



Master Thesis

How did Canadian missionaries imagine settler-indigenous relations from the 1950s to 1970s?

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1. Introduction

Imperial and indigenous history are two opposite narratives that have been marked by contested power dynamics. Throughout world history, imperial powers have taken on divergent shapes to directly and indirectly influence indigenous livelihood and future. The term indigenous refers to the first inhabitants of a country before imperial excursions started to settle on their lands.¹ The traditional inhabitants of a land are contrasted with the settlers arriving at a later point in time, who introduced force and control upon the indigenous population – a process referred to as imperialism.² The myriad ways in which imperialist powers affected the indigenous populations are omnipresent in the political, social and academic spheres.³ Although the term ‘history’ often implies that a certain narrative belongs to the past, indigenous and imperial encounters continue to be highly relevant and contested topics of the 21st century. Referred to as “history of the present”⁴ in recent academic discourse, the contemporary relevance of indigeneity and imperial influence is illustrated. The rich history of the indigenous population is of particular discourse in North America, with negotiations around truth and reconciliation affecting both the settler-governments and the indigenous communities.⁵ For a narrowed focus of enquiry on settler and indigenous affairs, this thesis will focus on Canada as part of the North American region.

¹ Chris Cunningham and Fiona Stanley, “Indigenous by Definition, Experience, or World View,” *BMJ*, 2003, 403.

² Bryan Palmer, “The Past Is Before Us: Capitalism, Colonialism, and Canada, 1500–2023,” *Labour / Le Travail* 93 (2024): 249.

³ Palmer, “The Past Is Before Us: Capitalism, Colonialism, and Canada, 1500–2023,” 249.

⁴ Palmer, 249.

⁵ “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” (Ottawa, Canada: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 551.

Contemporary Canada has various settler-agreements build in its legal framework for the coexistence of indigenous and non-indigenous population.⁶ In addition, the Canadian government published public apologies through their “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” for past interference of imperial powers on the Canadian native population.⁷ In a final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, published in 2015, the Canadian government concludes that the past interferences on the indigenous population can be best described as “cultural genocide”.⁸ Under consideration of the various impacts of imperial powers, it becomes significant to investigate the actors that actively executed imperial strategy on the ground. Therefore, this thesis investigates missionaries as part of the imperial forces to examine their actions and relations towards the indigenous communities. Missionaries were people of European descent, who were active organs of the Catholic Church in Canada.⁹ The influence exerted from missionaries upon the indigenous population can be traced back to various areas. Education, religion, upbringing and family affairs as well as social structures and community practices were profoundly shaped by missionaries imposing European ideals. The missionary actions and practices changed the way of life for the indigenous population in an irrevocable fashion, both in the past and in present day.

Under consideration of the reconciliation efforts made in contemporary society and the global impact that imperialism exerted not only in Canada but on the world, it becomes crucial to investigate the point of view through which imperialists acted and understood

⁶ David B. MacDonald, “Canada’s History Wars: Indigenous Genocide and Public Memory in the United States, Australia and Canada,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 17, no. 4 (October 2, 2015): 411.

⁷ MacDonald, “Canada’s History Wars: Indigenous Genocide and Public Memory in the United States, Australia and Canada,” 411.

⁸ “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada,” 579.

⁹ MacDonald, 411.

their relationship to the native population. Hence, this thesis investigates how missionaries imagined their relations to the indigenous population. This serves to understand the motivation behind missionary actions and aims to uncover the intent behind missionary imperial interference. Through the contemporary perspective, missionary actions have been clearly evaluated as negative and oppressive. In addition, missionary actions have been identified as morally wrong, embedded in a larger colonial agenda that prioritized domination over mutual respect and understanding. Hence, it becomes crucial to investigate the perspective that missionaries held to motivate and justify their actions. The thesis investigates how historical actors framed their own actions as beneficial and morally justified, which contributes to the understanding of how imperial power was sustained and legitimized. This analytical angle allows it to identify how power and dominance were upheld through actions that, in retrospect, reveal complex ethical and moral implications.

2. Research Question

The primary objective of this thesis lies in the answer of the following research question:

How did Canadian missionaries imagine settler-indigenous relations from the 1950s to 1970s?

2.1 Sub-questions

For a thorough investigation of the research question, three different areas are going to be the focus of analysis:

I) What role do missionary schools play in the construction of settler-indigenous relations?

II) To what extent does the Catholic Church influence imagined settler-indigenous relations?

III) How did missionary practices impact indigenous life and what are the repercussions in contemporary society?

2.2 Innovation

This thesis follows a unique approach of analysis for the primary sources selected. The investigation of missionary records aims to unveil the constructed nature of settler-indigenous relations. Within the three distinct chapters of analysis, this thesis can provide a deeper understanding of how imperial ideologies were maintained and reinforced. The conceptual framework that this thesis uses as analytical base builds

upon the existing theories of both Postcolonial theory as well as Todorov's Relational Axes. This establishes a new analytical angle on the missionary records selected and provides a holistic understanding of the topic. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the existing academic literature on missionaries and indigenous people in Canada and provides research on the contemporary debates around indigenous affairs.

3. Historiography

Both missionary practices and Indigenous affairs have been in academic discourse for a long time. Since the earliest encounters of missionaries on indigenous people date back to the 17th century¹⁰, the history of missionary influence and interference has been a relevant subject of debate for historians around the world. The impact of missionary influence is still observable in contemporary Canada, even though the classic missionary practices ended in 1996.¹¹ The topic is, therefore, of both historical and contemporary relevance. Research indicates that the Canadian government increasingly implemented policies of “recognition” for indigenous cultural practices during the last thirty years.¹² Another scholar highlights that said indigenous cultural practices and traditions were systematically undermined and extinguished through centuries of missionary influence.¹³ The recognition efforts made in contemporary Canada are therefore a direct consequence of settler-indigenous encounters. Indeed, the settler-indigenous contact has often been characterized by forced assimilation and systematic domination.¹⁴

Establishing a different point of view, Coulthard found that the recognition efforts are often ineffective and constrained by governmental and political actors.¹⁵ The constraints

¹⁰ George F. G. Stanley, “The First Indian ‘Reserves’ in Canada,” *Revue D Histoire De L Amérique Française* 4, no. 2 (January 1, 1950): 178.

¹¹ MacDonald, 413.

¹² Glen S Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the ‘Politics of Recognition’ in Canada,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 6, no. 4 (October 25, 2007): 437.

¹³ Erica Neeganagwedgin, “‘Chattling the Indigenous Other’: A Historical Examination of the Enslavement of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada,” *AlterNative an International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 8, no. 1 (2012): 19.

¹⁴ Neeganagwedgin, “‘Chattling the Indigenous Other’: A Historical Examination of the Enslavement of Aboriginal Peoples in Canada,” 19.

¹⁵ Coulthard, “Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the ‘Politics of Recognition’ in Canada,” 451.

are in place to “*help preserve the colonial status quo*”¹⁶, thus effectively limiting the indigenous agency in the Canadian social and political spheres. The colonial ties established through settler communities, such as missionaries, are therefore still visible in Canadian society. Through the examination of literature on colonial discourse, Loomba found that imperial forces completely extinguished indigenous life in its native form.¹⁷ The scholar sets forth that these changes are irrevocable and put the indigenous population in a subordinate position since the imperial encounters.¹⁸ Neeganagwedgin, likewise, found that the ideologies of white supremacy enforced by colonial settlers through history continue to influence contemporary indigenous life's.¹⁹

Hence, the settlers enforced their vision of a changed Canada solely through a Eurocentric lens, thereby forcing native cultures to adapt to European beliefs and values.²⁰ Through the evaluation of qualitative data, Francis adds: “*Only when Indians had shed their cultural characteristics—when, in fact, they ceased to be Indians— could they possess civic values. Until then, they had to be governed. (...) Missionaries themselves adopted the same criteria of “civilization” as governments had.*”²¹ The common notion between scholars is, therefore, that the imperial powers significantly disrupted Indigenous life. In addition, the use of force for the adaptation to European worldviews is apparent. Moreover, the interference of settlers is frequently found to be an irreversible act of Canadian history.

¹⁶ Coulthard, 451.

¹⁷ Ania Loomba, “Chapter 17: Overworlding the ‘Third World,’” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, 1st ed. (Routledge eBooks, 1994), 308.

¹⁸ Loomba, “Chapter 17: Overworlding the ‘Third World,’” 311.

¹⁹ Neeganagwedgin, 23.

²⁰ Neeganagwedgin, 22.

²¹ Mark Francis, “The ‘Civilizing’ of Indigenous People in Nineteenth-Century Canada,” *Journal of World History* 9, no. 1 (March 1, 1998): 66.

Another subject of influence executed under missionary control was the missionary schooling system. Established during the 1880s, the missionary schools' purpose was primarily to help Indigenous people adapt to the settler culture and settler values.²² Inherently, this concept refers back to the attitudes of “civilizing” the non-white population. Attendees of the missionary schools were separated from their parents and indigenous traditions, and followed an educational curriculum issued by white settlers of the Catholic Church.²³ Ellis calls this the “*deculturation*” process, indicating that indigenous children effectively lost the connection to their native culture and thus were often not able to reintegrate into indigenous society after the end of schooling.²⁴ The education received through the missionary system was English only, which decreased the language proficiency level of the indigenous native languages.²⁵ MacDonald highlights that the separation from parents and loss of traditions led to intergenerational trauma²⁶, which exemplifies the serious repercussions of missionary schools. Loomba adds that missionary schools acted as institutions that enforced colonial policies, thereby legitimizing their actions through governmental approval.²⁷ Neufeld et al. similarly found intergenerational trauma to be of significance in regard to missionary schools, especially since the education system lasted from the 1830s to 1996.²⁸ The long-lasting effects of missionary education are thus amplified by the duration of their practices. The deculturation process established by Ellis was furthermore based on a

²² MacDonald, 413.

²³ C. Douglas Ellis, “The Missionary and the Indian in Central and Eastern Canada,” *Arctic Anthropology* 2, no. 2 (1964): 29.

²⁴ Ellis, “The Missionary and the Indian in Central and Eastern Canada,” 29.

²⁵ MacDonald, 413.

²⁶ MacDonald, 413.

²⁷ Loomba, 316.

²⁸ Katelin H. S. Neufeld et al., “‘The More You Know’: Critical Historical Knowledge About Indian Residential Schools Increases Non-Indigenous Canadians’ Empathy for Indigenous Peoples,” *Political Psychology* 43, no. 4 (September 25, 2021): 618.

hierarchical system, placing Eurocentric views of missionary actors above Indigenous life and traditions.²⁹ These Eurocentric points of view have been scrutinized by Francis, indicating that they were inherently constructed, subjective and therefore man-made.³⁰ In addition, Francis found that the missionary education system was only framed as necessary in the context of European worldviews and ideals.³¹ The detachment of indigenous “savage” roots therefore had to take place in the early stages of development according to missionary standards. Hence, missionary schools educated children from early ages onwards to substantiate a long-term impact including complete detachment from indigenous language and traditions.³² Ultimately, the missionary education enforced a Eurocentric curriculum, replacing indigenous cultural frameworks with frameworks approved of the settler-society.

The impact made by the settler-society including missionaries can be observed in contemporary Canada. Whilst the concept of Eurocentric superiority and its influences negatively affected generations of indigenous people, Neeganagwedgin adds that it did shape the Canadian state to the way we know it today.³³ Nevertheless, this strategy of state formation was built on ideologies of white superiority, imperialism and Eurocentrism. Missionary schools were thus one part of colonial influence upon the indigenous communities across Canada.

The Catholic Church played an important role in missionary actions. Stanley highlights that the motives of missionary education were intrinsically linked to values of the

²⁹ Ellis, 26.

³⁰ Francis, 52.

³¹ Francis, 52.

³² MacDonald, 413.

³³ Neeganagwedgin, 18.

Catholic Church: *"To the Christian missionary, therefore, it has been a duty imposed by God to bring the Indian to an understanding of his mercy, to bring him to some appreciation of the white man's way of life, and to raise him from his primitive state of barbarism in order that he may share with the white man the dominant civilization of the North American continent (...) The task was God- imposed; the results would be God-given."*³⁴ These motives were radically criticized by works of Neeganagwedgin, indicating that it was religion that constructed the concept of racial superiority, thereby laying the groundwork for discrimination and inequality that indigenous people were later exposed to.³⁵ In addition, Coulthard highlights that one of the main aims of the missionary activities was to establish and preserve the socio-political order through religious indoctrination.³⁶ Moreover, Neeganagwedgin establishes that this socio-political order was based on the Churches assumption that the indigenous population was racially and spiritually inferior, thereby establishing a hierarchy of the civilized versus the primitive.³⁷ This label of barbarism imposed upon the indigenous population served to justify civilizing strategies of the Catholic Church through their missionaries. Since missionaries based their worldview on the values and morals of the Church, the indigenous way of life was viewed as deficient and in need for transformation. The transformation's aim was first and foremost to convert indigenous individuals to Catholicism and install European Christian ideals in the population.

Defending the missionary point of view, Whitehead highlights that the Church contributed positively to the empowerment of indigenous woman through assigning

³⁴ Stanley, "The First Indian 'Reserves' in Canada," 178.

³⁵ Neeganagwedgin, 22.

³⁶ Coulthard, 443.

³⁷ Neeganagwedgin, 21.

them leadership roles within their community.³⁸ In addition, the introduction of literacy and overall education were found to be a positive aspect of missionary influence amongst the indigenous population.³⁹ The ability to write and read as lifelong skills could have contributed to more agency for the indigenous individual beyond missionary influence. Francis mentioned that the missionary ideas of a structured society could have given women an empowered role through assigning them leadership roles within the community.⁴⁰ This indicated the change from traditional roles towards other roles intertwined with the Eurocentric ideals. The shift away from traditional roles could have led to more responsibility and authority, which enabled the indigenous woman to take part in duties outside the home, such as teachings of bible classes and conversion of others.⁴¹

All of the aforementioned (and potentially emancipatory) influences were, however, solely linked to activities associated with religion and European ideals. Therefore, a cooperation of indigenous and European ideals did not take place, since solely the European point of view in combination with Catholic standards were used to establish the status quo. Indeed, Ellis states that the whole social order of the missionary-indigenous cohabitation depended on whether religious ideals were upheld and valued.⁴² Comparing the social functionalities of the Catholic Church to cult-like

³⁸ Margaret Whitehead, "'A Useful Christian Woman': First Nations' Women and Missionary Work in British Columbia.," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 18, no. 1 (1992): 145.

³⁹ Coulthard, 443.

⁴⁰ Francis, 66.

⁴¹ Whitehead, "'A Useful Christian Woman': First Nations' Women and Missionary Work in British Columbia.," 157.

⁴² Ellis, 25.

characteristics of other social groups, Ellis criticizes the Churches' mechanisms of social control.⁴³

The contradicting influences of the Catholic Church on indigenous lives are debated by scholars, nevertheless the aspects of white superiority and the rigorous loyalty to the teachings of the bible are commonly acknowledged in academic works. In addition, Coulthard found that institutions, government and media served as "*features of colonial power*".⁴⁴ Those features practically extended the colonial influence and included the power of the Catholic Church and its schools.⁴⁵ Neeganagwedgin summarizes the ultimate purpose of the Catholic Church as enforcers of "*assimilation and subjugation*".⁴⁶ With few exceptions, therefore, it becomes apparent that scholars agree on assimilationist purposes of the Christian missionary, both through contemporary literature and literature dating back to the 1950s.

The impact of missionaries on indigenous lives both in the past and in contemporary society are under highly relevant academic debate. The debate frequently describes the conflicting interests of the indigenous population versus the Canadian settler-government. MacDonald found that, despite reconciliation efforts made by the Canadian government, inequalities persist in the Canadian social structure.⁴⁷ The scholar goes so far as to say that these societal inequalities are "normalized" in Canadian society.⁴⁸ Another scholar states that rights were violated through the establishment of missionary

⁴³ Ellis, 25.

⁴⁴ Coulthard, 452.

⁴⁵ Coulthard, 452.

⁴⁶ Neeganagwedgin, 20.

⁴⁷ MacDonald, 421.

⁴⁸ MacDonald, 421.

schools, especially when it comes to the preservation of heritage and tradition.⁴⁹ In addition, the scholars found that missionary assimilationist approaches led to the loss of cultural identity for indigenous people.⁵⁰ In contemporary society, a significant gap persists between indigenous and non-indigenous people, especially in the economic and welfare sector.⁵¹

Loomba states that the impact of missionary practices was mostly found in language and education through the implementation of British English.⁵² Through the sole focus on British English and the neglect of native languages, the impact of missionary practices has thus been described as "full conditioning".⁵³ Scholars therefore commonly acknowledge that the impact made by missionary settlers are observable on both the cultural level as well as the social level. Moreover, changes made through imperial powers were commonly found to have affected equality levels between indigenous and non-indigenous. Next, Francis notes that the missionary's primary duty laid in the civilization of the indigenous people, which made the means of disconnecting from their culture and traditions inevitable.⁵⁴ Given the European understanding of "civilizing" at the time of peak missionary activities, the dislocation from family and the education under British norms became instruments of the British Crown and Catholic Church.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Belayet Hossain and Laura Lamb, "Cultural Attachment and Wellbeing Among Canada's Indigenous People: A Rural Urban Divide," *Journal of Happiness Studies* 21, no. 4 (May 11, 2019): 1304.

⁵⁰ Hossain and Lamb, "Cultural Attachment and Wellbeing Among Canada's Indigenous People: A Rural Urban Divide," 1304.

⁵¹ Hossain and Lamb, 1304.

⁵² Loomba, 311.

⁵³ Loomba, 311.

⁵⁴ Francis, 87.

⁵⁵ Francis, 87.

Another significant impact made by missionaries on indigenous ways of life is the conversion to a sedentary lifestyle, according to Stanley.⁵⁶ The influence of missionary activities thus started way before the schools were opened or the conversion to Catholicism took place. As scholars indicate, the impact made starts in the reassessment and transformation of the indigenous life-form, particularly the shift from a mobile to a sedentary lifestyle. Hossain and Lamb highlight how indigenous populations in Canada experience ongoing social marginalization, both through centuries of active imperialism and in present day context.⁵⁷ MacDonald argues that a turning point for indigenous rights was reached in 1998 with the Canadian government issuing a "*Statement of Reconciliation*", which included a financial compensation of 350 million dollars.⁵⁸ This turning point was equally acknowledged in works from Neufeld et al., who indicated that reconciliation efforts aim to educate society about the extensive hardships faced by indigenous people throughout Canadian history.⁵⁹

Through various sectors, including education and religion, missionaries enforced change based on European beliefs. The academic debate around the topic reveals the magnitude of said European encounters. Overall, the tone throughout academic works is largely negative around missionary activities and its repercussions. Only a number of exceptions were found in the literature. A substantial turning point through the acknowledgement of past imperial harms was frequently found in the literature. This thesis adds to the existing body of literature through a unique focus of analysis. The question of how missionaries imagined settler-indigenous relations aims to reveal the

⁵⁶ Stanley, 179.

⁵⁷ Hossain and Lamb, 1304.

⁵⁸ MacDonald, 413.

⁵⁹ Neufeld et al., "'The More You Know': Critical Historical Knowledge About Indian Residential Schools Increases Non-Indigenous Canadians' Empathy for Indigenous Peoples," 628.

missionary point of view, thus analyzing the educational system and religious practices. The examination of missionary records will uncover how missionaries envisioned and shaped the dynamics of settler-indigenous relations through their perspectives and practices.

4.Theory and conceptual framework

This thesis conducts the analysis of missionary records based on the conceptual framework of “Othering”. The conceptual framework aims to uncover the self/other relations by focusing on the in-depth analysis of the “Other”. This concept ensures a nuanced analysis of the thesis topic, focusing on missionary schools, the Catholic Church and repercussions of imperial influence on contemporary society. Furthermore, the framework establishes a cohesive focus of analysis and guides the interpretation of the research findings in alignment with the literature. The concept of “Othering” has been researched by scholars from the field of Postcolonial Theory. Therefore, approaches of Postcolonial Theory will be integrated in the analysis to further substantiate the concept of “Othering” and the “Other”. Moreover, this thesis will draw upon Todorov’s Relational Axes to operationalize the research on “Othering” for the purpose of this thesis. The conceptual framework provides a distinct lens through which the thesis topic can be investigated, therefore ensuring a unique analytical angle on the primary sources selected. The aim of the application of the conceptual framework is the establishment of a holistic understanding of the thesis topic. In the following, an overview of the concept of “Othering” will be portrayed.

Since this research focuses on self-other imaginaries, the conceptual framework centers around “Othering” and the analytical perspectives established by Postcolonial Theory. Postcolonial Theory addresses the political, cultural and economic repercussions of colonialism.⁶⁰ According to Spivak, colonial practices fundamentally

⁶⁰ Loomba, 311.

changed the reality of the colonized population.⁶¹ Moreover, Spivak states that the colonized subject was frequently seen as the “Other”, which discredited and discriminated the colonized population.⁶² Therefore, the perspectives of the colonized population were ascribed a low importance in colonial discourse. Eurocentric perspectives and western narratives were thus the dominant worldviews, erasing alternative epistemologies.⁶³ Moreover, Postcolonial Theory aims to identify and deconstruct westernized and Eurocentric perspectives.⁶⁴ Postcolonial Theory believes, moreover, that the colonial structures established in the past still affect contemporary society.⁶⁵ In addition, Postcolonial Theory looks at how the West explained and interpreted the colonized subjects, which also adds to the conceptual understanding of “Othering”.⁶⁶ Moreover, Postcolonial Theory can be based on Said’s concept of “Orientalism”, describing the “*Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient*”.⁶⁷ In the process of researching the imagined settler-indigenous relations of Canadian missionaries, the insights of Postcolonial Theory can help uncover the various dimensions of “Othering” found in western notions and Eurocentric narratives. This is especially important since the primary sources of this thesis are written from the perspective of the Canadian missionaries. Postcolonial insights can thus help to uncover to what extent the indigenous communities in Canada were “Othered” by the missionaries. The concept of “Orientalism” can furthermore assist

⁶¹ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can The Subaltern Speak?,” in *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Macmillan, 1988), 26.

⁶² Spivak, “Can The Subaltern Speak?,” 24.

⁶³ Spivak, 24.

⁶⁴ Ambesange Praveen, “Postcolonialism: Edward Said & Gayatri Spivak,” *Research Journal of Recent Sciences* 5 (2016): 47.

⁶⁵ Praveen, “Postcolonialism: Edward Said & Gayatri Spivak,” 47.

⁶⁶ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Penguin Books, 1995), 2.

⁶⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

the analysis to establish the extent to which the missionaries interpreted and explained the indigenous communities. Ultimately, the theory establishes a relevant framework for the analysis of the imagined settler-indigenous relation through the concept of the “Other” and the concept of “Orientalism”.

Next, the conceptual framework of "Othering" revolves around defining and marginalizing groups based on perceived differences.⁶⁸ This positions the marginalized population as outsiders within society. In the context of the settler-indigenous relationship, "Othering" can help uncover disadvantages of the marginalized population as well as potential advantages of settlers within the Canadian society. This lens provides critical insights into dominant structures of society and helps to understand the power dynamics between the privileged versus the marginalized. Societal hierarchies are equally important to analyze in the context of self and other. In the context of "Othering," societal hierarchies establish the narratives and perceptions that sustain practices of marginalization.⁶⁹ By examining these hierarchies, structural disparities can be uncovered.⁷⁰ This can be applied to uncover how institutions like missionary schools and the Catholic Church influenced societal hierarchies, thereby constructing the “Other”. Uncovering structural inequalities is a relevant base upon which this thesis can further build the analysis. Through the examination of power imbalances and societal hierarchies, underlying systems of advantage and disadvantage can be brought to the

⁶⁸ Loomba, 311.

⁶⁹ Loomba, 311.

⁷⁰ Loomba, 311.

surface. This furthermore contributes to the insight into the settler-indigenous relationship, revealing potential imbalances and unequal distributions of power.

Next, the concept of Relational Axes will be addressed to further substantiate the concept of "Othering". Established by Todorov as "the typology of relations to the Other", the axes can be understood on three levels.⁷¹ The first (axiological) level describes the moral judgement of the "Other" based on values and morals of the self.⁷² Moreover, this level establishes a moral based hierarchy, categorizing the "Other" as inferior or superior.⁷³ The first level thus establishes whether the "Other" is liked and accepted by the self or not. The second (praxeological) level describes the act of distancing versus cooperating with the "Other".⁷⁴ Furthermore, the second level indicates whether or not the values of the self are imposed upon the "Other".⁷⁵ The third (epistemic) level addresses the discrepancy between knowledge and ignorance of the "Other".⁷⁶ This level therefore indicates to which degree the identity of the "Other" is recognized and respected. Through the application of the three axes in this thesis, the relationship of the Canadian missionaries to the indigenous people can be evaluated according to the three levels. Todorov states that the three axes are interrelated⁷⁷, which implies that the axes must be considered together to establish a comprehensive understanding of the missionaries relationship to the indigenous population. Therefore, this theory provides a robust framework to evaluate the complexities of the imagined missionary-indigenous relations. In addition, this theory can potentially identify

⁷¹ Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (Harper Collins, 1996), 185.

⁷² Todorov, *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other*, 185.

⁷³ Todorov, 185.

⁷⁴ Todorov, 185.

⁷⁵ Todorov, 185.

⁷⁶ Todorov, 185.

⁷⁷ Todorov, 185.

contradictions in behavior. Since this thesis examines the period between the 1950s and 1970s, potential shifts in attitudes could be uncovered through the integration of this theory as well.

This thesis will build upon the works mentioned above to investigate the imagined settler-indigenous relations through the concept of the “Other”. Through the integration of both Postcolonial approaches as well as Todorov’s axes, this project follows a unique approach to uncover the imagined settler-indigenous relations of Canadian missionaries. Therefore, this thesis contributes to the academic discourse on the missionary-indigenous relationship through a multi-dimensional approach that combines various theoretical key concepts. The analysis of the imagined relationship between settler and indigenous population establishes insight into cultural hierarchies and unequal distributions of power that are still of high contemporary relevance. Therefore, the analysis also contributes to the current debate on reconciliation and decolonialization.

5. Methodology

This thesis researches the imagined settler-indigenous relations of Canadian missionaries during the 1950s to 1970s. The research conducted in this thesis especially focusses on the role of missionary schools, the Catholic Church, and missionary practices to identify the imagined settler-indigenous relations. The topic is of social relevance since the missionaries influenced the Indigenous population for many decades and changed the way of life for Indigenous people forever. Thus, the topic is also relevant in contemporary context since the Canadian government is actively pursuing reconciliation efforts for the life's affected by missionary actors.⁷⁸ Furthermore, the Canadian government has issued settler agreements and public apologies about missionary practices that targeted the Indigenous population for decades.⁷⁹ Therefore, it becomes crucial to investigate the point of view through which the missionaries acted and understood their relationship to the indigenous population.

The topic has been studied from diverse points of views, involving qualitative and quantitative methods. However, the extent to which settler-indigenous relations are imagined by Canadian missionaries through the examination of missionary records have not been researched yet. The primary sources of this thesis consist of missionary records. Especially missionary newspapers published between the 1950s and 1970s will be the primary focus of analysis. The sources were obtained digitally through an indigenous study portal. Moreover, the sources were available upon account

⁷⁸ Government of Canada, *Treaty Texts - Treaty No. 2*, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, last modified June 15, 2021.

⁷⁹ Government of Canada, *Treaty Texts - Treaty No. 2*, Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, last modified June 15, 2021.

registration, which makes them fairly accessible. According to Zaagsma, digitization differs tremendously between the Global South and the Global North.⁸⁰ Moreover, digitization influences memory and heritage since it increases the accessibility of certain sources over others.⁸¹ In the process of source selection, it became prevalent that there are more digital sources of missionaries than of indigenous people and their perspectives. There are many Canadian online archives, however, they often do not hold primary sources issued by an indigenous person. In agreement with Zaagsma, this affects how indigenous heritage is passed on to further generations.⁸² The collection of primary sources was thus already steered into a direction where indigenous voices were absent. Therefore, this thesis utilizes the missionary perspectives to understand the imagined settler-indigenous relation. The availability of source material can furthermore be a direct reflection of political interest.⁸³ The priority of missionary over indigenous sources can therefore be seen as governmental aim to highlight certain (white) perspectives, whilst forgetting others.

The sources for this thesis are suitable as objects of analysis, since they report directly on indigenous people's affairs through the missionary-lens. The sources, though historical, are well preserved and clearly readable, which allows for an efficient research process. Moreover, they give insight into prevalent power dynamics. Limitations of the sources lie in the underrepresentation of indigenous perspectives, editorial control of published content, and the propaganda of religious topics. The awareness of these limitations is significant for the research process because it allows for a critical

⁸⁰ Gerben Zaagsma, "Digital History and the Politics of Digitization," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 38, no. 2 (September 16, 2022): 840.

⁸¹ Zaagsma, "Digital History and the Politics of Digitization," 833.

⁸² Zaagsma, 833.

⁸³ Zaagsma, 840.

engagement with the source material. Under consideration of these limitations, the sources are suitable for the examination of the research question.

To create a cohesive and nuanced analysis, this thesis draws upon different research methods. Mainly discourse analysis and content analysis will be applied in this thesis, providing a qualitative research approach. Moreover, the research method of close reading will be applied, which entails the interpretation of both implicit and explicit meanings of the sources.⁸⁴ In addition, close reading of the sources requires attention to the context in which the sources have been written.⁸⁵ The analysis of language used and themes displayed are thus equally important as the scrutinization of absent voices and narratives. Hence, close reading pays heightened attention to the non-inclusion of certain actors as well as recurring themes.⁸⁶ Through close reading, underlying meanings of the sources can be uncovered, enabling a more nuanced and in-depth analysis.

Next, the method of “reading against the grain” will be applied throughout the discourse analysis. In contrast to content analysis focusing on language and themes, discourse analysis allows for an understanding of potential power imbalances through the examination of marginalized perspectives.⁸⁷ According to King, “reading against the grain” enables the researcher to identify everything that is not being said in the source.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Julie-Marie Strange, “Reading Language as a Historical Source,” in *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh University Press eBooks, 2016), 201.

⁸⁵ Strange, “Reading Language as a Historical Source,” 201.

⁸⁶ Strange, 204.

⁸⁷ Michelle T. King, “Working With/in the Archives,” in *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh University Press eBooks, 2016), 20.

⁸⁸ Michelle T. King, “Working With/in the Archives,” 20.

In the context of the primary sources of this thesis, “reading against the grain” helps to uncover concealed themes in the missionary records. This research method establishes the most important part of analysis, since the thesis aims to uncover the imagined settler-indigenous relations. Applied “reading against the grain” can identify the experience of oppressed groups through the wording and explanation of the dominant narrative.⁸⁹

Discourse analysis furthermore uncovers the ideologies and assumptions that are dominant in the missionary records.⁹⁰ This helps to identify the indigenous perspective through the missionary lens. Moreover, discourse analysis establishes critical evaluation of historical sources and aims to detect biases and preferences of the source creators.⁹¹ Hence, the construction of the missionary records is equally evaluated as the language used and the content displayed. The combination of discourse and content analysis is therefore deemed an appropriate strategy for the research of missionary records. The inclusion of the additional frameworks “close reading” and “reading against the grain” enable the research of meanings beyond surface level and help create a bigger picture of how the sources can be interpreted in social and political context including power dynamics and marginalization.

⁸⁹ King, 21.

⁹⁰ King, 21.

⁹¹ King, 21.

5. Analysis: What role do missionary schools play in the construction of settler-indigenous relations?

5.1 Education as tool for assimilation

*"The present trend is to select the most promising pupils, to send them to schools among the whites, so that they may be more easily integrated into the Canadian society."*⁹²

The first prominent emerging theme in the analysis of the role of missionary schools for the construction of settler-indigenous relations is the use of education as tool for assimilation. Canadian missionaries aimed to assimilate the indigenous population, so they could eventually be absorbed into the settler society.⁹³ The educational goal, therefore, was to bring the indigenous population on the same standard of socialization that has been set a priority in the settler society.⁹⁴ Oblate Fathers and Nuns were the primary educators in missionary schools, establishing a system of hierarchy and obedience.⁹⁵ Moreover, the education received in missionary schools was approved by the Canadian government. In fact, the missionaries and the Canadian government worked closely together in the establishment of missionary schools.⁹⁶ Since both the missionaries and the Canadian government at the time consisted of European settlers, it is not surprising that they worked together to establish their common goal of full assimilation for the indigenous population.

⁹² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 15 (October-November 1953), 2.

⁹³ Coulthard, 450.

⁹⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

⁹⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

⁹⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

Moreover, radio and moving pictures were part of the education received in missionary schools in order to "*prepare pupils of remote areas to be in constant touch with the outside world and to become worthy citizens of Canada.*"⁹⁷ Worthiness was therefore perceived to be the outcome of successful assimilation through missionary education. Thus, the status of an indigenous person pre-assimilation in settler society was perceived as "unworthy" under missionary perspective. This categorization of worthiness versus unworthiness directly correlates to the axiological level of Todorov's axes, indicating value judgement upon the indigenous population.⁹⁸ This value judgement manifests itself in ascribing worthiness to the indigenous population. Under missionary perspective, therefore, equality is solely reached through assimilation. The axiological level categorizes equality versus inferiority in relation to the other.⁹⁹ These categories can be interchanged with worthiness for equality and unworthiness for inferiority. Hence, the indigenous population is categorized more inferior and more unworthy the less they are assimilated to the settler society. On the other hand, the indigenous population is categorized more equal and thus more worthy the more they are assimilated into the standards of the settler society. Education, therefore, serves as the primary tool to secure such assimilation.

Missionary schools constitute the base upon which education can be facilitated, thus playing a crucial role in the assimilation process. Moreover, missionary schools served as vehicles for forceful integration based on Eurocentric beliefs and priorities.¹⁰⁰ In fact, a missionary record of 1953 states that "*the advance of the white man's industry will*

⁹⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

⁹⁸ Tzvetan Todorov, 185.

⁹⁹ Tzvetan Todorov, 185.

¹⁰⁰ Neeganagwedgin, 20.

mean new problems for the Eskimos. Educational efforts must be bent."¹⁰¹ Not only is the white settler society depicted as advanced, reinforcing Eurocentrism and European superiority, but the indigenous education is portrayed as the direct outcome of the industry and society that the settlers installed on Canadian grounds. The "bending" of education furthermore exemplifies how the ideas of what is taught versus what is neglected reflect the standards of European settler colonialism at the time. Missionaries as essential part of European settler colonialism therefore imagined the indigenous population as deficient in education and thus as inferior to themselves. The education through missionary schools therefore served as a tool to decrease inferiority and eventually create "equal" Canadian citizens.

The aim of assimilation and acculturation presupposes that 1) indigenous people want to be educated and 2) that settler European standards were the only norm to which the "Others" have to rise up to. Neither presuppositions were based on factual evidence but rather on the Eurocentric worldview and westernized assumptions. Moreover, the debate around citizenship for indigenous people was predominantly found in sources of the 1950s. After successful assimilation through missionary school institutes, the status of the indigenous person was reconfigured. The acquisition of full Canadian citizenship was *"wished and hoped for the Canadian Indians in the near future"*.¹⁰² Therefore, it was not common for Indigenous people to have obtained citizenship during the 1950s. Rather, the idea of Canadian citizenship was an outlook of the future and thus the

¹⁰¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 9.

¹⁰² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 15 (August-September 1953), 2.

product of effective assimilation. This idea was perceived as promising by the missionaries, as they ascribed their hopes and wishes to it.¹⁰³

Citizenship can thus be identified as the ultimate goal of missionary school education. Hence, missionaries used citizenship (and thus a Canadian passport) as material proof for successful assimilation and equality. Equality, nevertheless, cannot be measured by the extent of how many people obtain citizenship of any sort. This measure of equality can thus be identified as the imagined "ideal" of the missionaries, serving to justify missionary school education. Another significant indicator of assimilation through missionary schooling is the renaming of boy and girls entering the school system. Frequently, indigenous children were renamed into predominantly Anglo-Saxon names. Names such as "*Boniface Abel, Joyce Solomon, Joseph Schnurr*"¹⁰⁴ did not only replace their indigenous alternatives but rather affirmed a new identity upon the indigenous children. In addition, it becomes prevalent that the names carry a religious undertone with them (Abel, Solomon, Joseph). The renaming was henceforth another assimilation tool used in missionary education.

In alignment with Edward Said's concept of "Orientalism", the renaming of indigenous children affirms their identity as being the "Other".¹⁰⁵ The "Other" is therefore seen as culturally and spiritually inferior¹⁰⁶ and the renaming served as measure to fit the indigenous children into the colonial worldview. This assimilation practice can furthermore be identified as tool for obedience to the missionaries who assigned the new names in the first place. Moreover, the renaming indicated the second-class nature

¹⁰³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 2.

¹⁰⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 2.

¹⁰⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

¹⁰⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

of indigenous names and indigenous language. Therefore, the traditional indigenous names and thus their cultural traditions were suppressed in the missionary education. In addition, the simple act of renaming assumes that missionaries imagined the former indigenous names as primitive and thus not good enough for successful assimilation.

Assimilation therefore also took place on the level of personal identity. The fact that indigenous children were renamed upon arriving at missionary schools indicates that the renaming took place early on in their life's. The former identity carried was thus erased through the assigning of new names, establishing *domination* as primary educational tool of missionary schools. Furthermore, senses of belonging to the traditional indigenous culture were systematically diminished through the act of renaming. Missionary school education was therefore a significant part of imperial strategy and cultural erasure was a crucial part of it.¹⁰⁷ Renaming furthermore implied the cut of ties to the indigenous communities and imposed underlying religious frameworks upon the children through using names that carried Christian connotations.

5.2 Control over indigenous life through schooling

"The purpose of Education Week is to give a chance to the parents to realize the worth of their sacrifices in being separated from their children, to see the progress these are doing in learning, and to encourage both teachers and pupils in their worthy endeavors." "108

¹⁰⁷ Neeganagwedgin, 22.

¹⁰⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 15 (April-May 1953), 2.

The residential school system of Canadian missionaries exerted direct and indirect control over various areas of indigenous life's. One essential aspect of the missionary school system was the separation of the indigenous child from their respective parents and community.¹⁰⁹ The missionary perspective frames the separation strategies as something positive and worthwhile rather than a traumatic experience.¹¹⁰ In addition, the strategy appears to be a normalized sacrifice for the sake of educational progress and learning. Furthermore, the separation is portrayed as a noble and necessary part of indigenous education, highlighting the "worthy endeavors" of both teacher and student.¹¹¹

The residential schools therefore institutionalized separation, which enabled both the physical and mental distance from indigenous communities. Missionaries thus depicted themselves as primary caretakers of the children, leaving no room for parental guidance and influence. This inevitable reinforced control on both the indigenous child on school grounds as well as their families at home. Thus, parental authority was seen as secondary compared to missionary guidance and state control, even if that meant violation of indigenous rights: *"Indian Affairs Branch had acted without consultation with the parents, and its action is considered a violation of the Indian Act."*¹¹² Therefore, parental consent was usually not present in the decision-making process of education and residential schools. This presupposes that missionary educators, such as nuns and

¹⁰⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (April-May 1953), 6.

¹¹⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (April-May 1953), 6.

¹¹¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (April-May 1953), 6.

¹¹² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 15 (September-1965), 7.

oblate fathers, considered themselves the most knowledgeable in the fields of childcare and education.

Therefore, missionaries imagined their relationship to both the indigenous families as well as the indigenous child as rather paternalistic and hierarchical. The indigenous communities were thus depicted as passive recipients of missionary education, rather than active and opinionated members of society. This silencing of indigenous parents reflects Spivak's contributions to Postcolonial theory, highlighting how the colonizers diminish the voices of the colonized.¹¹³ This silencing effectively took place in the context of missionary schools and can be identified as a strategic tool to limit the autonomy of the indigenous parents. Their voices, opinions and ideas are therefore portrayed as neglectable from the missionary side. This reinforces a magnitude of power imbalances and positions the missionary in the position to decide about the life and the fate of Indigenous children. Ultimately, this is a mechanism of total control over the Indigenous communities.¹¹⁴

The control exerted had both effects on the indigenous life's at the time as well as their prospective futures. Through the missionary decision making process on the education of the indigenous children, ideological control was executed and their future arranged in accordance with settler-values. Thus, missionaries constructed the indigenous role in the settler society through the educational system of missionary schools. Moreover, the control exerted both weakened indigenous family ties as well as reinforced sustained settler-dominance in Canada of the 1950s. In alignment with Loomba, settlers did not just briefly interfere with indigenous communities but rather entirely extinguished

¹¹³ Spivak, "Can The Subaltern Speak?," 26.

¹¹⁴ Loomba, 311.

indigenous life and traditions.¹¹⁵ Moreover, McDonalds findings on the effects of missionary education beyond the school environment can be confirmed¹¹⁶, as the repercussions of missionary education impacted both future of indigenous children as well as their family ties. Hence, missionary schools institutionalized colonial dominance through the exertion of control that both directly (separation from parents, school curriculum) and indirectly (cut of family ties, shaping of future) influenced indigenous children.

Next, the control of education entailed the control of certain narratives that indigenous children were taught. These narratives were in accordance with settler values and norms and highlight the sole importance of Eurocentric worldviews. Moreover, racial hierarchies were explicitly made clear in the primary sources analyzed: *"The Indians from the various tribes who patronize this school are not in appearance what the white people might expect them to be. They are well-dressed and neatly groomed, giving the impression of having good taste and refinement."*¹¹⁷ Hence, the dominant narrative that was accepted and reinforced through missionary school education was that of the "civilized" European.¹¹⁸ Therefore, the success and likeability of the indigenous individual was measured by the extent to which their outer appearance resembled the settler society. In alignment with findings of Neeganagwedgin, missionary schools reflected concepts of white superiority.¹¹⁹ Narratives of white superiority and settler worldviews were therefore embedded into missionary education, controlling what is

¹¹⁵ Loomba, 320.

¹¹⁶ MacDonald, 413.

¹¹⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 15 (October-November 1953), 7.

¹¹⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 7.

¹¹⁹ Neeganagwedgin, 420.

tolerable and what is non tolerable in Canadian society. Physical control can be observed on the level of appearance, since indigenous children had to dress, speak and behave in accordance with settler standards. Loomba's argument of missionary schools eliminating alternative ways of thinking¹²⁰ can furthermore be supported through the primary sources consulted for this chapter. Direct control over future roles in society can furthermore be observed in the following source: *"The present trend is to select the most promising pupils, to send them to schools among the whites, so that they may be more easily integrated into the Canadian society."*¹²¹ Future prospects within the settler state thus entailed the eventual integration into "white" schooling systems. The missionary school system and education therefore aimed to prepare the Indigenous children to be aligned with settler worldview and settler values before they were able to be involved in settler society.

Next, missionary records emphasize the value of education in a controlled and organized framework of the settler society: *"From the dawn of history to the present, organized societies, both public and private, have always relied on one form of activity: education, and one institution: the school, to train leaders for the future generations."*¹²²

The heightened importance of the school as a whole including its long history of success thus serves to justify the schools operated by Canadian missionaries.

Embracing the outlook on "leaders for future generations", the missionaries expected their schooling to be of long-lasting nature. This long-term vision underscores the confidence in the school as the assimilation tool of control.

¹²⁰ Loomba, 319.

¹²¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

¹²² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 7.

5.3 The system of residential schooling and curriculum

“Teachers all are of high calibre, and the lessons all are taught in English. Thus, the Indian school children of the north are being given the same opportunities for education as are their white brothers to the south.”¹²³

The curriculum of the missionary-instructed residential schools consisted of a variety of different subjects for the indigenous children. First of all, the English language was the main language of instruction.¹²⁴ This effectively discouraged the learning and upkeep of indigenous languages, which were not part of the school curriculum. The neglect of the Indian language was not the byproduct of the residential curriculum but rather an intentional strategy to *“discourage the use of Indian language, as it hinders progress in English and full adaption to civilized ways”*.¹²⁵ The English language was therefore seen as the language of the civilized and thus given sole priority. In agreement with research from Ellis, the suppression of indigenous language can be identified as colonial tool for assimilation.¹²⁶ The ability to speak indigenous languages therefore decreased over time and with several generations attending the residential schools. This resulted in the destruction the cultural history that is attached to indigenous languages.¹²⁷

The language loss that occurred after years of training in the English language also increased the gap between the indigenous children and their families in the indigenous

¹²³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

¹²⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 7.

¹²⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 7.

¹²⁶ Ellis, 26.

¹²⁷ Hossain and Lamb, 1306.

reserves. Not only did they not know about their own cultural history, they effectively lost their ability to communicate with their parents and grandparents. English as primary mode of instruction on residential school grounds thus contributed to identity and heritage loss for the indigenous children. The force of language goes hand in hand with the force of a certain worldview, which directly correlates to the concept of epistemic violence.¹²⁸ Epistemic violence is therefore executed when non-European ways of knowledge are undermined and replaced with ideologies and knowledge of the colonizer.¹²⁹ Violence experienced on the level of education and knowledge can be identified in the residential school curriculum, as it effectively erased indigenous native culture over generations of schooling through the loss of indigenous languages.

Next, the residential curriculum had special emphasis on practical education: *"Hudson Strait and Hudson Bay set up a practical curriculum that includes writing, English, reading, arithmetic and geography, but with special emphasis on native arts and crafts, hygiene and cooking."*¹³⁰ Therefore, the residential schooling system balanced academic education with manual labour. Especially subjects like hygiene and cooking reinforced the missionaries' beliefs that the indigenous knowledge of those matters were insufficient.¹³¹ Notably, however, was the upkeep of native arts and crafts within the residential school curriculum. Nevertheless, the sole integration of the indigenous culture through arts and crafts does not counteract the cultural identity loss faced through the elimination of their native language. It does, more so, indicate that residues of the native culture can be solely expressed through crafting and making art.

¹²⁸ Spivak, 26.

¹²⁹ Spivak, 26.

¹³⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 9.

¹³¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 9.

Another significant determinant in the context of residential school curricula is the strict division between boys and girls: *"The courses comprise for boys: practical carpentry, farm mechanics, sheet metal work, motor mechanics, forestry, etc.; for the girls: domestic service training and home economics."*¹³² This reflects the missionaries' value for gendered division through their education, emphasizing domestic services for the girls and manual labour for the boys. Hence, the perspective futures of the indigenous children were predetermined through the residential school curriculum. Notably is, furthermore, that the primary sources analyzed do not indicate prospective careers through higher education, such as medicine, law or academics. This reinforces the idea that missionaries imagined the indigenous children to be the blue-collar workforce of tomorrow. This ultimately highlights the settler expectation of indigenous people taking on a subordinate role in society. Moreover, the high intensity vocational training hindered the acquisition of potential leadership skills and prevented critical engagement with the education imposed.

The focus on labor-intensive occupations furthermore resulted in the engagement in lower economic positions.¹³³ The hierarchies imposed by settler colonialism were thus not challenged nor changed by the residential school curriculum. Rather, settler-hierarchies were reinforced and upheld through the educational program. This aligns with postcolonial criticism of colonial education since the system of residential schooling produced obedient colonial subjects rather than independent individuals.¹³⁴ Hence, residential schools under missionary management did not improve economic

¹³² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 17 (December 1956), 2.

¹³³ Neufeld et al., 628.

¹³⁴ Loomba, 310.

opportunities for indigenous people through their educational curriculum. Hence, indigenous children did not benefit from an increase in living conditions after the completion of missionary education, since labor opportunities were solely found in the low-income sector.

Reflection on the missionary school curriculum was given as follows: *"It is pitiful to witness so many ,fine young boys and girls, educated in up-to-date schools, return to the squalor of dire poverty, living in miserable shacks or tents, without adequate clothing, depending on a poor, unbalanced diet."*¹³⁵ Considering that the sources examined stemmed from missionaries themselves, it can be said that they reevaluated their educational practices realistically. Nevertheless, cycles of poverty were not relinquished through residential school education. The poverty cycle once established through imperial exploitation of Canadian natives was thus solely given a different shape though the missionary education curriculum.¹³⁶ The stereotypical settler imagination of the less-knowledable and "primitive" indigenous population finds its reinforcement in the way missionaries educated indigenous children. The concept of "Othering" can be confirmed to the extent to which education systematically prepared indigenous children for labor intensive and low-paying jobs. Missionaries' educational curriculum is essentially based on the assumption that indigenous children are the "Other".¹³⁷ Hence, the aim to equip them with skills needed in the low-income sector is a measure to keep the "Other" at distance to the higher educated.

¹³⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 16, no. 17 (December 1970), 6.

¹³⁶ Coulthard, 443.

¹³⁷ Neeganagwedgin, 21.

This gap between higher educated (settler) and less educated indigenous person created an ongoing hierarchy in Canadian society in which the "Other" is placed on a lower social position due to their occupation. It appears that - once "Othered" in the European worldview - missionaries made an effort to enforce long lasting social marginalization. This is observable through the residential school curriculum and aligns with stereotypical imperial powers dominating native populations.¹³⁸

5.4 Indigenous resistance and criticism of the missionary school system

*"The bomb is the vocal dissatisfaction of an increasing number of Indian parents with the way that so-called student "Integration" is being shoved down their children's throats."*¹³⁹

*"Why not bring whites to our school instead of spreading our children around where they will be really segregated?"*¹⁴⁰

Through the course of missionary education and residential schooling, the settlers encountered resistance from the indigenous population and were openly criticized. Primarily indigenous parents protested against the concept of residential schooling and were published in the missionary newspaper records that are examined in this thesis. Indigenous parents thus challenged the core of missionary education, that assumed that indigenous people had to be fully assimilated and merged into settler-society. Moreover, the issue of social marginalization is raised, which openly attacks the outcome of the assimilation practices as failure.¹⁴¹ The fact that critique of their own system was

¹³⁸ Coulthard, 443.

¹³⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 28, no. 7 (September 1965), 3.

¹⁴⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, September 1965), 3.

¹⁴¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, September 1965), 3.

published in the missionary records reveals an evolving settler-Indigenous relationship in which missionaries had to acknowledge failures within their own practices. In agreement with Coulthard, however, the colonial status quo was still upheld through policies and government interventions.¹⁴²

Frequently, missionary records criticize the governmental choices for indigenous policies.¹⁴³ At the same time, they do not criticize missionary education itself (which was often the outcome of the policies). Through the course of indigenous resistance, therefore, the missionaries tried to take on the role of the mediator whilst pushing the blame on governmental choices: *"If real consultation had taken place, if there had been a genuine dialogue or if they had even bothered to listen to what the Indians were saying during these preliminary meetings, the government would not have written a new policy paper or, when they did, their policy could not have ignored so completely the realities of the Indian situation."*¹⁴⁴ Through the acknowledgement of governmental failures, missionaries tried to position themselves in-between the indigenous population and the government. Thus, they strategically aimed for a "neutral" role in the indigenous resistance movement.

This strategy served mainly to legitimize their continued presence in indigenous life's though missionary schooling. The acknowledgement of systematic failures and the inclusion of indigenous voices started to be integrated in the missionary records from 1965 onwards, which reflects external pressures on the missionary education system.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Coulthard, 451.

¹⁴³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, September 1965), 5.

¹⁴⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, *The Indian Missionary Record*, vol. 28, no. 7 (January-February 1970), 4.

¹⁴⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, September 1965), 3.

The blaming of the government served to both take a distanced position to the indigenous protests as well as to shift the responsibility of the educational outcome on governmental policies. Hence, the perceived "shift" of settler-indigenous relations were not an indicator of decolonialization efforts by the missionaries. Rather, missionaries tried to maintain power in new ways and attempted neutrality within the resistance movement. Most of all, missionaries tried to maintain lasting control over indigenous education and residential schooling, reinforcing settler dominance. Or in Coulthards words: *"the longevity of a colonial social formation depends, to a significant degree, on its capacity to transform the colonized population into subjects of imperial rule."*¹⁴⁶

Hence, even though criticism from indigenous voices was included in primary sources from 1965 onwards, it was still important for missionaries to maintain settler-control over the indigenous assimilation process.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the inclusion of indigenous voices as such shows a certain level of rapprochement.¹⁴⁸ On the praxeological level of Todorov's typology of relations to the "Other", rapprochement indicates that two (opposing) groups find areas of reconciliation.¹⁴⁹ Even though full identification of reconciliation cannot be made through the sources analyzed, a certain level of rapprochement is present. In addition, the inclusion of indigenous voices is a contrasting factor of Spivak's stance on the common suppression of marginalized voices. Nevertheless, it can be argued that even the inclusion of indigenous voices and quotes were narrated through and edited by the missionary reports. This, in turn, argues for

¹⁴⁶ Coulthard, 443.

¹⁴⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 3.

¹⁴⁸ Todorov, 185.

¹⁴⁹ Todorov, 185.

potential discourse management from the missionary side through the control of indigenous representation.

The missionary critique on the government's policies for indigenous education is another factor symbolizing the "Othering" of the indigenous population. The indigenous population was positioned between missionaries and government, thus depicted as subjects being discussed rather than as active participators in the dialogue. Hence, their education and future depended on outside parties making decisions whilst blaming each other in face of indigenous resistance. Whilst neither side took the full responsibility for failures of the indigenous assimilation system, missionaries and governments continued their practices whilst appearing to criticize each other.¹⁵⁰ Another example of missionaries in the role of both critics and enforcers of settler strategies can be observed as follows: *"As long as the government persists in using education for its own designs, education will continue to be an unpleasant, frightening and painful experience for Indian children who have little reason to like or be interested in school anyhow."*¹⁵¹

This argument – as reaction to indigenous criticism on the educational system – reveals another example of how missionaries framed the failures of the residential school system on the mismanagement of the government.

The description of residential education as painful and frightening was a strategic critique of government educational policies, which allowed missionaries to distance themselves from their *own* worst aspects. Therefore, missionaries portrayed themselves as sympathetic figures in the indigenous resistance movement, publishing indigenous voices under the name of progress and rapprochement whilst blame-shifting towards

¹⁵⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, September 1965), 8.

¹⁵¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 7.

governmental institutions.¹⁵² Thus, missionaries were avoidant of their own accountability in the context of forced assimilation in the residential schooling system. The criticism ultimately did not challenge or change deeper structures of settler interference. Rather, missionary criticism of governmental policies served to distract the public from failures on the missionary side. Therefore, even at a time where criticism against residential education grew stronger, missionaries established a position for themselves where they were not the liable party for educational outcomes. This secured their control over continued residential schooling and interference on indigenous life's and shows how even a certain level of rapprochement did not indicate full decolonialization. Missionary schools were thus the central pillar to secure the position of superiority and continue the transformation of the "Other".

5.5 The role of missionary schools in justifying settler-colonialism

*"Education has always been the key instrument to preserve and improve culture in general, and a special form of government, in particular. All lasting political reforms were made permanent through the school."*¹⁵³

Missionary schools have played an important role in the settler society of Canada. As missionaries were originally from Europe and permanently settled on Canadian soil, they were extensions of European imperialism even after decolonialization was prominent after the Second World War.¹⁵⁴ Thus, the interplay of indigenous and

¹⁵² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 9.

¹⁵³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 8.

¹⁵⁴ MacDonald, 412.

missionary lifestyles, with the latter dominating the former, served as a means to secure imperial power even through the second half of the 20th century.¹⁵⁵ They were, furthermore, not part of the discussion over independence and autonomy.¹⁵⁶ Especially since the original habitat of indigenous people was completely taken over by Europeans permanently settling in the newly established country of “Canada”, indigenous people were the marginalized group in society.¹⁵⁷ Through education, missionaries claimed to *preserve* and *improve* the culture of the Indigenous population.¹⁵⁸ Since indigenous practices and traditions were frequently erased and not supported by missionary education, the statement of preserving culture is paradoxical.

Moreover, “*a special form of government, in particular*”¹⁵⁹ indicates that missionary education was used to enforce settler governance as the only acceptable political structure within Canada. This aligns with the criticism of indigenous recognition by Coulthard, indicating that settlers used the term education to recognize indigenous people and their needs.¹⁶⁰ However, these “needs” were framed under the assumption that indigenous people lacked guidance, education and the means to participate in society. The criticism of recognition is especially important in regard to governmental policies on indigenous life and schooling. According to Coulthard, political reforms secured indigenous dependency on the settler society and thus on missionaries.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ MacDonald, 411.

¹⁵⁶ Coulthard, 443.

¹⁵⁷ Coulthard, 443.

¹⁵⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 8.

¹⁵⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 8.

¹⁶⁰ Coulthard, 452.

¹⁶¹ Coulthard, 452.

Hence, the political reforms established through missionary schooling did not contribute to indigenous empowerment. Rather, the reforms made the indigenous individual more dependent on the settler society through the loss indigenous traditions and languages. Missionary education thus justified their practices under the concept of recognition for indigenous needs for the establishment of political governance and education. These needs, however, were arbitrary and were not made in consultation with the indigenous population. Hence, the decision-making of matters about indigenous life's were solely one sided and were based on settler norms and values. The "needs" of indigenous people were furthermore invented by the settler/missionary community, which aligns with Edward Said's concept of Orientalism.¹⁶² The concept of Orientalism refers to the practice of making sense of and explaining the world beyond the boundaries of the settler community.¹⁶³ Hence, the missionaries tried to understand and explain the Indigenous communities through the lens of their own worldview and socialization.

Based on the conclusions that missionaries made on indigenous life, they came up with the various areas in which the natives "lacked" abilities and/or knowledge. The fact that one perspective is not the only way to establish a life and thrive is neglected under the concept of Orientalism, which is based on the assumption that the Eurocentric worldview is the only proper way to be engaged in life. These assumptions are drawn by Said to explain the behavior of the colonizer in the interaction with the colonized.¹⁶⁴ The explanation of the indigenous life's later served as a moral and ethical ground to establish laws and institutions to "help" the indigenous population to rise up to the

¹⁶² Said, 3.

¹⁶³ Said, 3.

¹⁶⁴ Said, 3.

Eurocentric standards. In attempt to fulfill the arbitrary "needs" of the indigenous population, the missionary took charge of significant sectors of life like education, welfare and upbringing. Given that the European lens solely saw a lack of certain abilities within the native population, the missionaries viewed their actions as dutiful and necessary.

Hence, an institution such as the missionary residential schools served as one extension of justifying settler colonialism, under the assumption to improve indigenous life. The imagined missionary-indigenous relationship was therefore also largely based on the assumptions through which missionaries "explained" indigenous life's. These assumptions were absent of diverse points of view and did not entail critical reflections of the missionaries' own value and belief system. Under the assumption of "progress", missionaries found further explanation for the continuation of residential schools: *"These Indian communities will progress in proportion with the available educational facilities."*¹⁶⁵

Moreover, the missionary records critically engage with indigenous' stances expressing concern about the outcome of missionary education.¹⁶⁶ Questioning the intellect of the indigenous people to see the ascribed value of residential schooling, one missionary states: *"We hear people, supposedly in the know, raise doubts as to the services rendered to the Indian population by the residential schools. They say: "For years, there were only residential schools ,in the picture, and what were the results? Such a sweeping statement is quite unfair to residential schools and to their graduates. It reveals only a superficial sense of observation and a limited understanding of the very*

¹⁶⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 2.

¹⁶⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 3.

nature of education and of its predictable outcome."¹⁶⁷ Hence, missionaries imagined the indigenous population as limited in their abilities to comprehend the full value of the residential school system. This is a direct reflection of the power imbalances that were implied through the residential schooling system.

Educating in the name of moral duty and progress, missionaries imagined themselves as part of a bigger picture in the establishment of a world where all citizens lived by the standards of European worldviews. Hence, they justified their role not only through the educational curriculum, but also through the emerging discourses of modernity and progress. Missionaries positioned themselves as gatekeepers of knowledge and education, thereby erasing indigenous traditional knowledge and justifying it through the invented "need" for assimilation into white settler society.¹⁶⁸ Through the missionary held belief of being the benevolent and dutiful educator, they justified their practices to themselves and for the settler collective. A significant underpinning for the moral duty held by missionaries were teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church.¹⁶⁹ In the following chapter, the role of the Catholic Church in the construction of settler-indigenous relations will be analyzed.

¹⁶⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 3.

¹⁶⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 8.

¹⁶⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 2.

6. To what extent does the Catholic Church influence imagined settler-Indigenous relations?

6.1 The Interplay of Catholicism and Education

*"The secret of our success is simple. It is because Beauval is one of the many schools in Canada where education is based upon God's plan and God's design. These are the best blueprints for training children. (...) When the whole atmosphere of education is imbued with Christian principles then, and then only, is training and education most effective."*¹⁷⁰

Canadian missionaries were extensions of the Catholic Church. Hence, their actions and behavior were inevitably intertwined with the rules and values held by Catholicism. Comparing missionary education with the best and divine blueprint, the missionary point of view illuminates that their educational practices were God-given.¹⁷¹ To some extent, this gives the individual missionary the opportunity to outsource the responsibility for their actions to God himself. The Catholic Church therefore portrays itself as the one that brings salvation and universal truth to the indigenous population.¹⁷² In other words, indigenous knowledge was "Othered" in a way where it was mainly ignored and overwritten by the religious doctrine of Catholicism. Through erasing any other form of education or religion from the narrative, it can be confirmed that indigenous voices were suppressed and their agency overruled. It can be observed, therefore, that the individual identity of the indigenous population is largely ignored through the interplay of missionary education and Catholicism.

¹⁷⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

¹⁷¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

¹⁷² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

Hence, there is a certain alignment with the third axis of Todorov's typology of relations to the "Other".¹⁷³ This third epistemic level refers to the ignorance of the "Others" identity¹⁷⁴, which can be confirmed to the extent that indigenous narratives were neglected in both areas of religion and education. Todorov also refers to this as the level of neutrality and indifference¹⁷⁵, which cannot fully be confirmed through the settler-indigenous relationship. On the one hand, indifference for indigenous traditions and culture can be confirmed through the missionary point of view. This indifference gets illuminated through the one-sided decision making and the forced assimilation using Christian doctrine.¹⁷⁶ The individual as such is perceived as indifferent, since its knowledge is perceived as inferior. Neutrality, on the other hand, cannot be confirmed through the examination of the settler-indigenous relationship. Neutrality implies that two actors with divergent values and traditions can coexist next to each other without interference into each others life's.¹⁷⁷

Both Catholicism and the residential schooling system symbolize significant interferences in indigenous life's that lasted for decades. Therefore, the ignorance of the "Others" identity can be confirmed as they were perceived as indifferent actors of society.¹⁷⁸ Indifference, however, did not lead to neutral behavior between the two actors. The imposed religious and educational practices were extensions of the wider assimilation process, in which the "Other" was forced to level with Christian European standards.¹⁷⁹ The success of education and Catholicism as well as their expansion was

¹⁷³ Todorov, 185.

¹⁷⁴ Todorov, 185.

¹⁷⁵ Todorov, 185.

¹⁷⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

¹⁷⁷ Todorov, 185.

¹⁷⁸ Todorov, 185.

¹⁷⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

furthermore a decision made by religious leaders themselves: *"Following an exhaustive on-the-spot survey of the situation, Mr. Marcoux had recommended that the department build one residential school to be managed by the Roman Catholic Church and another by the Church of England."*¹⁸⁰ Quality control and evaluation of educational and religious practices were thus a matter of Catholic officials as well, leaving no room for indigenous people to participate in the debate around their own education.¹⁸¹

The religious and colonial goals were thus given first priority over the establishment of indigenous autonomy. During the 1950s to 1970s, the religious doctrine of the Catholic Church was already deeply embedded in the settler governance of Canada.¹⁸² This established a two-fold way of dominating the marginalized populations: On the one hand, missionaries had direct interference with the Indigenous population. On the other hand, the government had the administrative and political control over the indigenous population. Both were influenced by and worked with the Catholic Church. The interference and decision-making process on indigenous life's was furthermore often initiated by the Church and made official by the government: *"Solely members of the Catholic Church are in charge of reviewing Indian education and welfare and only they are consulted to examine the well-being of Indians. Also, only they are the ones who make government recommendations afterwards!"*¹⁸³ As both parties were in pursuit of the same goals and carried the same intrinsic worldview, it is likely that they did not challenge each other's recommendations for indigenous matters. Rather, they

¹⁸⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

¹⁸¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

¹⁸² Stanley, 179.

¹⁸³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 1.

reassured each other's beliefs in assimilating the indigenous population into settler culture.

This systematic control led to the erasure of indigenous identity, as it was gradually overwritten by Catholic rules and values.¹⁸⁴ An example of the erasure of indigenous identity can be observed in a 1950s source, highlighting that *"Indian children are baptized right after birth."*¹⁸⁵ As early as infancy, therefore, did the process of conversion into Catholicism start for the indigenous children. Missionaries, therefore, imagined the settler-indigenous relationship through the lens of salvation, underpinned by moral duty of Catholicism. The God-given blueprint, as referred to earlier, portrays the missionary view on indigenous education as a divine and holy process. Inevitably, hierarchies are reinforced under this perception, framing one side as morally superior guided by God himself and the "Other" in need of conversion.¹⁸⁶ The missionary thus facilitated cultural erasure under the guise of salvation, thereby silencing indigenous voices in the process. This sub-chapter concludes by agreeing with Loomba's words: *"native recipients are entirely conditioned or devastated by the master culture."*¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Loomba, 316.

¹⁸⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

¹⁸⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

¹⁸⁷ Loomba, 311.

6.2 Religious conversion and superiority complex

“The bishop threw amongst them at Chesterfield Inlet some dust which had come from the tomb of Saint Theresa at Lisieux. Almost immediately an irresistible impulse moved the Eskimos to their knees, asking for Baptism.”¹⁸⁸

The settler-indigenous relations were significantly shaped and influenced by the Catholic Church. The missionary records analyzed frequently highlight “miracle” conversion stories in which the indigenous population accepted Catholicism as their primary religion.¹⁸⁹ Though missionaries were not entitled to e.g. baptize the native population, they integrated many efforts to ensure proper conversion would take place eventually.¹⁹⁰ Hence, missionaries were working closely with other church executives like pastors and bishops to realize this mission. Through the publication of miraculous conversion stories, missionaries essentially created myths around the power of the Catholic Church.

The claim that the natives underwent “irresistible impulses” to be converted portrays Catholicism as both divine and inevitable. The missionary records thus framed Catholicism as superior to indigenous faiths. Since baptism is portrayed as the divine and inevitable outcome of settler-indigenous contact, the justification for interference into indigenous life’s is portrayed as given by God himself. As argued in research from Midzain-Gobin and Smith, the establishment of myths about the indigenous population historically served to obscure the truth.¹⁹¹ Since the conversion of indigenous people’s

¹⁸⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 6.

¹⁸⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 6.

¹⁹⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 6.

¹⁹¹ Liam Midzain-Gobin and Heather A. Smith, “Debunking the Myth of Canada as a Non-Colonial Power,” *The American Review of Canadian Studies* 50, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 479.

is portrayed as voluntary, broader influences of force and suppression of indigenous agency are ignored. Midzain-Gobin and Smith refer to the outcome of such myth-making as *"historical amnesia"*¹⁹², which in this context contributed to the silencing of indigenous opinions in the conversion process. Since the subjugation of the indigenous individual was depicted as the only logical outcome, indigenous people were portrayed as the recipients of salvation.

The broader repercussions of such myth-making, that was detected in missionary records, contributed to the creation of Canada as a country of tolerant and peaceful coexistence.¹⁹³ This image not only falsifies Canada's history of settler-colonialism, but it also trivializes the indigenous experience in both past and present-day Canada. In the context of Catholic influences on the settler-indigenous relations, missionaries imagined themselves to be part of a bigger and divine power underpinning and justifying their daily actions. Missionaries, furthermore, imagined themselves as superior due to the divine framing of their actions. God himself served as moral compass for missionary activities, establishing the ultimate justification of assimilation practices.

A further example of settler myth-making can be observed in a source from 1970s, highlighting a missionary statement: *"I am really happy to do this work as for the first time in my life I am doing something for our own fellow Indian people by trying to bring them the good News of Christ in our Salvation. I remember one old pagan Indian man who (...) had cancer of the throat. I brought him to the hospital in Fort Frances, Ont. and visited him and was really welcomed by him. 2 days after he called for instructions, which I gave him he was baptized a week after at 10:00 p.m.(...) Everyone told me at*

¹⁹² Midzain-Gobin and Smith, "Debunking the Myth of Canada as a Non-Colonial Power," 479.

¹⁹³ Midzain-Gobin and Smith, 479.

the hospital that I helped the old man steal heaven. But it wasn't me, it was the grace of God. As the saying goes in the Bible, many are called and few are chosen."¹⁹⁴ This missionary statement portrays the settler as the savior of the indigenous man, bringing him salvation through Catholicism. Moreover, the missionary depicts himself as a vessel of Catholicism and God's will, which makes him appear humble and good-willed.¹⁹⁵ Ultimately, this makes the missionary look innocent in the grand scheme of religious conversion. Shifting the responsibility on God himself, the missionary withdraws from any liability for the intervention into indigenous life's.

According to recent findings from Allard-Tremblay, this portrayal of innocence diminishes the level of ethics and morality behind the actions of the settler.¹⁹⁶ Or in other words: *"Moral responsibility can be corrupted when accountability is driven by the moral comfort of innocence in ways that thwart actual responsiveness."*¹⁹⁷ The active withdrawal from negative outcomes of religious conversion, such as cultural erasure of indigenous communities, can thus be categorized as corrupted responsibility.¹⁹⁸ Moreover, the moral positioning of missionaries as agents of "salvation" for the indigenous people assumes that missionaries alone possessed the knowledge necessary for a sacred and holy life.¹⁹⁹ This reflects how missionaries imagined their own religious beliefs to be the compass for a good and well-lived life. The Eurocentric

¹⁹⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 6.

¹⁹⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 6.

¹⁹⁶ Yann Allard-Tremblay, "Dispelling the Fantasy of Innocence: Complicity and the Cultivation of Transgression in Settler Colonial Contexts," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, January 5, 2024, 6.

¹⁹⁷ Allard-Tremblay, "Dispelling the Fantasy of Innocence: Complicity and the Cultivation of Transgression in Settler Colonial Contexts," 6.

¹⁹⁸ Allard-Tremblay, 6.

¹⁹⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 6.

assumption of being more civilized and powerful vis-à-vis the indigenous population thus additionally finds its back up in the religious doctrine of Catholicism.

The assumption of knowing the righteous way in which people should conduct their lives is another example of Said's concept of Orientalism.²⁰⁰ Through this concept, the line can be drawn back to the creation of myths. Through the writing on and the defining of indigenous life's through the lens of the settler, myths about civilizing were created and deemed necessary. These perceptions of necessary interventions are found in the missionary records, thus confirming the myths on civilizing the "Other". The backbone of the civilizing missions was in this case the worldview of the Catholic Church, establishing the knowledge of this religion as both the sole and the superior alternative to indigenous traditional practices.

Depicting the Indigenous population as grateful recipient of Christian assimilation strategies, missionary records of the 1950s highlight the lens through which missionaries interpreted indigenous behavior. Indicating that the *"happy and grateful Indians just had one of the most beautiful days of their life's"*²⁰¹, missionaries explained the indigenous reaction towards meeting a higher member of the church. Also referred to as his "eminence", figures of higher rank in the system of the Catholic Church were portrayed as superior and holy.²⁰² In lieu of authentic indigenous voices and opinions on the Church and their executives, the missionary records assumed and interpreted the indigenous experience through their own Eurocentric lens. Moreover, Catholic figures were presented as almighty and succeeding in all areas of knowledge, with

²⁰⁰ Said, 6.

²⁰¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 1.

²⁰² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 1.

Fathers *"knowing more about Indians than most Indians"*.²⁰³ Essentially, the white European claimed to study the indigenous culture and traditions for a limited period of time and then concludes to have achieved superior knowledge.

In reference to Todorov's typology of relation to the "Other", it can be argued that the second praxeological level can be identified in the behavior of the Catholic figures.²⁰⁴ As this level evaluates the gap between rapprochement and distancing of actor X towards the "Other", it can be argued that the Catholic Fathers aimed to learn more about indigenous culture through active rapprochement.²⁰⁵ This evaluation, however, can solely be made when looking at the church-indigenous relationship through the lens of the settler. The settler did try to learn and educate themselves about indigenous ways of life: *"Father Levern Spent His Life Among the Indians He Loves. (...) A man who can Speak the Blackfoot language."*²⁰⁶ The missionary records thus illuminate certain ways of rapprochement towards the indigenous culture and traditions. This can furthermore be observed in the following excerpt: *"I studied their customs, their ways of living ,and their handicrafts and recorded countless stories, songs, folk tales and stodes of all sorts, with elderly folk, most of them illiterate. Yet my experience has been that personal gifts, intelligence, skill, knowledge within their own sphere, ,are far more developed among primitive folk, Eskimo, fishermen, hunter, habitant and all, than among the upper classes of Canadians within the reach of school, factory and comfortable homes, who harbor within themselves a stubborn superiority complex."*²⁰⁷ The extent to which rapprochement can be identified in the settler-indigenous context gets illuminated

²⁰³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²⁰⁴ Todorov, 186.

²⁰⁵ Todorov, 186.

²⁰⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²⁰⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

through this statement of a missionary doctor. Furthermore, not only does the missionary doctor admit that the indigenous people harbor great levels of expertise within their living habitat, but he also reflects upon the white Canadian settler and ascribes him a superiority complex.²⁰⁸ Therefore, a certain level of personal reflection is present in the missionary after he educated himself about indigenous lives.

Nevertheless, when observed through the indigenous perspective, the efforts of rapprochement made by the settlers did not lead to peaceful coexistence. In fact, many missionaries spend years living and studying the indigenous ways of life just to conclude that the conversion to Catholicism is still necessary for ultimate salvation: *"His life amongst the Indians (52years) has been devoted solely to converting the Indians to Christianity. 'I have tried to do the will of God' he says, 'I am thankful for being able to spend my life among the Indians.'"*²⁰⁹ Even though the missionary underwent a form of acculturation whilst living with the indigenous population for a lifetime of 52 years, he finds himself as executor of God's will and thus does not question the Catholic assimilation practices. Missionaries therefore imagined themselves as holy executors of God's will whilst also learning about indigenous culture. The knowledge achieved did not, however, change the course of assimilation practices. Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of rapprochement practiced by the missionaries did not benefit the indigenous population. Other than occasional reflective statements, as seen above, the missionaries still imagined themselves superior in knowledge about life, culture,

²⁰⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²⁰⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

tradition and faith. In alignment with Loomba's findings, the "starkness" of colonial encounter shows how the indigenous population underwent full conditioning.²¹⁰

6.3 The Catholic Church and Indigenous Dependency: Framing Indigenous People as "Needing Guidance"

*"The standard of living of the Indians has risen steadily since the turn of the century, and Father Le Vern points out to their houses to illustrate this. Today they have tables, stoves, chairs, maybe tractors. They live in white man's houses, although in the summer many of them still get the urge for the great outdoors sleeping in tents set up alongside their homes."*²¹¹

Through the years, the influence of missionaries and the Catholic Church established a form of path-dependency for the indigenous population. From the settler point of view, this dependency was interchangeable with "progress", as highlighted in the quote above. Standards of living in accordance with settler worldview were thus depicted as a better and enhanced, essentially more civilized, way of living.²¹² Racial comparisons were frequently made when referring to the indigenous versus the "white man's" living standards.²¹³ Enabling the indigenous population to live like the "white man" is thus perceived as the honorable outcome of missionary intervention. In addition, the racial comparison ridicules the traditional indigenous ways of living through pointing at sleeping outdoors in the summer.

²¹⁰ Loomba, 311.

²¹¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²¹² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²¹³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

Through the description of this as an “urge”, the missionaries ascribe animalistic characteristics to the Indigenous population.²¹⁴ As if a natural urge which cannot be controlled, missionaries depicted the indigenous traditional ways of living as inferior and primitive. The “Othering” perceived through this statement clearly takes place through the racial comparison and the reference to animalistic traits. Moreover, through the settler point of view, a betterment of indigenous society is depicted, which gratifies settler interference and “guidance”. This point of view through which the settler imagines the indigenous population in context of religion and dependency are in alignment with findings from Neeganagwedgin. The scholar found that *“Throughout the earlier centuries, many Christian churches have been complicit in promoting the biological and social inferiority of both Aboriginal and African people vis-à-vis Europeans.”*²¹⁵ Hence, the indigenous population was perceived as incapable of self-rule and self-governance.

Findings from Stanley further illuminate the aim of the Catholic Church through missionary interference. In the process of assimilation, the indigenous population had to be first convinced to give up their active lifestyle and replace it with sedentary ways of living.²¹⁶ The establishment of a sedentary lifestyle was thus the fundamental requirement before the conversion to Christianity could take place and full identification with European values could be established. Under the Eurocentric lens, the establishment of a home with certain amenities was perceived as necessary for survival.²¹⁷ Therefore, the missionaries' interventions were viewed as essential by the settler community, which gave them a sense of duty and moral responsibility. According

²¹⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²¹⁵ Neeganagwedgin, 22.

²¹⁶ Stanley, 179.

²¹⁷ Stanley, 179.

to Stanley's findings, the missionary interventions were intrinsically motivated by duty and God's morale.²¹⁸ Moreover, Stanley's findings suggest that the primary aim of these dutiful actions were the exchange of a "barbaric" lifestyle with the lifestyle of the white man.²¹⁹ Not only did the exchange take place on a physical level, but the changes should have been valued and appreciated by the indigenous population under the settler perspective.²²⁰ Additionally, the "barbaric" lifestyle referred to by Stanley links to Edward Said's explanation of the contrast between the West and the "savage" non-west.²²¹ Thus, the Church as institution of imperialism "Othered" all non-western thought.

The Christian missionaries therefore made the indigenous population perpetually dependent on Eurocentric ways of thought. Once sedentary ways of life were established and conversion to Christianity followed, the path-dependency was established and going back to traditional ways of life nearly impossible. Indeed, Francis describes this process as permanent transition as opposed to temporary lifestyle change.²²² The traditional ways of governance and land use, as well as indigenous social structures, were thus replaced with a sedentary lifestyle. The Catholic Church as imperial tool furthermore made sure that transitions into a sedentary lifestyle were institutionalized and ever lasting. As the indigenous land was taken, the children sent to residential schools and the adults forced to settle down, the catholic missionary intervention ensured that the return to traditional ways was no longer feasible.

MacDonald describes this structural imperialism as erasure of public memory since this

²¹⁸ Stanley, 179.

²¹⁹ Stanley, 179.

²²⁰ Stanley, 179.

²²¹ Said, 3.

²²² Francis, 58.

system ensured that traditional indigenous knowledge was not sustained for further generations.²²³ The assimilation strategies by the Catholic missionaries therefore additionally affected memory and heritage loss, which can be identified as a direct consequence of path-dependency established. Under the assumption of "needing guidance", missionaries thus neglected the impact of their actions on the collective memory of future generations of indigenous people. In fact, the erasure of tradition and heritage was part of the imperial project of conversion.²²⁴

Since no other beliefs other than Christianity were tolerated in the spheres of the Catholic missionaries, the conclusion can be drawn that they depicted other beliefs as less worthy, if not trivial, compared to their own. In alignment with the third epistemic level of Todorov's relational axes, it becomes prevalent that ignorance of the "Other's" identity best describes the actions of the Catholic missionary in the creation of path-dependence.²²⁵ As Todorov states, however, the relational axes can show affinity with one another and thus be intertwined.²²⁶ Therefore, it can be said that an interrelation of the epistemic (third) and the praxeological (second) level can be observed as well. Since the missionaries imagined the indigenous population as "needing guidance", the missionaries believed them to be subordinate. The "Other's" submission²²⁷ is therefore the primary aim of missionary intervention, especially in the context of conversion and adaption of sedentary lifestyles.

²²³ MacDonald, 421.

²²⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²²⁵ Todorov, 189.

²²⁶ Todorov, 189.

²²⁷ Todorov, 189.

Upon reflecting on their own practices and assimilation strategies, Catholic missionaries tended to be quite pessimistic: *"Missionaries and school teachers are doing their utmost to train them aright, and to revive in them that pride of race that once was their greatest characteristic, but on many a reserve, it is a losing battle."*²²⁸ The responsibility for the outcome of missionary practices, however, are framed to lay within the recipient of the education. Framing it as a "losing battle", missionaries drew upon the intellect of the indigenous community, which they perceived as insufficient. Through highlighting that Catholic missionaries were doing their "utmost", their own self-perception gets illuminated. The "guidance" they offered to the indigenous community, which was essentially invented by the Catholic Church, was perceived as an ultimate and flawless guide on how to conduct life.²²⁹ The confidence and sense of higher moral duty that missionaries held as intrinsic beliefs thus made criticism on their own system impossible. Ultimately, it was the reference to God himself that made missionaries unquestioning executors of the teachings of the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church was thus the main influence on the imagined settler-indigenous relations and the entire backbone for missionary operations under the Eurocentric guise of "needing guidance".

6.4 Catholic influence on Indigenous Governance

*"It has been the constant policy of Catholic authorities to take into account the need for leadership among the Indians. Accordingly, instead of losing trained leaders to the white communities the Church hopes to be able to send these leaders back to work among their own people."*²³⁰

²²⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (December 1956), 3.

²²⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February 1953), 1.

²³⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 2.

"For every day that the Indian people continue to be governed under the old Indian Act, the fault lies squarely on the shoulders of Indian leaders like Harry Cardinal and others of his ilk. "He has criticized civil servants in Ottawa and the ministers of the government for not abolishing the Indian Act, and then, when they wish to do so, he insists that the Indians continue to be governed under the repressive Indian Act."²³¹

The indigenous population in Canada underwent significant influence by both the Catholic Church and the Canadian settler-government.²³² Both parties ruled over and made decisions for the indigenous population and had legal reference points for their actions.²³³ As early as 1876, the first legally binding "Indian Act" was introduced, which effectively ruled over all areas of indigenous affairs through the imposition of a colonial legal framework, the restriction of self-determination and assimilation policies.²³⁴ The Catholic Church, as significant part of the settler community, made collaborative decisions with the government in a reciprocal relationship.

The missionary records reveal that the rules and laws established in 1876 still affected all areas of indigenous life a century later. In addition, the records reveal statements from indigenous individuals supposedly criticizing the "Indian act". However, these statements were published in a paradox nature, which creates a picture of a confused and unintelligent indigenous person who rejects the "Indian act" but wants to be governed under it at the same time.²³⁵ The extent to which these statements have been edited and taken out of proportion is not clear, however, it does suggest that the

²³¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (November 1956), 2.

²³² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (November 1956), 2.

²³³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (November 1956), 2.

²³⁴ Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, *Government of Canada's Approach to Implementation of the Inherent Right and the Negotiation of Aboriginal Self-Government*, last modified September 19, 2019.

²³⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (November 1956), 2.

missionary records purposely wanted to create an image that ascribes low competence to the indigenous person. Governance as ultimate form of domination furthermore highlights the extent to which the actions of Catholic missionaries were enshrined in a legal framework, establishing them as the "absolute truth".

In addition, settler-established governance on originally indigenous grounds can be identified as another stark form of epistemic violence.²³⁶ At the core, epistemic violence in this case manifests itself by settling entities taking over not only the land but also the governing structure including the authority that it entails. As indigenous communities were not consulted in the process, but rather ruled over with foreign opinions, epistemic violence can be identified in both the ideological as well as the physical spheres.

MacDonald highlights how the actions of the Catholic settler government did not align with the needs of the indigenous community.²³⁷ Or in other words: *"Indigenous experiences often stand at odds with how the settler government wishes itself to be seen."*²³⁸

Next, a turning point in the Catholic influence on indigenous governance can be observed in missionary records published around 1965 until 1973. The sources indicate how, gradually, both Catholic missionaries and government administrators recognize the need to withdraw from certain actions impacting the indigenous population. In fact, discussions around phasing out the Federal responsibility on "Indian affairs" take place and are recognized by both missionaries and priests.²³⁹ Primary reasons for the discussions revolved around solving indigenous problems from an indigenous

²³⁶ Spivak, 26.

²³⁷ MacDonald, 412.

²³⁸ MacDonald, 412.

²³⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 12.

perspective and not through white interference.²⁴⁰ In attempt to change the status-quo, new governing structures were introduced on some reserves: *"No white man is present on committees, policy-making discussions or town-council type meetings, for the simple reason that, as long as he is there, the Indian will not attempt to go it on his own. They resent white interference in problems unique to their own society."*²⁴¹ Admitting the negative repercussions of Catholic missionary influence, indigenous communities are ascribed more autonomy in handling their own affairs.

Moreover, self-help guidelines instead of financial support and charities followed this governmental turning point. The motivation behind these changes in Catholic missionary interference derived from both 1) recognition of failures in their laws around indigenous guidance and 2) the wish to decrease monetary resources allocated to indigenous welfare. *"The main reason why our government has failed so miserably in its near-sighted efforts to better our Indian brothers' lives is its refusal to help the Indian people work out their own problems, what they know to be their community's particular needs."*²⁴² The theory underpinning this change of ideas around missionary and governmental intervention lied in the assumption that the indigenous population resents the whites but also that they *"get by on charity and relief so who cares about the white man's preachings for bettering one's lot and the need for progress?"*²⁴³ The changed course of the settler government can be identified as quite paradoxical. The contradicting nature of government efforts are observed in both 1) involving the indigenous population in matters of their own kind and thus acknowledging their own

²⁴⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 12.

²⁴¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 12.

²⁴² Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 12.

²⁴³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 12.

failures whilst 2) blaming the indigenous population to be passive receivers of monetary resources.

The indigenous population benefits from a more autonomous way of making decisions on their own reserves, however, this is not a sign of equality but rather a governmental effort to save financial resources. Therefore, this shift can be perceived as a gradual but incomplete change of Catholic settler influence on the indigenous population.

The "Othering" of indigenous people can furthermore be observed through this change in governmental structures. Through the issuing of self-help guidance and the clear remark on the betterment of the native community through "progress", the Catholic settler government still asserts their moral and intellectual superiority. Indigenous communities are thus continued to be "Othered" with the interplay of Church and government as gatekeepers of progress for indigenous self-leadership.

Missionaries as extensions of the Church thus decided who is allowed to lead on indigenous grounds, reserving themselves the right to rule over the "Other" even in changing circumstances.²⁴⁴ Another significant aspect to highlight in this context is the shift of language around the indigenous population. Instead of formerly used attributes such as backward or uncivilized, the Catholic government and their missionary extensions began to imagine the indigenous person as welfare dependent.²⁴⁵ In addition, and despite changing circumstances, the Catholic Church increasingly noted their concerns around the neglect of Catholic doctrine under indigenous self-leadership: *"We hope that Indian parents of all religious persuasions will realize fully the gravity of the present situation, as religion - the mainstay of society - is threatened, not*

²⁴⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 12.

²⁴⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (September 1965), 16.

by direct persecutions, but by the more subtle and nefarious danger of letting it sink into oblivion."²⁴⁶ The Catholic Church thus expressed concern and underlying anxiety against the change of environment into increased indigenous self-autonomy.

Missionary rule over indigenous affairs, as extensions of the Catholic Church, was threatened in face of indigenous self-leadership. This imaginary threat of a losing control, however, did not factually occur through indigenous self-leadership, since missionaries and Church combined still held the ruling hand over the broader matters of indigenous lives. Thus, even if indigenous self-governance expanded, the education of indigenous people including its leaders still derived from missionary schools including Christian religions doctrine. In this way, Christian values and ideology was deeply embedded in the social structures of the indigenous population. The Christian Church thus significantly influenced the way in which missionaries imagined settler-indigenous relations through the establishment of governmental frameworks underlying missionary actions. Through that, the Catholic interference can be marked by three key characteristics: assimilation, controlled integration and paternalistic dominance.

²⁴⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July- August 1973), 4.

7. How did missionary practices impact indigenous life and what are the repercussions in contemporary society?

7.1 Social and psychological effects of missionary actions

“Today, in the twenty-first century, mental health issues persist along with a general quality of life gap between non-Indigenous and Indigenous Canadians.”²⁴⁷

“The Indian has not the white man's psychology and mentality. In order to understand the Indian one should be at least mixed-blood. Even though physical trait's of a people are changing, its mentality remains as a distinctive ethnic character.”²⁴⁸

The debate around psychological and social effects of missionary education is of high relevance in contemporary society, but carries its origins in the 20th century missionary interventions. Throughout the primary source material analyzed, it becomes prevalent that the indigenous population is characterized as biologically and psychologically different than the white settler population.²⁴⁹ Both primary characteristics for distinctiveness, such as hair and skin color, as well as secondary characteristics like behavior and conduct are perceived as radically different and “Other”.²⁵⁰ Indigenous people had to conform with missionary-imposed settler values, which often came at the expense of their own identity and cultural loss.

Such loss often led to an increased rate in mental health conditions, such as depression and increased suicide rates.²⁵¹ The loss of cultural identity furthermore increased

²⁴⁷ Hossain and Lamb, “Cultural Attachment and Wellbeing Among Canada’s Indigenous People: A Rural Urban Divide,” 1304.

²⁴⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January 1956), 7.

²⁴⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January 1956), 7.

²⁵⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January 1956), 7.

²⁵¹ Hossain and Lamb, 1306.

feelings of mental displacement and unbelonging.²⁵² Since missionaries preferred an assimilation over an integration strategy, the indigenous traditions and religious preferences were replaced with Eurocentric standards. Since integration would have implied to accept the "Other" with all their distinctive values and practices, it was not suited for the settler aim of cultural erasure. The dislocation from family and reserves, additionally, led to stress and anxiety in indigenous children.²⁵³ In addition, the scholar Francis highlights how Christianity was embedded in a racial doctrine²⁵⁴, influencing missionary actions into imagining racial superiority over the indigenous population. The source material analyzed frequently highlights racial comparison, or links to disparate identity in general: *"It was great weather at the opening of the residential school, which showed God has blessed his 'copper skin children'."*²⁵⁵ The impact of a system with ingrained racist tendencies led to both social and psychological effects in the indigenous population, as they were undervalued and discriminated.²⁵⁶ The chronic reference to their racial "subordinate" characteristics by missionary actors negatively impacted confidence and self-esteem.²⁵⁷

The primary sources furthermore highlight how Christian missionaries imagined their competence in explaining matters around the psychology of the indigenous population: *"Father G. De Bretagne gave a very substantial talk on 'The Adaptation of our Apostolic Methods to Indian psychology.'"*²⁵⁸ The explanation of psychological phenomena through the missionary is another instance in which alignment with Said's

²⁵² Hossain and Lamb, 1306.

²⁵³ Francis, 78.

²⁵⁴ Francis, 71.

²⁵⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (October-November 1953), 4.

²⁵⁶ Francis, 71.

²⁵⁷ Francis, 71.

²⁵⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (August-September 1953), 4.

concept of Orientalism is prevalent. Therefore, imperial assumptions on native people's behavior and conduct did not end when colonialism was officially over. As postcolonial scholars like Said highlight, imaginations of white superiority and the perceived ability to explain the world and the "Other" remained in the settler consciousness.²⁵⁹ Missionary interventions and the concept of residential schooling prevailed even as the global order shifted to refrain from colonialism. Missionary actions were therefore not perceived to be harmful tools of imperialism, but rather a necessity for Canadian nation-building under the guise of assimilation. This aligns with previous findings of this thesis on how missionaries imagined their work to be a duty imposed by a higher power, framing them as benevolent guides and justifying their actions. In addition, missionaries imagined their interferences as humanitarian, ensuring progress and development for the indigenous population.

Potential harm of social and psychological impacts was thus not recognized by missionary actors. Rather, the opposite was the case due to the imagined legitimacy of missionary actions. Missionaries furthermore perceived themselves as necessary intermediate between Western and native culture: *"From building schools to building bridges - that's the way it is for Bishop Fergus O'Grady. Only the bridges aren't steel and concrete structures; instead they are bridges of understanding between races."*²⁶⁰ Cultural mediation was thus as umbrella term to disguise the psychological and social control exerted upon the indigenous population. In alignment with postcolonial thoughts on continued imperial intervention, missionaries frequently framed their action as essential to establish cross-cultural understanding. Despite the power imbalance

²⁵⁹ Said, 189.

²⁶⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 5.

between missionaries and indigenous people, missionaries presented themselves as neutral facilitators of cultural mediation. This created an illusion of consent between the two parties. As indigenous people did not experience most missionary interventions voluntarily, however, consent did in fact not occur.

Missionary actions through imperial times as well as after official "decolonialization" were based on the same inherent characteristics, enforcing Christian European thinking. As missionary practices lasted until the 1990s, over two centuries of indigenous generations were affected. The "bridge" referred to in the missionary quote earlier can therefore be characterized as a one-way street towards Eurocentrism, erasing reconciliation and tradition. As the residential school curriculum ensured indigenous language loss²⁶¹, children were brought up to reject their own roots. This can be characterized as internalized colonialism, which encouraged children from a young age to have negative associations with their own heritage.

Framing this as "soft-power colonialism", Francis highlights that the imperial aim shifted from conquering of the "Other" towards saving the souls of the "Other" and ensuring continued welfare.²⁶² Since the primary sources analyzed were published in a missionary record, they primarily represent the missionary point of view. Thus, limited direct quotes from indigenous voices were present. In the context of social and psychological impacts of missionary practices, however, the following statement highlights an indigenous stance: *"Many Indians once again are looking toward the old as the hope of the future. Many Indian leaders believe a return to the old values, ethics and morals of native beliefs would strengthen the social institutions that govern the*

²⁶¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1953), 6.

²⁶² Francis, 71.

behaviour patterns of Indian societies. But would the Christian churches have the guts to get out? It seems highly unlikely. They still prefer sectarianism to faith."²⁶³ Religious sectarianism therefore refers to forceful and rigorous religious attachment to Christianity. Highlighting the indigenous perspective, it becomes prevalent that to Christian missionary interference exceeded tolerable limits and thus fundamentally altered indigenous life. The wish of returning to the traditional ways of indigenous life expresses both grief and mourning for what has been lost. The desire to reclaim indigenous culture and beliefs can be characterized as a direct response to the psychological and social harm experienced. Research from MacDonald highlights how the reclamation of indigenous culture and identity aligns with psychological healing and the processing of past trauma.²⁶⁴ The desire for cultural reconciliation observed in the 1970s primary sources, therefore, already stated the underlying urge for healing and withdrawing from (neo) imperial influence. Ultimately, the psychological and social consequences of missionary encounter extent far beyond their initial period of contact.²⁶⁵ Two centuries of missionary interventions created a legacy of Eurocentric impact that influence indigenous people in Canada today.

7.2 Cultural revival versus lingering erasure

"Younger generations gradually change their ideas of the Sun Dance from a form of religious expression to an annual feast and get together. Only a few old men and

²⁶³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 3.

²⁶⁴ MacDonald, 430.

²⁶⁵ MacDonald, 430.

*women in the tribe now take the Sun Dance as a religion(...). They should be on their farms, but are at the Sun Dance-and from the Sun Dance comes trouble and evil."*²⁶⁶

*"Under the new policy, which applies only to schools on Indian reserves throughout Canada, Indian bands will choose what kind of education Indian children should have, to compete in both their and the white man's world."*²⁶⁷

The missionary impact on indigenous lives can be defined into two categories. Under the assimilationist policies executed by Canadian missionaries, cultural erasure can be clearly identified. At the same time, however, a turn can be observed in missionary records during the 1970s, emphasizing increased cultural revival.²⁶⁸ Whilst indigenous language and traditions were systematically suppressed by missionary actors for the majority of centuries, gradual reintegration of indigenous practices took place during the 1970s.²⁶⁹ New governmental policies allowed for more agency of the indigenous population, which granted them the rights to establish their own residential school curriculum.²⁷⁰ In addition, the use of native languages was encouraged under the policy,²⁷¹ emphasizing that indigenous languages were recognized as appropriate teaching languages.

The newly established policy increased indigenous autonomy. At the same time, however, characteristics of "Othering" were still ingrained within the governmental policy and thus in missionary actions. In fact, the continuation of the "Us" versus "them" relationship continued to exist and was underpinned by racial comparisons. The distinction between the indigenous versus the "white man's world" further exemplifies

²⁶⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (February-1953), 5.

²⁶⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 1.

²⁶⁸ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 1.

²⁶⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 3.

²⁷⁰ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 1.

²⁷¹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 1.

how missionaries imagined settler-Indigenous relations, even in spite of increased indigenous autonomy. Furthermore, the expansion of indigenous self-leadership occurred in establishments erected and run by Catholic missionaries. This enabled the missionary to maintain a sense of general oversight even if the educational choices were ultimately made by indigenous leaders. Missionaries were therefore in a sort of binary position within their authority and influence. On the one hand, they continued to run the missionary schools and established a path dependency for many indigenous people to both the sedentary lifestyle as well as to the Catholic Church, that was maintained even after increased indigenous autonomy. On the other hand, missionaries had to outsource and withdraw from certain responsibilities that were now assigned to indigenous people themselves, ultimately resulting in a certain loss of power and dominance.

Hence, a slow shift can be observed in the sources from the 1970s, steadily involving more inclusive voices and shifting away from the traditional religious missionary doctrine. This can also be identified as a significant part of indigenous history and as the first time in centuries that their voices are heard, acknowledged and listened to. In contrast to Spivak's findings of the common silencing of the subaltern voices in the colonizer versus colonized relationship, the turn of the 1970s did in fact allow the subaltern (indigenous people) to speak.²⁷² As this time period was about twenty years from the end of missionary run residential schools altogether, these new policies ascribing indigenous people more self-leadership can be identified as the early signs of the end of missionary influence in Canada. The "end" of missionary influence, however,

²⁷² Spivak, 26.

cannot be fully identified as an ultimate termination of all missionary held influence. The legacy of both colonial as well as postcolonial influence of missionary interventions on indigenous lives are still observable in contemporary Canada²⁷³, as discussed in the next chapter. The limits of indigenous self-leadership even under the new government regulations were manifested in the continued missionary oversight of all indigenous-run operations. For example, the educational curriculum honoring more indigenous beliefs and traditions was ultimately still facilitated at missionary residential schools. Hence, missionary teachers as well as indigenous teachers taught the school curriculum, leaving continued room for Eurocentric settler influence.

Nevertheless, the primary sources point to the fact that the residential school personnel was in fact chosen by indigenous parties during the 1970s: *"Further, this policy recognizes the rights of parents to determine the religious status of their local school, and of the final approval of the teachers who are hired to teach in Reserve Schools - and this whether they assume financial control or not."*²⁷⁴ Of important historical significant is furthermore the newly ascribed right to the indigenous parents to decide upon the religion that is taught and followed in the residential schools.²⁷⁵ As missionaries preached Catholic religious doctrine for more than two centuries at this point, this policy clearly establishes defeat and actual power loss for missionary leaders. Furthermore, the turn of indigenous self-leadership and the change of rights in indigenous sovereignty gives insight into the shifting settler-indigenous relationship.

²⁷³ Coulthard, 443.

²⁷⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 4.

²⁷⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 4.

In reference to Todorov's typology of relations to the "Other", an alignment with the second praxeological level can be identified through increased indigenous autonomy.²⁷⁶

The indicator for *rapprochement* in this case is the withdraw from governmental and missionary influence on the educational curriculum. Through ascribing more self-leadership to the indigenous population, missionaries inevitably dismantled their own built-up hierarchies and established more equality, even if it is not voluntary but government initiated.²⁷⁷ This can be characterized as very early forms of reconciliation and *rapprochement* of the different actors, even though missionary-run frameworks and Eurocentric notions were still involved in indigenous lives. On the other hand, however, the cultural erasure facilitated over the years was not reversed through simple acts of early reconciliation and *rapprochement*. In fact, as postcolonial scholar Loomba highlights, imperial encounter and repercussions of imperial influence leave the native culture in an irrecoverable state.²⁷⁸

Cultural erasures, such as diminishment of indigenous religions (Sun dance, mentioned above), gradually inhibited indigenous generations from remembering the origins of their roots and traditions. Hence, the term "lingering erasure" is appropriate in describing the long-term effects of cultural destruction, making missionary interferences a long-term, gradual and often silent phenomenon that affected indigenous people on an intergenerational level. Therefore, certain assimilation practices executed by missionary actors affected the indigenous culture directly, whereas others influenced the life of indigenous people more indirectly and in the long-term. Under consideration of the

²⁷⁶ Todorov, 189.

²⁷⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 4.

²⁷⁸ Loomba, 308.

mixed integrations of both missionary influence as well as part of indigenous leadership, the residential school experience of the 1970s can be characterized as having hybrid nature. The mixture of indigenous spiritual beliefs and European Christian beliefs thus constituted the educational blend that was taught in residential schools from the 1970s onwards.²⁷⁹

According to research from Hossain and Lamb, the reintegration of certain cultural practices positively affected indigenous psychological health and well-being.²⁸⁰ This, in turn, increased the resilience against neocolonial influences and re-established a certain sense of belonging.²⁸¹ Indigenous cultural distinctiveness was thus more acknowledged and implemented in the educational curriculum. Distinctiveness in this sense is different to "Othering" described earlier, as cultural distinctiveness positively acknowledges differences instead of marginalizing and oppressing them.²⁸² Hence, the incorporation of indigenous-led school curricula can be identified as the first steps towards cultural reconciliation.

Moreover, as resilience increased, and the status quo moved away from Christian religious doctrine, indigenous resistance towards missionary interventions grew as a whole.²⁸³ At the same time, the increased indigenous resistance was met with dissatisfaction from the Catholic missionary side: *"The Indians of today are in a better position than the poor white men of today. The Indian can go back to his reserve where he doesn't pay taxes and where he can live off welfare, and if necessary, the occasional*

²⁷⁹ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 4.

²⁸⁰ Hossain and Lamb, 1306.

²⁸¹ Hossain and Lamb, 1306.

²⁸² Hossain and Lamb, 1306.

²⁸³ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (July-August 1973), 8.

rabbit. But a white man living in one of our cities has no place to go if he has no money for rent."²⁸⁴ As perceived in earlier analysis, the indigenous population continues to be portrayed as a welfare case for the Canadian government and for Catholic missionaries.

At a time where Eurocentric values were increasingly questioned through indigenous voices and grassroots movements, the reactions found in missionary records were predominantly defensive. The comparison of the indigenous person to the poor white man aims to indicate how well protected and governed the indigenous population was under the Canadian government. This same settler government, however, was the one instituting imperial laws of suppression including the Indian Act of 1876. Such defensive strategies were direct consequences of the perceived threat through increased indigenous resistance. Missionary actors likely saw their legacy of Eurocentric influence threatened and thus reacted with moral comparisons. During the 1970s, therefore, missionaries increasingly lost power dominance over the indigenous communities and the established hierarchy was partly restructured.

This inevitably influenced the way in which missionaries imagined the settler-indigenous relations. Due to the slow decrease of missionary power and the gradual failure of certain assimilation practices, the settler-indigenous relationship that was previously based on Eurocentric dominance was now increasingly vulnerable and exposed to threat. The gradual development of settler-indigenous relations from the 1950s to 1970s therefore constituted of stark settler dominance and structural inequalities during the 1950s and 1960s. After the onset of the 1970s, however, the sources clearly indicate a shift of power dynamics that ascribe a certain sense of self-government and autonomy

²⁸⁴ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 2.

to the indigenous population. The full spectrum of missionary influence, however, was not eliminated. Hence, the 1970s can be characterized as the early start of the dismantling-phase of certain settler influences including missionary intervention.

7.3 Truth and reconciliation in the 21st century

Missionary record 1970:

*“Mr. Wuttunee, also a former director of the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada, said the new Indian policy **“does not mean cultural genocide; it means cultural revival. It does not mean economic depression; it means economic progress. It does not mean segregation or second-class citizenship; it means first-class citizenship with special rights guaranteed by the British North America Act.”**”²⁸⁵*

Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015:

*“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 peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which **can best be described as ‘cultural genocide.’**”²⁸⁶*

In the 21 century, the intergenerational impact of missionary actions on the indigenous population has been brought to the surface. Hence, the Canadian government seeks to reconcile with the indigenous community through the acknowledgement of the severe effects of missionary influences. A complete shift can be observed in the language addressing settler influence on the indigenous community. Missionary records of the

²⁸⁵ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 2.

²⁸⁶ “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” (Ottawa, Canada: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 1.

1970s defend assimilationist policies and suggest indigenous people were elevated through settler influence (“first class citizenship”).²⁸⁷ Forty-five years later, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission describes the various areas of settler influence as cultural genocide.²⁸⁸ This represents a paradigm shift in the understanding of assimilation policies. From the historical view of assimilation as necessary tool for “civilization”, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission now highlights the intentional and violent nature of assimilation as cultural destruction.

Debating this cultural erasure, MacDonald goes so far as to compare past interferences of the Canadian government on the indigenous population with the elimination of the “Other” during Nazi Germany.²⁸⁹ In addition, the scholar highlights how – despite reconciliation strategies- structural inequalities persist for the indigenous communities in Canada.²⁹⁰ Hence, the colonial legacies continue to shape indigenous life since they are a part of, and ingrained in, the system. Postcolonial scholar Loomba highlights how such historical institutionalism is particularly entrenched within sectors of education, government and healthcare.²⁹¹ Neufeld et al. found that reconciliation efforts succeeded in educating the broader society about indigenous colonial legacy, albeit structural racism continues to persist in contemporary Canada.²⁹² The intertwined nature of missionaries and the Canadian government, based on settler origin and the practice of

²⁸⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 2.

²⁸⁸ “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada” (Ottawa, Canada: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 1.

²⁸⁹ MacDonald, 420.

²⁹⁰ MacDonald, 421.

²⁹¹ Loomba, 311.

²⁹² Neufeld et al., “‘The More You Know’: Critical Historical Knowledge About Indian Residential Schools Increases Non-Indigenous Canadians’ Empathy for Indigenous Peoples,” 628.

Catholicism, therefore established a system of violent suppression that is still observable in different parts of Canadian society.

Through invoking the term "cultural genocide", the Truth and Reconciliation Commission refers to the severance and longevity of imperial influence. This powerful term symbolizes the deliberate destruction of culture and refrains from cultural destruction as by-product of assimilation. "Cultural genocide" furthermore symbolized the death of identity (as opposed to genocide symbolizing the death of the body). In addition, contemporary indigenous affairs of the Canadian government try to make amends with the indigenous population. For instance, so-called "healing-funds" are paid out by the Canadian government.²⁹³ The first "healing-fund" was granted in 1998 and covered a total of 350 million dollars.²⁹⁴ Even though the current settler-indigenous relations are geared towards reconciliation and healing, the cultural loss persists within the indigenous population. Monetary resources thus cannot retrieve or revive the loss of tradition and the disconnection from cultural roots. It can merely compensate in sectors like housing, welfare etc., in which the indigenous population is disproportionately disadvantaged.²⁹⁵

As missionary schooling aimed to equip the indigenous population with vocational training instead of encouraging further academic studies, missionaries geared them towards low-income jobs.²⁹⁶ This served as systematic barrier to hinder the indigenous population from entering higher and more prestigious ranks in society. Missionaries thus helped to create a wealth-gap between settlers and indigenous people. In the 21st

²⁹³ MacDonald, 413.

²⁹⁴ MacDonald, 413.

²⁹⁵ MacDonald, 413.

²⁹⁶ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1963), 5.

century, the governmental healing funds can help to lessen this gap and encourage higher education. Cultural and spiritual practices, however, will remain to be lost to the extent to which their roots and origins cannot be retrieved anymore. Essentially, the foundation and the very start of cultural loss goes hand in hand with the onset of missionary residential schools, which institutionalized settler doctrine on indigenous grounds. The superior nature in which missionaries saw themselves vis-à-vis the indigenous population laid the ground stone for the phenomenon that is contemporarily acknowledged as cultural genocide.

This imagined nature of higher class that missionary settlers carried as intrinsic value enabled the institutionalization of Eurocentric notions within the Canadian society. As both missionaries and the government have consisted of European settlers during the 20th century, the policies and laws established served solely the white Christian settler as opposed to the native population. Missionary worldview and their imagined relationship to the indigenous population created the structural inequality that persists in Canadian institutions today. The way in which cultural assimilation and indigenous cultural loss was perceived from the indigenous side is not sufficiently elaborated by the missionary records. However, one statement (narrated through a missionary voice) could be retrieved: *"No longer Indian! What are we to think when the minister tells us we aren't supposed to be Indians any more, just Canadians like other Canadians, and then we learn of a letter making the rounds of the Indian Affairs offices advising that Indian "experts" will always be needed? What for? There are not supposed to be any more Indians?"*²⁹⁷ The perceived blindness for race, as illuminated by the quote from an

²⁹⁷ Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, (January-February 1970), 3.

indigenous person, illustrated the paradox of missionary assimilationist practices. The aim of full assimilation through the destruction of heritage and culture did not result in an Indigenous-Canadian fully blending in into settler society. Instead, missionary assimilationist practices continued to engrain racial structures into society through their own perceived position of superiority.

The need for assimilation itself dictates a sort of insufficiency about the "Other" that needs to be eliminated. The attempt to convert and 'civilize' the "Other" thus always stemmed from an imagined position of power and perceived knowingness of the right way to live. As imagined executors of Catholic guidance and arguably of Jesus Christ himself, missionaries morally supported their own actions through their faith and a perceived higher power. The outsourcing of responsibility for missionary actions to the higher power further enabled missionaries to persevere in their actions enabling cultural loss. This adoption of an artificial way of life and artificial European culture inevitably led to grievances and pain associated with missionary actions from the indigenous perspective.²⁹⁸ The disregard of the negative repercussions of missionary actions shows furthermore to what extent the Eurocentric lens blinded the missionary from recognizing potential that other worldviews had to offer.

In reference to Todorov's typology of relations to the "Other", an interrelation of the three relational axes can be observed when looking at the current Truth and Reconciliation measures. The first axiological level indicating value judgement towards the "Other" shows how Canadian settler society has moved away from depicting the "Other" as inferior.²⁹⁹ Whereas perceived inferiority of the indigenous population was

²⁹⁸ Francis, 87.

²⁹⁹ Todorov, 189.

the backbone of missionary operations, the current Truth and Reconciliation Commission moves away from this notion and promotes equality instead. This equality is not based on assimilation but rather on the recognition of individuality of all citizens and the strength that lies within a multicultural society. Next, the second praxeological level indicates that the current Truth and Reconciliation measures are in alignment with Todorov's understanding of rapprochement.³⁰⁰ This can be identified through the embracing of indigenous values and culture instead of the historical suppression of them through missionary actions. Even though certain actions of rapprochement have also been identified during active missionary intervention, the analysis showed that those actions were still benefitting the settler structures and were negotiated within settler superiority. In contemporary Canada, rapprochement takes place without the forced submission of the indigenous population.³⁰¹ In fact, the Truth and Reconciliation commission transparently uncovers settler injustices towards the indigenous population and tries to make amends without the need for assimilation. Next, the third epistemic level indicates that the former (missionary initiated) ignorance of indigenous identity is contemporarily replaced by the honoring of indigenous identity and reconciliation efforts made by the settler government.³⁰² Thus, indifference or neutrality towards indigenous identity is replaced by acknowledgement in the value of the "Other".

Through highlighting the consequences of missionary actions including cultural genocide, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission tries to reflect on the various ways in which the indigenous population has been "Othered" by the settler community.

³⁰⁰ Todorov, 189.

³⁰¹ Francis, 87.

³⁰² Todorov, 189.

Though the emphasis on indigenous history as "Other" from settler history, "Othering" in general continues to take place in a different format. Whereas "Othering" was used to construct an image of another individual that was inherently insufficient in knowledge and skill, the "Othering" perceived in contemporary Canadian society highlights the differences in history without neo imperial aims of explaining the "Other" through settler worldview.

8. Conclusion

This thesis investigated the imagined settler-indigenous relations through the missionary lens. Through the examination of the missionary school system, the influence of the Catholic Church and the repercussions of missionary actions in contemporary society, settler-indigenous relations were analyzed through various angles. This thesis contributes to the understanding of how executors of the imperial system morally and ethically justified their actions. Moreover, this thesis adds to the existing literature by illuminating how the imperial system sustained itself through missionary actors. Next, findings of this thesis help understand how the missionary worldview led to the legitimization of force, assimilation and control.

Missionaries imagined themselves to be a neutral force, executing the will of a higher power. They imagined the settler-indigenous relations to be underpinned by 'duty', which depicted the missionary as humble servant of a greater cause. Hence, missionaries imagined themselves to be the obedient servers of God, which allowed for an outsourcing of responsibilities to God as well. Missionaries themselves were not reflective of their own Eurocentric lens, which in turn established the worldview that the

assimilation practices were based upon. In addition, missionaries imagined their relations to the indigenous population as paternalistic, which enabled them to rule over indigenous education and family affairs. Next, missionaries found themselves in the self-ascribed role of the cultural mediator between settler-government and the indigenous community. These findings suggest that missionaries imagined their position in between the two parties as *neutral*. Hence, missionaries imagined themselves as knowledgeable enough to foster cross-cultural understanding, thereby neglecting the fact that unbiased stances on affairs are essential in any mediating activity. Thus, missionaries were unable to detect their own Eurocentric lens, which made unbiased mediatorship impossible. In relation to God, their *neutral* stance was imagined since they primarily found themselves as the executors of duty, instead of the ones making the decisions and carrying the responsibility. Only the grander purpose of conversion to Catholicism and the strategies of assimilation enabled the missionary to imagine divine superiority over the indigenous population, which then fueled their actions. Hence, a hierarchical relationship can be observed in the settler-indigenous relations as well. In addition, missionaries imagined their intellect to be of higher level than the intellect of the indigenous population. Missionaries used this imagined belief to channel indigenous careers towards the low-income sector. Hence, the explaining and assuming of indigenous intellect illuminates the intrinsic Eurocentric beliefs of being naturally more gifted and intelligent - essentially more “civilized”- than the indigenous population. In addition, missionaries imagined themselves as most competent and knowledgeable on indigenous psychology, which was underpinned by racial comparisons. As their own Eurocentric notions were referred to as facts, missionaries were not receptive of alternative worldviews. Therefore, the imagined settler-indigenous relations were

underpinned by only one God-imposed and Eurocentric worldview, which was perceived as the only way to conduct a worthy life. Moreover, the motivating forces behind missionary actions continue to influence Canadian society in the 21st century. As contemporary Canadian affairs around the settler-indigenous relationship aim to find reconciliation with the indigenous communities, repercussions of imperial influence are omnipresent in Canadian society. Hence, the longevity of missionary imagined settler-indigenous relations additionally highlight the importance of study on the subject.

This thesis is limited due to the sole consultation of online archives as well as the exclusion of French-Canadian sources. In addition, this thesis is limited to sources from the 1950s to 1970s, which is due to source availability. Therefore, suggestions for further research are the incorporation of sources from the early 20th century and earlier. In addition, field research in Canada and the consultation of physical archives would benefit further studies of the subject. Lastly, a reversed research angle to investigate the imagined settler-indigenous relations of the indigenous perspective would be a relevant subject of inquiry.

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