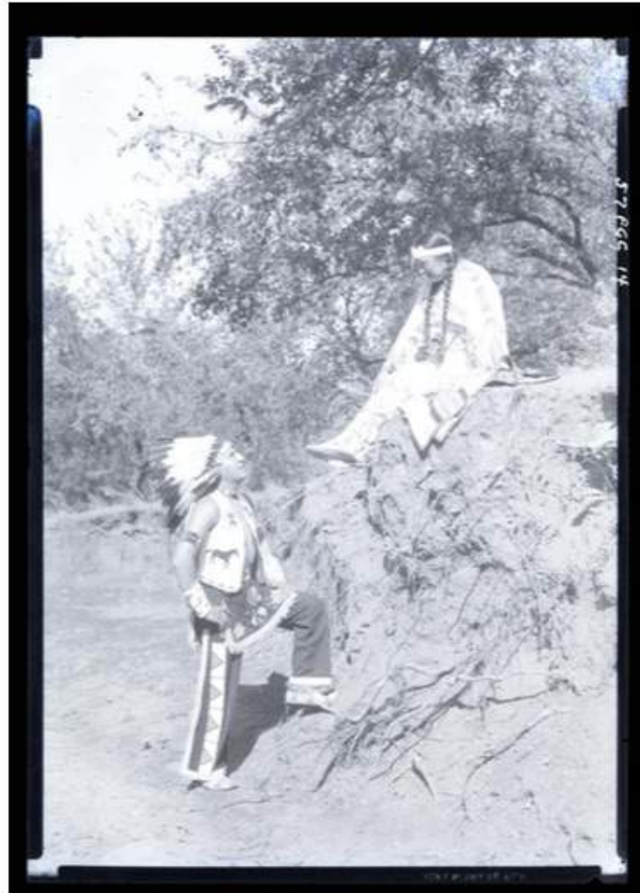
[Figure 3.14] Da-ka-xeen Mehner, *The Thlingit Artist 001 (Reinterpretation)*, 2009, digital photograph, 33 x 48 cm x 13 x 19 in

[Figure 3.15] Da-ka-xeen Mehner, *Reflection 001 (Reinterpretation)*, 2009, digital photograph, 33 x 48 cm x 13 x 19 in

[Figure 3.16] Da-ka-xeen Mehner, *The Artist Alone with his Thoughts (Reinterpretation)*, 2009, digital photograph, 33 x 48 cm x 13 x 19 in

[Figure 3.17] Da-ka-xeen Mehner, *Native Photographer Photographing a Woman (Reinterpretation)*, 2009, digital photograph, 33 x 48 cm x 13 x 19 in

[Figure 3.18] Peter Pitseolak, *Peter Pitseolak holding a camera with a home-made filter*, c.1940-1960, gelatin silver print



[Figure 3.19] Horace Poolaw, *Bruce Poolaw and Lucy "Wattawasso" Nicolar,* Mountain View, OK, c.1928

[Figure 3.20] Horace Poolaw, *Bruce Poolaw,* c.1928

[Figure 3.21] Horace Poolaw, *Lucy "Wattawasso" Nicolar,* Medicine Lodge Treaty Pageant, 1932

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