I REMIND UNTIL I FALL:
AN EXAMINATION OF SPACE, MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE AT THE
COQUALEETZA RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AND INDIAN HOSPITAL

by

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Abstract

Through a theoretical and practical examination of how space is socially constructed and perceived, this study hypothesizes that the monolithically negative portrayal in the media and academic literature of the Indian residential school experience does not adequately reflect the full range of the experiences of all children at such institutions. A typology of spaces is constructed which establishes that concepts of gender, race and age impact the ways that institutions and institutional spaces are organized and perceived. This typology is applied to the Coqualeetza Residential School and the Coqualeetza Indian Tuberculosis Hospital in Sardis, BC for the period 1935 - 1950. Interviews were conducted with former Coqualeetza residents. Their comments, along with extant accounts of residential school experiences were examined within the context of this typology. The results reveal that, at Coqualeetza and at other residential schools, social constructions and personal perceptions of spaces affect and reflect peoples’ experiences in profound ways. Examining such perceptions has revealed that residents’ experiences and memories are heterogeneous, diverse and very personal.
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Introduction

If you are on Highway 104
In a Shubenacadie town
There is a hill,
where a structure stands
A reminder to many senses
To respond like demented ones.

I for one looked into the window
And there on the floor
Was a deluge of a misery
Of a building I held in awe
Since the day
I walked into the ornamented door.

There was grime everywhere
As in a building left alone or unused.
Maybe to the related tales of long ago
where the children lived in laughter or abused.

I had no wish to enter
Nor to walk the halls.
I had no wish to feel the floors
where I felt fear
A beating heart of episodes
I care not to recall.

The structure stands as if to say:
I was just a base for theory
To bend the will of children
I remind
Until I fall.

Rita Joe. “Hated Structure: Indian Residential School, Shubenacadie, N.S”

The quiet, empty rooms of the abandoned residential school in Rita Joe’s recent poem occupy both tangible space and the amorphous personal landscapes of memory and experience. Rita Joe is, at once, a woman walking cautiously into the school, a child tip-toeing to reach the windowsill to see out, and a First Nations person trying to make sense of the rush of sensations that the place is evoking. As she looks in, she is (we are) transported into a nebulous territory where senses, experiences, memories and material reality coexist. The poem’s evocative and almost tactile images reflect the intricacies of space: they imply that experience and memory are related to the physical space of the school in complex and malleable
ways. Rita Joe's poem also suggests that experiences at residential schools, like memories and spaces, were diverse and often conflicting.

This study seeks to understand just such heterogeneous Indian residential school experiences through an examination of the various spaces that the schools created for their students; that is, it seeks to qualify space as an important analytical tool to understand experience. I use the term place interchangeably with site and actual space in this paper to describe physical, material environments. I use space to refer to how environments are socially constructed and perceived. Roberta Gilchrist suggests how social ideals and concepts are manifested in places: "Far from merely reflecting society, material culture [or place] can be seen to construct, maintain, control, and transform social identities and relations". Laura Cameron further suggests that sites are imbued with the various stories of the people who experienced them; and, Paul Rodaway explains that perceptions are experienced "through the senses and interpreted by the mind". In these ways, spaces are created from places.

I investigate the ways such places and spaces at residential schools have been perceived, and create a typology (a list and description of types) of socially constructed and perceived spaces, which can be applied to residential school histories, as well as to other historical inquiries. In particular, I apply this typology of spaces to the Coqualeetza Residential School and the Coqualeetza Indian Tuberculosis (TB) Hospital, in Sardis, British Columbia (BC) for the years 1935 - 1950. The school operated on the site until 1940, when, after an experimental preventorium was erected to house students who were believed to be at risk for TB, it was converted to a TB hospital. I chose Coqualeetza School because the Sto:lo Nation (in whose territory the school is located) have significant archives related to the school and I have been granted the permission and support of the Sto:lo Nation to conduct oral interviews with former students for this research. My original intention was to study only the school. However, for reasons which will be discussed later, I am also including the hospital in my study. For now, it should be known that Indian TB
hospitals, like Coqualeetza, were segregated institutions designed specifically to deliver health care to First Nations patients, much the same way residential schools were designed to educate First Nations children.

I have interviewed only Sto:lo people who attended the hospital and preventorium as children so their experiences can be more directly compared with those of residential school students. I believe that looking at how students and patients’ perceived the spaces around them and how their perceptions may relate to experience, memory and place will deepen our knowledge of residential school and Indian hospital histories. It will also introduce unique data regarding patients’ experiences at TB hospitals, a little known or understood area. This offers an opportunity for comparative analysis of two related and physically adjacent institutional settings in Canada. This approach necessitated field work and oral interviews with a sample of former residents and the analysis should promote a more in-depth understanding not only of experiences at these places but also of how those experiences have informed the memories of former residents.

There is a substantial body of literature related to residential schools, which can be divided into three general categories. Little was written before World War I; such as it was, it tended to present residential schools as laudable or simply necessary places. Work from World War II to the 1990s focused on the failure of residential schools both in terms of their assimilative functions and the abusive experiences of their victimized students. As these abuses have been exposed by Natives and non-Natives alike, the tendency for historians has been to examine students’ experiences rather than the goals and failures of residential schools as tools of assimilation. Finally, the most recent scholarship led by J.R. Miller’s work has attempted to view residential schools as complex and dynamic places in which the residents in certain times and places exercised some agency.

Examinations of the experiences of residential school children have exposed appalling physical, psychological and sexual abuses suffered by First Nations children at the hands of their teachers, school
administrators, religious leaders and even fellow students. Jim Miller describes some of the horrific abuses that children suffered in residential schools across Canada which included beatings, confinement and public humiliation. Miller goes on to chronicle the frighteningly frequent and brutal sexual abuse against First Nations students and describes how the abusers, if detected, often went unpunished.\footnote{11}

Elisabeth Furniss furthers that students at William’s Lake Residential School in BC complained of being fed rotten food and being whipped across the face.\footnote{12} Also, court cases and media publicity related to residential schools have further made public these abusive experiences. The implication of this trend in the literature and media is that children’s experiences at residential schools were by nature abusive, unhappy, and hopeless. I hope that the spatial analysis I am developing will address the complex nature of these important residential school experiences without denying both the abuses that were suffered and the assimilative intentions of the schools.

How do memories of space relate to the actual organization of physical environments at residential schools? The literature suggests that the manipulation of physical space is imbedded in the philosophies of residential schools and segregated Indian hospitals. It called for the spatial segregation of First Nations children from their families. Political scientist Paul Tennant suggests that the process of removing children from their homes to residential schools, which reached campaign proportions by the 1920s, was intended to restrict children’s and parents’ access to each other, thereby limiting the cultural influence of the children’s home communities.\footnote{13}

Removing First Nations children from their homes to residential schools was a process of controlling their actions, behaviour and bodies by isolating them in a particularly structured space. In his seminal work on power and space, Michel Foucault contends that the human body is an “object and target of power [which can be] ... manipulated, shaped, [and] trained”\footnote{14}. Moreover, Foucault argues that schools are places where “controlling or correcting the operations of the body”\footnote{15} was attempted. He calls control discipline and schools or other institutions disciplinary space. Children’s bodies were clearly sites where control was
exerted at segregated schools and hospitals. The process of discipline at these places mirrors Foucault's model:

1. Discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. It is the protected place of disciplinary monotony...

2. [establishing disciplinary space] was a tactic of anti-desertion, anti-vagabondage, anti-concentration. Its aim was to ... know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. It was a procedure, therefore, aimed at knowing, mastering and using. Discipline organizes an analytical space...

3. The rule of functional sites would gradually, in the disciplinary institutions, code a space that architecture generally left at the disposal of several different uses. Particular places were defined to correspond not only to the need to supervise, to break dangerous communications, but also to create a useful space.16

In her work on gendered spaces, Daphne Spain also explains the power implications of how places are organized: “in essence, spatial segregation does more than create a physical distance; it also affects the distribution of knowledge [groups or individuals] could use to change their position in society”.17 The physical organization of segregated hospitals also reflects social and power relationships; Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, in her study on African American women, explains how societal conceptions of health and disease can be manifest spatially: “The effect of these views [about illness and wellness] was to isolate blacks even further within American society - to remove them from the world of health and lock them within a prison of sickness”.18 Higginbotham’s study suggests a much more complex situation than simply segregation based on concepts of health; as will be discussed, power relationships based on race, gender, age and health interplay to affect the ways that places are physically organized.

In terms of Indian residential schools and hospitals, the idea that “discipline organizes analytical space” is manifest: these places were organized to facilitate supervision, monitoring, assimilating and punishing their residents. First Nations children were, for the most part, forcibly removed from their homes and placed in distant, culturally alien institutions where they were confined, their movements restricted, and their actions monitored; they were sent to residential schools or, if they were suspected of being susceptible to TB or had contracted TB, were quarantined in hospitals or preventoria to be treated.
Paul Tennant’s observations about the political organization of BC First Nations illustrates the Foucaultian notion that expressions that are linked to the body, such as speech and dress, self-identification (i.e., names), or socializing were tightly controlled at BC residential schools. The children were routinely physically punished or further removed or isolated within the institution for even minor abuses of the strict rules that were established to control their behaviour. Keith Carlson’s description of Coqualeetza school illustrates this in the following list of offenses and punishments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Punishment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insolence</td>
<td>Writing 400 lines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with girls</td>
<td>half hour of kneeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing in school</td>
<td>Kneeling down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stubbornness</td>
<td>Kneeling during breakfast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling carrots</td>
<td>Kneeling during supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing tobacco</td>
<td>Kneeling during supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking bounds</td>
<td>Public Reprimands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using tobacco</td>
<td>Public Reprimand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late</td>
<td>Confinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking Indian</td>
<td>Work during recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laziness</td>
<td>Work during recess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fighting</td>
<td>Extra Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking in Bed</td>
<td>Extra Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Dancing</td>
<td>Extra Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Playing forbidden games</td>
<td>Extra Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing apples</td>
<td>One day’s confinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>Confinement/humiliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking plaster</td>
<td>Three lashes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disturbance in dormitory</td>
<td>A few slaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Runaway</td>
<td>Five strokes of the lash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking into girl’s dorm</td>
<td>Expulsion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting fire to boy’s dorm</td>
<td>Expulsion.</td>
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At residential schools, some of the most violent discipline was reserved for what I will call spatial crimes, such as disturbances in the dormitory, truancy, breaking into the girl’s dorm, running away, or playing in the school building. As well, spatial punishments, such as confinement and forced prolonged kneeling were meted out. Punishments such as these were not unique to First Nations residential schools, as Jean Barman illustrates. Barman points out that “the four levels of punishment common in British and British Columbia schools were ridicule, detention, corporal punishment, and expulsion” for various offenses including slovenliness, tardiness “chewing candy in class, forgetting books, talking in prep, noisiness in the school library, pocketing or throwing food at meals, and swearing at games practices”. Though some
punishable offenses at boys' private schools and First Nations residential schools were, there are some offenses and punishments that are specific to each place. For instance, boys in private school were often caned for committing the "offense" of poor academic performance or for disrupting academic situations. This would not have been a punishable issue in residential schools (and is not listed among Carlson's list of punishments and offenses) where high academic performance was not expected, let alone encouraged. First Nations children, in contrast, were specifically punished for exhibiting elements of their cultures (such as for "talking Indian"). Finally, running away, an offense at residential schools, was not considered a common enough offense at private schools to explicitly designate a punishment (though it was considered a problem). Among the list of punishments for private school boys, confinement was not included. As will be discussed later, these types of offenses and punishments were also evident at Indian hospitals. In other words, punishments, crimes and spaces have been closely linked at these places.

The layout and functional organization of residential school sites should provide another illustration of Foucault's contention that authoritative figures organize space to exert control over bodies. This organization also reflects contemporary Euro-Canadian attitudes about gender, race, and children. At residential schools, this is evident on the landscape. In her autobiographical novel My Name is Seepeetza, Shirley Sterling maps the process whereby these social constructions were manifested in places by providing a sketch map that accentuates the unhappy place that residential school occupied for the title character, Seepeetza (see Appendix I). Buildings at the Kalamak school were organized in a hierarchical pyramid. The teachers and principal were located at the top in private or semi-private dwellings; the children at the bottom in two large girls' and boys' dormitories, separated from the administrators by a soccer field. Seepeetza's school site plan suggests the ways that place can graphically reflect social or political values.

Of course, as the literature implies, school sites were not simply static places where clear-cut colonial objectives were played out. Spatially and temporally, they were complex and dynamic and, over time,
reflected changing societal conventions and needs. The school buildings on the Coqualeetza grounds, for example, served many functions. Throughout its years of operation, the main dormitory building served as a school dormitory, then a tuberculosis hospital, followed a military barracks, and, today the Sto:lo Nation operates the site and the old dormitory as its administration building.26

These changing functional uses of places mirror the multifarious ways that they can be perceived and manipulated as spaces and also the heterogeneous nature of peoples’ perceptions and experiences of them. In her look at the draining of Sumas Lake, BC, Laura Cameron views space as perceptively malleable: one place can evoke many spatial perceptions and responses.27 People perceive places differently and those perceptions are based on personal experiences as well as social constructions such as gender and race. Cameron’s work further suggests that places are *storied,* that is, knowledge of places is shaped by and reflected in the stories that are told about them: “stories help to orient us in respect to our lives and, in no small measure, in respect to the places in which we live. Our storytellers invest places with meaning, and reflexively, these places orient the stories we tell.”28 The meanings of places are both experiential and practical; that is, perceptions of spaces are determined by experience as in “I remember that tree because I had my first kiss there”, and they are determined by functionality: “I wash my laundry in that room”. In my examination of perceived spaces, through interviews with former residents about their memories of Coqualeetza, much about the complexities of residential school and Indian hospital experiences should therefore be revealed.

The types of space discussed here include: institutional, race, gender, age, dangerous/safe, and liminal space. That is, space that overlaps and exists between public and private spaces. I also hint at other possible types of spaces which remain to be explored and suggest ways that they might relate to those which I have examined. While the focus here is primarily on how institutional space has shaped the experiences of Coqualeetza residents, it is important to include other categories of space. Each category
manifests itself in physical, social and personally perceived ways and will be examined according to these characteristics.

Institutions: For the purposes of this paper, institutions are defined as sets of physical structures, which reflect and promote social ideals. Examples of these include schools, hospitals, convents and monasteries. Institutions are often isolated from the greater community in order to focus on achieving their aims (see Appendix II). Institutional space is thus physically organized to serve, among other things, social and functional aims. In particular, Neil Sutherland suggests that “most of the institutions in which children spent their lives -- . . . school, truant home, industrial school and so on -- had as a principal goal the socializing of the young into the whole cluster of ways of living that characterized the larger cultures of which they were a part”. By its nature, therefore, institutional space organizes collectives: it is set up to arrange and process a large number of people in an orderly way, and in a way that reflects hierarchical relationships and socially accepted norms. Through various means, it also promotes conformity among its residents and attempts to deny or revoke their personal or private space.

To organize large numbers of people, institutional leaders are often preoccupied with numbers: of students or members; grades; output; program or internship lengths; and, success and failure statistics. Jean Barman illustrates this in her investigation of several British private schools. They produce annual reports, admission cards, scrapbooks and newsletters which chronicle students’ places of residence and parental occupations; the Annual Report of the President of the University of British Columbia reports on the number of bachelor’s degrees earned. In George Wherret’s study of tuberculosis (TB) in Canada, fluctuating mortality rates are recorded as are numbers of patients in institutions at a given time. Numbers can help to organize institutional space: they track the status of members of the institution; they track the successes or failures of the institution. In short, they allow the organizers of institutional space to better organize it so that it can produce more efficient and larger numbers.
The physical organization of institutional spaces also promotes uniformity as Jean Barman's work on schools in BC illustrates:

Generally, pupils lived in dormitories with perhaps eight to twenty beds in rows along two walls ... University [School] is typical [of private schools]: "At the end of each passage, opening right and left, is a dormitory containing, roughly speaking, ten beds. Besides these two dormitories is a Master's bedroom ... A nightstand by each bed held such personal items as ... [a] mug, toothbrush, comb and brush\textsuperscript{35}.

As we shall see, residents of institutions, such as the private schools discussed above, are also often required to wear uniforms; coupled with the similar appearance of uniformed children, the conformity promoted by institutional spaces is striking.

Leaders of institutional spaces promote conforming behaviour among residents by manipulating time. Time, in these spaces, is regulated by schedules and bells. Schedules tell members in an institution which tasks they should be performing, and when and where they should be performing them. Bells, commonly associated with schools, signal that the changing of task and space are about to take place. Neil Sutherland also discusses how bells signified the authority of teachers at British Columbia public schools: "'Duty' teachers on their patrols ... saw a boisterous, noisy world [in the playground], but also one they were sure they controlled. The bell symbolized their authority, and the response it brought from the children demonstrated its strength".\textsuperscript{36}

Finally, as Higginbotham suggests, the controlling of peoples' private lives by the state and by administrators of institutions is often achieved by the intrusion into or denial of their personal space.\textsuperscript{37}

Though institutional space has unique, definable characteristics, such as the ways it attempts to promote conformity and deny privacy, it is not exclusive of other categories of space.

Race: Constructions of race also determine the ways that space is organized and perceived. Daniel Francis suggests that stereotypes based on perceptions of race can define the social and physical place of peoples
in a community. Indian stereotypes occupy a place in Canadian society that is reflected in colonial policy and therefore, in the existence of residential schools and segregated hospitals. Francis embodies the efforts of many scholars who, as Peggy Pascoe argues, are trying to “challenge the notion that race should be conceived of as a biological category”.

These historians have looked at race as a social construction, a system of ingrained stereotypes based on contemporary societal conventions and power relations, as Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham argues: “race must be considered a social construction predicated upon the recognition of difference and signifying the simultaneous distinguishing and positioning of groups vis-a-vis one another. More than this, race is a highly contested representation of power between social categories by which individuals are identified and identify themselves”.

Hierarchical concepts of race relations also informed colonial policy, which dictated the way that colonized spaces were organized. Daphne Spain explains how race helped to form the domestic or dwelling spaces on a southern plantation prior to the American Civil War: “rural southern gentry faced the dilemma of housing servants in ways that kept them under supervision ... Southern planters solved the housing problem by placing slaves in cabins separate from the main house. A typical plantation consisted of 'nearly as many roofs as rooms', with the master’s house in the center surrounded by slave quarters”.

This spatial organization where slaves’ houses encircled the master’s house resembles Foucault’s model space for surveillance, the Panopticon: “The idea is that every person is isolated in a small room, where they all may be observed at all times by a single person in the center tower. The building would be lit around the perimeter, so that each person could be clearly seen by the central observer, but each inmate would neither see the observer nor any other inmate”. Black slaves, who were ranked lower in the racial hierarchy, were situated so that the white plantation owner could best monitor their behaviour and reaffirm his own higher place in the racial hierarchy.
Racialized space also helps to shape other types of space. Brooks Higginbotham exemplifies how race helped to shape gendered space, which will be discussed shortly, in 1960s South Africa: “little black girls learned at an early age to place themselves in the bathroom for ‘black women’ not in that for ‘white ladies’”. Race space is based on societal ideas of what race is and it is physically organized to reflect and further those ideas. It is particularly evident in the institutional spaces to be examined in this study: the Coqualeetza Indian Residential School and the Coqualeetza Indian TB Hospital, two institutions set up specifically according to race.

Gender: Gendered space also reflects social values and relationships and is based on socially accepted concepts of masculine and feminine roles and behaviour. These concepts are reflected in the ways that some places are physically organized. The organization of places according to gender, for instance, often serves to create or perpetuate power imbalances between the sexes. Daphne Spain examines some of the relationships between power and space. She argues that physical space, particularly, domestic, work, and school spaces, are organized according to culturally specific notions of gender which serve to reinforce existing power relationships between men and women. In relation to institutional settings, she looks briefly at children’s schools in America, to see how gender informed their physical organization. In one example of a nineteenth century coeducational school, she describes how spatial segregation “reinforced the different curricula by which girls failed to acquire the Greek and Latin required for college admission”. That is, girls and boys were educated in separate rooms for separate purposes. Gendered space, therefore, is space that is constructed according to prevailing notions of gender. As we shall see, it is also space that can be perceived differently by men and women regardless of whether it has been constructed or organized as male or female; and, it is space in which the body is controlled in ways suggested by Foucault.

Age: I develop this category to contrast the spatial experiences of adults and children. As I am focusing my study on a residential school and a children’s ward at an Indian hospital, so will not be discussing how
the elderly might perceive space. That said, I believe including age categories would be important to understand other types of experience. For instance, perhaps this methodology could be applied to the experiences of elderly people in seniors’ residences.

That space is age-related is clear: children are often not allowed into establishments that serve alcohol (adult space); younger children are not allowed on certain rides at amusement parks (older children’s space). Until recently, however, children’s voices typically have not been recorded. Histories, from their perspectives, are rare. Children’s experiences and perceptions of the spaces around them are often recounted or written after they reached adulthood. This is notably problematic as reconstructed childhood memories must be conveyed through adult language, experience and context. Neil Sutherland suggests a way to compensate for this. In his study of childhood in Vancouver, Sutherland “examined a set of overlapping memories from a single neighbourhood”. Similarly, I hope that by examining adult recollections of school spaces, I can draw some general conclusions about age space.

Age-related space is evident at schools where children are physically and intellectually segregated according to their ages, as Jean Barman illustrates: “Public education in British Columbia covered ten years, seven at the primary and three at the secondary level … in 1923 an eighth year was added to the primary programme and, five years later, a fourth year swelled the secondary level”. Children negotiated through these levels by passing examinations and by getting older. Children’s age or grade also influenced which areas of the school they occupied, as will be evidenced later. That space is often organized according to age is also evident when the spaces that adults were relegated to in these same settings are examined. While the children at schools were situated in collective spaces, such as dormitories and classrooms, the adults usually occupied either private or prominent space, like offices or teachers’ lounges.
Dangerous and Safe: Spaces can also be perceived based primarily on people's emotional associations with them. Karen Dubinsky's study on rape describes how rural women perceived berry patches as dangerous spaces because sexual assaults occurred there. In this way, the same physical space can be perceived differently by men and women, even if that space has not been constructed as masculine or feminine. Marta Danylewycz, in her study on Quebec nunneries, exemplifies how a teacher/nun perceived the school at which she taught and lived as dangerous:

I would not have been able to bear the solitude which gripped me as soon as darkness invaded my modest room. Sitting close to the window, feeling my heart wrung by emotion, without lighting my small oil lamp, I [was] ... always fearing to see in every small shrub along the road, a vagabond ready to knock on my door. That morbid anxiety grew ever more when, during the day, a real 'vagabond walked down the road. Just as one person's experiences can make some spaces seem dangerous, another's can make the same spaces seem safe.

Liminal: Finally, spaces are also physically and symbolically separated by what Anne McClintock calls "liminal or boundary objects". These are symbols that remind us that boundaries between spaces exist and are socially important. McClintock lists some of these objects and illustrates their significance; she suggests that Victorian servants:

spent much of their time cleaning boundary objects – doorknobs, windowsills, steps, pathways, flagstones, curtains, and banisters, not because they were especially dirty, but because scrubbing and polishing them ritually maintained the boundaries between private and public and gave these objects exhibition value as class markers. Glistening doorknobs, freshly washed curtains, spotless windowsills and scrubbed paths, - the uncertain objects on the threshold of private and public, upstairs and downstairs – vividly expressed ... boundar[ies between spaces].

Further to McClintock's concept of boundary objects, I believe objects which act as either barriers or portals between places are also significant. The most evident of these liminal spaces are doors and windows. Like boundary objects, these exist between places. However, rather than simply reinforcing spatial and social boundaries, barrier/portal objects offer opportunities to resist them. This is because of the dual-function they serve: whereas doors enclose rooms, doorways allow one to enter or exit; whereas
windowpanes reinforce symbolic boundaries between places (because you can see what you cannot enter) open windows can break them down.

The categories of space I have discussed are suggest that a typology of space is a complex undertaking. This is even more apparent when we examine more closely the ways that types of space overlap: the dangerous space of the berry patch described by Dubinsky is clearly gendered space in that it is women who perceived it as dangerous; age and gender space are often manifested in institutional spaces, such as schools; and, embedded in most of the above types of spaces are other types, which have not been developed fully for this study but which have been suggested. These include, domestic space, religious space, and academic space, which have been discussed in terms of institutional and age-related spaces. Space exists on physical, social and perceptual levels which are interrelated and which overlap. This complexity, I believe, mirrors the diverse nature of peoples’ individual experiences. Applying a complex typology of spaces to residents’ experiences at one such place should therefore be a useful way to understand these experiences.

The Study: Space, Memory and Experience at Coqualeetza

Coqualeetza is an historically dynamic site. Over the years, it has served as a fishing village, two Methodist Indian Residential Schools, an Indian Tuberculosis Hospital, an Armed Forces Barracks and a cultural and interpretive centre. This study originally focused on the second residential school on the site, which operated from 1924 to 1940 when it was converted to an Indian tuberculosis hospital. The building became a hospital only after an experimental preventorium was erected which was designed to deliver preventative health care to students from the school. A local history explains: “The children who will live in the preventorium are those [students] who, after repeated x-rays and physical examinations, have been picked out as children who are most liable to contract Tuberculosis if permitted to lead an ordinary life”. The hospital and school have proven equally significant to the people who remember
them. Some, like Mrs. Bev Julian, a former patient who I interviewed, suggest that the two should be
considered similarly in terms of the experiences of students and patients. 59 Myra Sam, a former
Coqualeetza student and hospital employee, illustrates this: “They still treat(ed) [us] like [we were at]
school.” 60 Interestingly, she is not discussing the rules for native patients but rather those prescribed to the
Native employees at the hospital. Though the children who were sent to tuberculosis hospitals were no
doubt very sick, such hospitals, like residential schools, were places of segregation, of prevailing concepts
of race, gender, age and of Indian Affairs’ authority. 61

The Coqualeetza complex means many things to many people, not simply because of the historic dynamic
functional nature of the site but because of the varying memories that former Sto:lo residents have about
the place. This study challenges the assumption that experiences at this site can, as residential school
literature suggests, be lumped into one category. This may be the case particularly at Coqualeetza
Residential School because, as Paige Raibmon has recently suggested, the school’s last two principals,
especially George Raley, attempted to make the institutional space of the school hospitable for its students
by organizing dormitories so that fewer students occupied smaller, pleasantly decorated, semi-self
sufficient rooms. 62 Raibmon further suggests that because of Raley’s effort to make children feel
comfortable, their experiences at Coqualeetza were not necessarily all negative, as previous literature and
media have implied. Raibmon explains how this can broaden our understanding of residential school
experiences because, at Coqualeetza a “flexible system with the potential to encompass a range of
attitudes, environments and experiences” was fostered. However, Raley’s conception of home was
“conceived within a White, Victorian definition of home” 63 though it challenged institutional notions of
uniform domestic spaces, it did not reflect what First Nations children thought of as homey. Regardless,
Coqualeetza was unique among most residential schools whose austere and rigidly institutional set-ups
were often anything but homey.
This diversity of experiences is evident when former residents of Coqualeetza are interviewed. For this study, I interviewed three Sto:lo women and one Sto:lo man. Two of the women attended the Coqualeetza Residential School. The third woman was a long-time patient at the preventorium and hospital and returned later as an employee. The man I interviewed is a groundskeeper at the Coqualeetza site. He has extensive knowledge of the site and its history, and has spoken with many people who resided at the school and/or hospital. As such, he has many stories to share about the site.

I originally intended to interview more people who attended the school from a wider variety of backgrounds. However, for several reasons, it has been quite difficult to locate people who either attended the school or who are willing to talk about their experiences. First, Coqualeetza was Methodist residential school; the number of former Methodist students who are Sto:lo is relatively low due to the fact that most Christian Sto:lo people are or were Roman Catholic. This is indicated in an early sampling of Department of Indian Affairs census reports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th># Counted</th>
<th>Methodists</th>
<th>Catholics</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>2,728</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>2,481</td>
<td>Fraser River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>2,878</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>2,611</td>
<td>Fraser River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>2,436</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>New Westminster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>2,401</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>2,243</td>
<td>New Westminster</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This has meant that many of the students who attended the school were not Sto:lo. They were brought in from communities that were often far from Sto:lo territory and they are no longer in the area. Moreover, Sto:lo students who were Catholic most often were sent to St. Mary’s school in Mission, BC.

One Sto:lo person I interviewed, however, indicated that indeed there is a thriving Methodist community in Sto:lo territory, some members of which did attend the school. However, he also indicated that the people he mentioned did not wish to speak to interviewers - especially about their school experiences.

Although I did anticipate that some people would be hesitant to discuss residential school experiences, I had hoped that there would be a sufficient number of former students to make up for this. The limited number of Coqualeetza students available in this area to interview has therefore affected my approach to
this study. Specifically, I have incorporated into my analysis the TB hospital; and, I have included a comparative element based on published autobiographical accounts of residential school experiences that helps to enrich this micro-spatial analysis. This modified approach illustrates that extant accounts of residential school experiences can be re-examined, with institutional space mind, so that the complex nature of residential school experiences can be better understood.

Interviews were either formal or informal, depending on how interviewees felt about being tape-recorded or having their names used. Formal interviews were conducted at interviewees’ houses and were recorded if they granted consent. Informal interviews were conducted in conjunction with a walking tour of the complex. These seemed to act as both mnemonic devices and indicators of the ways that memory and space are related.

Discussing the photographs with interviewees revealed how the same spaces could be experienced in a multitude of ways. I expected that the basis of these different experiences would rest on social categories of gender, race and age, but through interviews, I discovered a much more complex situation: experiences markedly differed and so, too, do memories of them. These differences are extremely personal and seem to be based on how people perceive the spaces of the Coqualeetza site rather than how the site was physically or socially comprised. Myra Sam confirms this when she explains that, though her memories of the Coqualeetza school are primarily happy ones, her sister, Sweetie, has memories which are mainly negative.

The experiential similarities between the school and the hospital may be attributable to the fact that they embody and occupy similar types of space; specifically, institutional space. Institutional space is organized and made manageable by the promotion of conformity. At both the school and the hospital, conformity was promoted by the erasure of individual identity; one way was through the issuance of
uniforms. A Stó:lo elder who attended the school describes her excitement at receiving so many new clothes upon enrollment. This resembles Jane Willis' memories about her residential school of receiving a new wardrobe when she started school:

I received a red plaid school dress, a blue plaid Sunday dress with matching pants, a gray denim work dress, two white cotton undershirts, two pairs of thick fleeced bloomers, two pairs of thick beige wool stockings, a pair of elastic garters, a red wool cardigan, a pair of blue denim overalls, two flannel nightgowns, a gray denim apron, a blue denim play jacket, a green wool Sunday coat, a red beret for play, a navy-blue one for Sundays, rubber boots, and a pair of brown leather high-top shoe.

The above mentioned Stó:lo elder also describes how the girls were taught to mend all their own uniforms and the uniforms of the boys who attended the school. She remembers how a school matron became angry at her when she darned a boy's grey sock with pink wool, an act which broke conformity rules.

Uniforms of a type were also used at the preventorium and hospital; female child patients wore identical underwear and hospital gowns. Uniforms helped to characterize the institutional spaces at Coqualeetza; as such, they shaped the experiences and memories of school and hospital residents.

School administrators assigned students personal identification numbers in a further attempt to erase their personal identities and promote the conformity necessary to run institutional space. The elder mentioned above explains how her number was sewn to the inside of her clothes and written on her locker, a memory of institutional space similar to those described by Jane Willis:

Miss Moore pointed to compartment 64, marked every piece of clothing she had issued to me with that number in black indelible ink, and showed me how to stack everything into the small compartment. She hung my Sunday coat on clothes hook 64. She led me out to the washroom and showed me which toothbrush, plastic cup and towel to use. They were all marked 64.

Miss Moore does not write Willis' name in her clothes or on her possessions, but a number. As already suggested, Coqualeetza was not characteristic of residential schools; though children were issued personal identification numbers, they were also called by their names, unlike Basil Johnston who remembers being referred to as "Number forty-three" at his residential school. Jean Barman describes a similar situation at British boys' private schools in that, though boys were not referred to by numbers the "were
addressed only by their last names, brothers usually being differentiated as ‘major’ or ‘minor’, or ‘I’ and ‘II’.

Using students’ names, rather than their numbers certainly contributed to Raley’s vision of a more personal, familial residential school at Coqualeetza. In this way, the experiences of Coqualeetza students were not necessarily characteristic of the experiences of children at other residential schools.

However, personal identification numbers at Coqualeetza School do signify how the rigidities inherent to institutional space (despite Raley’s efforts to minimize them) were resisted by some students. Under the back porch of the principal’s house, called the Big House and located on the front part of the grounds (see Appendix II), carved numbers cover the outside walls. Judging from the dates that, in some cases, are also carved in the walls, many decades of student cohorts are represented. According to an interviewee, these are student numbers, covertly engraved in quiet acts of protest. The act of carving one’s student number onto the side of the principal’s house was a risky one compounded by the explicit knowledge that students were not allowed to be on that part of the site. This latter point is supported by a Sto:lo elder who remembers that the only time she was allowed in the front grounds was for a picnic in celebration of the King’s birthday. Myra Sam also indicates that students were not allowed on the part of the grounds on which the principal’s house was located. The rigidity, symmetry and conformity of the institutional spaces of the school were quietly defied in the simple, repetitive act of both marring clean institutional space and moving beyond the physical areas which institutional space defined for students. The fact that generations are represented under this porch seems to suggest the existence of a flourishing subculture of resistance among school students. The varied experiences of Coqualeetza residents can be linked directly to how they perceived the institutional space around them; only those students who perceived the Big House as a site of resistance and, as will be discussed shortly, reaffirmation of personal space, experienced carving their numbers in its walls.

These personal identification numbers also embody another aspect of institutional space and, consequently, reflect another dimension of some students’ experiences; they exemplify how students
created personal space which was denied them by the institution. The denial of personal space is particularly a function of institutional space which promotes conformity and uniformity; residential schools, for instance were public, coercive spaces in which children were housed in dormitories, required to eat, pray, study and work together; they were required to dress the same; their identities were hidden under their personal identification numbers; and, the spaces they occupied were subject to the inspection and supervision of adults. Jane Willis, for instance, describes the ordered, symmetrical dormitory at her residential school as an “impersonal room”.

Carving one’s personal identification number into the walls of the principle’s house — a forbidden, private space nestled within the public space of the institution — was more than an act of vandalism committed to protest the situations in which First Nations students found themselves. It was also a way to reclaim the personal space which was intruded upon by the institution; it was a way of personalizing space, of denying the conformity of the spaces and authority around them and of leaving something of themselves, something personal to testify to these things. Personalizing space was achieved in other ways as well. For instance, one Sto:lo elder describes how the older girls’ dorm was transformed into a personal space for her when her girlfriend combed her hair and made her feel special.

Institutional space is also regulated by bells, schedules and rules which have characterized the experiences of Coqualeetza residents. Mrs. Sam explains how bells organized the daily lives of students and impacted her own experiences and memories of school life:

They ran us by bells. We hear[d] the six o'clock bell and we'd get up and then we'd wash up and make our beds and everything and then another bell goes and we have to all go kneel at our bed and we'd pray again there and then another bell goes and we go down to the assembly hall and go to church and another bell, we'd go down to eat. This must have been really early in the morning because we were in school by at least nine and most of us already had a lot of our work done.

This mirrors Basil Johnston’s description of a typical day at the residential school he attended: “6:15 A.M. Clang! Clang! Clang! I was nearly clanged out of my wits and out of bed at the same time ... Up and
down the aisles between the beds Father Buck walked, swinging the bell. . . . ” Mr. Johnston further describes how his day was regulated often by bells which rang at 20 minute intervals. The bells at Johnston’s school and at Coqualeetza signaled and regulated where children were supposed to be, when they were supposed to be there, and what activities they were supposed to be performing. Schedules also dominated the lives of patients in the hospital as an issue of the Coqualeetza Courier, a newsletter produced by the hospital staff, indicates:

Our rising time starts from 5 A.M. for those who wash in bed till about 7 when our breakfasts are on their way to us. By 7:30 we are all served . . . Nine o’clock brings rest period. This is the parting of the ways for some of us. Those who go to school go to Mrs. McAuley in the Library, Miss Ruddy... Correspondence classes are in the east end of the O.T. under Mrs. Hayes. Then we have Rehab patients who work in the Laundry, Kitchen, Office Paint Shop, and with the Housekeeping Staff. Oh oh I forgot the boys who do the Orderly work.

Then a large group of us go to the O.T. and manage to keep ourselves busy with all manner of things. At 11:30 we have dinner after which we can watch T.V. play records, play cards, games, write letters, etc. . . . Rest period is at 1 o’clock. This is our real quiet time. At 3 our temperatures are taken, then for another hour it’s a repetition of our morning. Supper at 4:30. This usually lasts till 5 then the little kids are off for an hour at O.T. Most of us watch our special programs on T.V. 6 to 7 is another rest period, followed by another hour of O.T. for any adult who has permission. We have a lunch time then too. 9 o’clock is the deadline for “lights out”.

This reflects the ways that institutional space was governed by schedules and suggests that residents had differing experiences. For some school and hospital residents, rigid schedules were not necessarily unpleasant or even viewed as monotonous. Mrs. Sam explains how the ordered, predictable life at residential school seemed to guarantee a measure of security and access to knowledge residents otherwise did not feel they had:

I guess my first memories of [school] was being able to go and have 3 squares a day; you know, things like that, but . . . all I remember when I was really young was we always went to church, we always had prayers, 4, 5 times a day . . . but we worked. You see we went to school half a day. I don’t know whether it was 8:00 or 9:00 til noon. And then the other half, we worked . . . We learned a lot there - we learned to darn and sew, knit, and things like that, they taught us there. I don’t have bad memories of Coqualeetza.

Record-keeping also organized the institutional spaces of the school and hospital and impacted residents’ experiences. This is illustrated in the school annuals which list: graduating class members and their personal information; scores in intramural sporting events; departmental accomplishments; details of class
trips; visits from dignitaries, and departmental reports. Through these and other records, students', patients' and the institutions' accomplishments were documented and measured. This will be discussed further in the section which deals with gender.

Schedules, regulations, uniforms, and personal identification number all are evident in the institutional spaces of Coqualeetza school and hospital. But this does not adequately reflect the complexity of this spatial category nor of the experiences of Coqualeetza residents; other types of space are also evident within the institutional spaces of the school and hospital. Racialized, gendered, age-related, dangerous, safe and liminal spaces helped to organize the institutional spaces of Coqualeetza and were experienced and perceived by Coqualeetza residents.

Race influenced the ways that the institutional spaces at Coqualeetza were organized and perceived. Beyond the obvious fact that the school and hospital were institutions for Indians, racialized space is also evident when the intricate relationships between race and identity are examined. David Nock observes that perceptions of residential school space as racial were particularly confusing for Native children at residential schools. He suggests that a child who was removed from his/her family (and probably reserve) to residential schools to have his/her Indian-ness erased and replaced with white-ness, often "went to school an Indian ... [and] emerged as nothing". This suggests that the institutional spaces of residential schools were transformational, created for Indians, controlled by whites administrators with the explicit function to eradicate Native culture. That children at Coqualeetza were affected by this is suggested by a Sto:lo elder who remembers the odd sensation she felt when white people would drive by the school grounds and stare at the Indian children who were out on the front lawn celebrating the King of England's birthday.

Mrs. Sam illustrates how gender determined the ways that the residential school was physically organized: "That used to be the girls playground (points to south side of building) and that was to boys (points to
north side of building)... The... boys’ dormitories were on this side (north) and the girls’ on this side (south). Thompson Ferrier’s description of what First Nations boys and girls “ought to be taught” at industrial schools suggests some reasons why students were separated according to gender:

**What the Girls are Taught**

... Housework, mending, sewing, darning ... The cooking of meats and vegetables, recipes for various dishes, bread making, ... Washing, ironing, bluing ... Dairying, milking, care of milk, cream, churning, house work. Sweeping, scrubbing, dusting, care of furniture, books, linen, etc. ... physiology and hygiene ... proper habits in eating and drinking, cleanliness, ventilation. ...

**What the Boys Learn**

... farming, gardening, care of stock, and carpenter work ... stack raining, dairying, care and management of poultry, hogs and horses. Fruit raising ... use of fertilizers, methods of seeding, the manner of growth, the storing and selling of the crop.

Girls, therefore, spent much of their time inside in *female spaces*, such as the kitchen or laundry, which reinforced and reflected beliefs of women as domestic and nurturing. Boys, on the other hand, were often outside in *male spaces*, such as the fields, which reflected contemporary attitudes about men as providers, and physically strong. The Coqualeetza annual suggests girls and boys were educated according to similar notions of gender; departments in which children were taught and work was performed included:

**Boys Work**
- Agricultural Department
- Garden Department
- Manual Training Department
- Mechanics Class
- Black smithing Department
- Shoe Repairing Department
- Bakery

**Girls’ Work**
- Garment Department
- Culinary Department
- Laundry
- The Infirmary
- The Dining Room
- The Sewing Room

The outside, male spaces were also spaces where boys were involved in certain team sports and girls were not. The importance of sports and related accomplishments to school experiences is evidenced by Myra Sam:

**J.W.:** What sports did you play?

**M.S.:** Ah, track and field, and high jumping and broad jumping. Girls weren’t allowed to play ball. You know, those days, we weren’t allowed [to play] softball or soccer or anything.
Within the context of institutional space, gender played a significant role in residents’ experiences. For instance, unlike Mrs. Sam, who was not allowed to play certain sports because she was a girl, athletic boys often received extra food: “the soccer team - they were really proud of their soccer team - they got extra nourishment. You know, we’d see them getting this extra stuff that we didn’t get but they always made sure they looked after those guys”. 99

This also illustrates an earlier point about institutional space: the importance of school and team spirit dictated that boys on athletic teams receive sufficient nourishment to succeed at their sports events. This suggests team successes were logged so that, when necessary, boys would get extra food to bolster team output; that is, so the team could produce better numbers. 100 Regardless, the experiences of athletic boys were clearly different than those of girls (or non-athletic boys).

At the preventorium, Mrs. Julian explains that patients were also separated by gender: “I think that side was the girls and this side was the boys (points to photograph)” 101 Finally, at the hospital. Mrs. Julian describes how wards were organized according to both age and gender:

J.W.: The girls and boys were separated by rooms or...?

B.J.: Yeah, by wards, because the men were up here, the girls here, when I was there. And then they changed that into kids. So, we had girls on this side and boys on the other side... I think we had forty kids. And then there was the centre piece [of the hospital building]... There were babies up to about five years old. There were three parts to the second floor and the men’s ward had two parts, but they were all men. 102

Organizing babies according to gender was apparently not necessary until they were five years old, at which point, hospital officials regarded them as possessing gender.

Perceptions of institutional spaces as gendered often have something to do with the body. Randy Fred describes the boys’ and girls’ dormitories at the Port Alberni Residential School as gendered spaces which
were to be symbolically defied. In particular, when the conditions were right, boys viewed the girls’
dormitories, inside of which they were not allowed, as opportune places to have sex:

One of the supervisors at Alberni during the fifties was easily bribed to open the door to
the infirmary on the second floor which separated the boys from the girls. All it took was
a bottle of whiskey and he’d open the door and ignore the stampede to the girls’ side.
Mrs. Rothwell, the girls head supervisor, slept like a log. As soon as her snoring stopped,
all the humping stopped; what a way to make love -- in a dormitory of squeaky beds,
listening to Rothwell snoring.103

Certainly, some boys at Alberni School perceived the girls’ dormitories as ideal spaces for exploring their
sexual desires. Unfortunately, Fred does not explain how the girls may have viewed the same spaces.

Lois Guss’ account of her experiences at her residential school may be useful here. She describes how
girls perceived their dormitories and bathing rooms as shameful spaces in which their bodies were to be hidden:

Living in a dormitory with twenty-five other girls was quite an experience. We were
taught that the body was something to be hidden and to be ashamed of, even when bathing
or showering, we wore clothing. At the important time in our life, when we became ‘a
woman’, no one told us what was happening in our bodies ... The nuns would only tell
us, “now you must stay away from boys” 104

In a powerful short story, Louise Halfe describes the struggle she felt when her body, curious and sensual,
was transformed at her residential school into a site of shame: “I can’t help it when the buds between my
legs tingle. I can’t help it when my eyes stray to explore the tits of the other girls. Why must I hide my
body jesus? The rags that I wear when I shower are so heavy, will I ever be clean?”.105

Lois Guss illustrates that her and Randy Fred’s perceptions of similar gendered spaces are different.

Granted, what went on in the girls’ dormitory at Alberni School defied school rules, so, to some extent,
both boys and girls may have also viewed these dorms as spaces of resistance.

Though boys and girls may have perceived similar gendered spaces differently, the body played a role in
those perceptions. Foucault’s contention that control is exerted on the body via the manipulation of space
seems evident in the way that Lois Guss perceived her dormitory. Yet Randy Fred’s perceptions of his

26
school’s girls’ dormitory illustrates that control of the body can also be resisted by manipulating space—as the boys at Alberni School did by sneaking out of and into gendered spaces to have sex. At Coqualeetza, examples of this were not so explicit; they were hinted at by Bev Julian who describes her embarrassment at being mistaken for a boy. One night when the hospital caught fire, patients were evacuated to other facilities:

Then they got us and took us to the forest hall and put us into our beds there. And they put me head to head with a man. They thought I was a boy. They got me all mixed up. And I sat there for two days and I had to use the bedpan so bad, and I wouldn't get on. Every time he would get on his, I would hide, eh? “Oh, no. Don't look, don't look” Finally he says to me, “what's your name?” I said, “Bev.” And he said, “Beverly?” And I said, “Yeah.” and he said, “Kelly?” and I said, “Yeah.” He says, “Hugh Kelly your Dad?” I says, “that's right.” He says, “nurse, nurse, this is a girl!” And they had to move me. [I said,] “get me a bed pan!”.

Age also plays a role in the ways that institutional spaces are organized and perceived. At Coqualeetza, the Sto:lo elder’s earlier description of how senior and junior girls occupied different dormitories clearly impacted her experiences there. She felt important and special when she was allowed to occupy the older girls’ space. Basil Johnston discusses how work spaces at the residential school he attended were organized according to the ages of children:

The seniors, in Grades 6, 7 and 8, went to their permanent occupations: to the barn, to tend horses, cows, pigs and all their products; to the chicken coop, to look after chickens; to the tailor shop, shoe shop, electrical shop, carpentry shop, blacksmith shop, mill or plumber's shack. These were jobs of standing and responsibility in the adolescent community. The other boys, from grades that had no status, waited outside the storeroom for the issue of mops, pails, sponges, soap, rags, brooms, dustpans, dust-bane and other janitorial paraphernalia for performing the menial tasks of washing, sweeping, mopping, dusting, polishing toilets, corridors, refectory, chapels, kitchen, dormitory, scullery, every conceivable area.

Jane Willis illustrates how this occurred in the classroom at her residential school when she recalls how she and her fellow students were physically ordered with the “junior girls up front and senior girls in the back”. Shirley Sterling also describes how, at Kalamak Indian Residential school, children’s dormitories reflected age and grade divisions: “We are divided into juniors grades one to four, intermediates grades five to eight, and seniors grades nine to twelve. Each group stays in different
dormitories called dorms, and recreation rooms called recs. We’re not allowed to leave our own rec or
dorm except for meals”.109

Age also determined the privileges children received in institutional spaces. Jane Willis explains who
could perform, and who would receive, haircuts at her residential school: “Miss Moore chose two senior
girls to assist her in the cutting. The senior girls were allowed to wear any style they chose as long as it
was not below the shoulders, but for the rest of us, Dutch-boy haircuts were it”.110 Randy Fred also
illustrates this when he describes how, at Alberni School, older boys bullied younger boys into washing
socks.111 The sock washing incident also illustrates how children empower themselves within age-related
spaces. Particularly in institutions, hierarchies among children often develop. These exist parallel to
power relationships between adults and children and are expressed through space. Neil Sutherland
provides several descriptions of the hegemony of older children in children’s spaces:

1. A group of the older boys tried to keep the soccer ball to themselves, passing it
within a fairly tight circle . . . other [younger] boys lounged in clumps . . .
2. preschool children had to shift their play space if it conflicted with the needs of
older youngsters . . .
3. Bigger [often older] boys stepped on the feet of smaller ones . . .112

Age space governs children’s behaviors and locations in institutions, like schools; but, within this space,
children create their own divisions and boundaries according to age. In general, older children receive
from adults or acquire through bullying more privileges than younger children. Although, I did not
discover these relationships in my research on Coqualeetza, I believe this is a noteworthy dimension to the
age component of institutional space.

Spaces at Coqualeetza were also perceived as dangerous and safe by their residents based on their personal
experiences of them. Strict rules and harsh punishments characterize how Bev Julian remembers the
Coqualeetza Hospital, at which she spent most of her first 11 years:

We had to rest again twice a day because there was no medicines and every time that I
made a move there was one nurse, nurse’s aid Eustice, [who would] stand there and watch
in the doorway. And the girls would say to me, “Bev, look out the window.” And I’d sit
Mrs. Julian's experiences at the hospital mirror those of Janice Acoose who describes how she perceived a nun's room at the residential school she attended as dangerous because physical punishments were carried out there: "My older sisters ... soon discovered one Sister's private chambers were used to punish girls who did not follow the rules. It was equipped with a wooden horse which allowed the Sister to lay the girls across it while she whipped their bare backsides until they screamed and cried". Acoose also describes the terror she felt in her dormitory: "Other times I cried because I was terrified of hearing the footsteps that regularly crept up the fire escape to our dorm. Those nights, listening to the little girls frantic whisperings, muffled screams and desperate cries, I jumped into bed with my sister, Carol and fiercely clung to her for protection".

Both Acoose and Julian describe how they felt their behaviour was always monitored, their bodies controlled, and both describe experiencing either an underlying or an overt fear of physical punishment. As Foucault has suggested in his discussion of how behaviour is controlled in prisons through manipulations of space and bodies, punishable offences include moving your body outside of the spaces assigned by institutions. In this case, Mrs. Julian sat up in bed and was punished for it or, as Randy Fred's sister remembers of her experiences at the Port Alberni Residential School, children were punished for sneaking out of their dormitories. These offenses and punishments confirm those outlined by Keith Carlson as mentioned earlier. The crimes were often offenses of the body or of space and the punishments were often violent. Clearly, Foucault's study of prisons proves to be a powerful, though limited, analytical tool for my study of other types of coercive institutions and Carlson's related
illustration of bodily and spatial offenses and punishments at schools is illustrative of what occurred at Coqualeetza.

Yet, just as the coercive spaces theorized by Foucault can be perceived as dangerous, so can spaces be perceived as safe. The experiential nature of institutional spaces, like safe space, is a subject that Foucault's model does not address. As will be demonstrated, however, it can be understood if former residents are interviewed about their experiences and perceptions of space. For instance, in an earlier example, one elder describes a safe space in the older girls' dorm, where her girlfriend combed her hair. This experience is similar to that of Rosa Bell who illustrates safe space at the residential school she attended; she describes how she felt when visiting the older girls in school: "They loved to sit me down and comb my hair. They'd let me pin curl their hair. I used to love to just sit on their beds while they did their schoolwork. Often I would go from one bed to another to talk with them".

The perceptual and experiential nature of dangerous and safe space within institutions spaces is particularly illustrated by the fact that the spaces that Janice Acoose and Bev Julian earlier describe as terrifying and Rosa Bell and the Sto:lo elder describe as comfortable and safe are both dormitories in institutions. The disparate perceptions of them are based on each girl's experiences.

Mrs. Julian's perceptions of the institutional spaces around her shaped her experiences. The relationship between those spaces and her experiences is more evident when we look at the liminal objects and spaces which she describes. Mrs. Julian describes how a menacing nurse's aid, Eustice, tormented her from the doorway to her dormitory. Eustice stood in the doorway each night and would wait for her to make a mistake. Eustice would then come over to her bed and physically punish her. The doorway in this memory was the sort of liminal space discussed in McKlintock. It existed between spaces or at the edge of a space; as a door, it divided child/patient space from adult/supervisor space; as a doorway, it offered a chance for escape, and an avenue for torture. Randy Fred's account also suggests that liminal spaces, like
doorways and windows, can be perceived as boundaries and portals; he describes how children temporarily escaped the residential school by climbing through the windows to get outside: “One of my older sisters ... remembers girls being strapped most frequently for sneaking off the school grounds. This was a favourite pastime and preoccupation – busting out of the hellhole. Many dangerous risks were taken, such as climbing through the window, down three stories on a rope of bed sheets tied together”.  

This window contrasts sharply with the window described in Rita Joe’s poem at the beginning of this paper. Rita Joe’s window is what I would call a barrier object or space. Randy Fred’s window is a portal – an opportunity to escape a space. The difference between the two windows is that someone chose to resist the imposed spaces around her by opening one. For Mrs. Julian, the doorway to her preventorium dormitory had clearly been a barrier between her and escape from her tormentor’s wrath and also a portal which, on Eustice’s days off, came to represent temporary, if symbolic, escape or relief: “And when [Eustice] was on her days off, that’s when I got a break. I was able to rest without watching”.

Mrs. Julian also describes another seemingly innocuous liminal object, a table, which has come to take on experiential significance within the context of institutional space: “I was sexually abused by one of the patients. To this day, I don’t remember her name or what she looks like. All I can see is her laying in that bed next to me and a table in between us and remembering what happened”. Whether the table acted as a boundary object, a portal object, or possibly both, it is clear that Mrs. Julian associates the table, particularly the space it occupied between her bed and her abuser’s bed, vividly with the experience of being abused.

These liminal objects are especially interesting if they are understood within the context of institutional space. For instance, the dormitory to which Mrs. Julian’s door was both a portal and a barrier manifests institutional space. The dormitory was set up to organize large numbers of people; it promoted conformity by its physical set up; it denied personal space in the sense that adult intrusion into Mrs.
Julian’s bed space occurred from there; and, it allowed for Mrs. Julian’s body to be controlled, monitored and disciplined, and abused by another patient. The doorway in which Eustice stood imitates the central watchtower of Foucault’s panopticon in that it was a space from which discipline and surveillance were carried out. It was the position from which Eustice monitored child patients and punished them when they behaved in ways contrary to the rules of the institution, or the unwritten rules of the enforcer, Eustice. The doorway can be understood, and perhaps was experienced as a centre of surveillance, because it existed in institutional space, a space in which surveillance was deemed necessary.

Furthermore, the liminal space of the doorway reinforces the social spaces that the nurse’s aid and Mrs. Julian occupied. Mrs. Julian’s bed and hospital dormitory room were defined by her age, gender, race and by her reduced status as a sick person. She occupied a ward for girls in a segregated Indian hospital, unfit to occupy the outside world; unfit to lead an “ordinary life”. In Shirley Sterling’s sketch maps of the Kalamak Indian Residential School, inequitable social relationships were also reinforced by space; the social relationships which existed in her residential school were manifested in the locations and organization of the school’s buildings.

Mrs. Julian also provides some very personal examples of how the institutional spaces at the hospital were perceived in complex ways which related to other categories of space. Not surprisingly, for Mrs. Julian, who spent much of her childhood in the beds of the hospital and preventorium, life in institutional spaces was characterized by monotony; yet, examining her perceptions of the spaces around her has revealed that she had a much wider range of experiences which have left an indelible mark on her memories. As discussed, Mrs. Julian remembers her bed as the very dangerous space where she was abused. However, she also remembers how lying in her bed brought about in her a spiritual awakening:

   When I was in Coqualeetza, that's when I started my gift. The spirits worked with me there and showed me how to meditate and how to say the prayers and why the prayers were so important. And I used to lay there and watch light bulbs at night and they'd talk to me. They had little faces on them and I'd lay there and watch. Today I can't look at a lightbulb because they are too bright, but I'd just lay there and watch. I could hardly wait
until the lights went off so I could listen to them. And they would tell me stories and laugh and I’d smile. And I knew I couldn’t laugh out loud because the others would wonder what I was doing, eh? . . . I was young, but I knew that. So I couldn’t tell anybody about it and I never realized that I was getting my training there because there was nobody at home to help me.127

Mrs. Julian’s memory of receiving what she calls her gift contrasts sharply with the image of her bed as a dangerous space. So significant was this experience that it helped Mrs. Julian come to terms with her sexual abuse, her childhood in an institution, and her future inability to conceive:

So, I figure that’s why the creator chose me to go and stay in the hospital all that time. And then I had TB of the womb so I was never able to have children or I never had my period. . . . And I said there was a reason for my not to have my period because the creator had already chosen my path, I was to do my healing work without any interruptions in my life. You have to be pure . . . be finished bearing children. So, my children are adopted. . . . So, that’s where I really started . . . and that’s where I learned to release all the hurts that I carried for so many years.128

Mrs. Julian came to perceive her bed and her dorm as the site of her spiritual birth. This has left such an impact on her that, years later, when she returned to the hospital as an employee, she was overwhelmed with the feeling that she was home: “So, I went back to Coqualeetza and worked as a Nurses’ Aid there . . . And I worked fourteen years at Coqualeetza as a Nurses’ Aid. My mom cried and she said, ‘why are you going back there?’ I said, ‘that’s my home, its the only home I know, the life there’.”129

Mrs. Julian’s unique perceptions of the spaces of the hospital as dangerous, safe, spiritual, and home-like reveal the amazingly diverse range of experiences and memories possible within the rigid organization of institutional spaces.

Conclusion:

At Coqualeetza, institutional space has played itself out in complex ways that reflect not only the physical grounds and buildings on the site over time but also the complex nature of individual school and hospital experiences. This paper has attempted to construct a framework, based on space, so that these experiences can be better understood. Interviewing former residents and reviewing the published history of residential school experiences were key to understanding these in terms of space.
This study has produced some surprising findings. In particular, Indian hospitals, in many ways historically forgotten, were similar environments and consequently fostered experiences analogous to those at residential schools. This is because they are variants of a particular type of space -- institutional space. Also, the institutionalized space category is as malleable and complex as the varied experiences of residents at Coqualeetza. Within this type of space, gender, race and age all shaped Sto:lo peoples’ experiences. Further, the institutional spaces at Coqualeetza have been perceived as either dangerous or safe by its residents. Prominent conceptual approaches, like that of Michel Foucault, have examined space in terms of power relations. This study shows that institutional space also affects people in far more personal ways the life experiences of interviewees illustrate.

Finally, Mrs. Julian’s spiritual experiences at the Coqualeetza hospital illustrate some of the inadequacies of attempting to use such an institutional space model to learn about experiences; clearly, her spiritual awakening does not neatly fit into the categories of space I developed. Nor does it contradict them; interviews with her, in which I showed her photographs and asked questions about space, seemed to bring out these experiences. They are revealed and uniquely understood when they are examined in terms of space even if, in some cases, the typology model does not directly apply.

Finally, this study has shown that a spatial/experiential analysis can be used to re-examine extant literature to better understand individual experiences. Perhaps more significantly, I believe this approach is flexible enough to be applied to other types of settings, especially other institutional settings, to help better understand experiences of their residents.
Appendix I: Map of Kalamak Indian Residential School
Appendix II: Map indicating locations of residential schools on British Columbia
Appendix III: Aerial photograph of the Coqualeetza Indian Residential School/Hospital c.1946.
Appendix IV: 1996 site plan of the Coqualeetza grounds
Notes:


2. An important article has recently come to my attention which is very relevant to this study of space experience. Please see: Brown, Helen. "Gender and Space: Constructing the Public School Teaching Staff in Nanaimo, 1891-1914" in *BC Studies: Women's History and Gender Studies*. Numbers 105 & 106, Spring/Summer 1995. Though it is too late to include a discussion of it in this study, it is related specifically to some of the issues I discuss.


6. School students and hospital patients will hereafter be referred to as residents when they are being discussed together.


15. Foucault, ibid.
16. Foucault, ibid.
19. Tennant, ibid.
24. Barman, ibid., 100.
27. Cameron, ibid.
28. Cameron, ibid., 92.
29. Miller, ibid., xii.
34. Wherret, ibid., 44.
35. Barman, ibid., 86.
36. Sutherland, ibid., 81.
37. Brooks Higginbotham, ibid., 195
38. Francis, Daniel *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992). Francis uses this term to refer to the stereotyped First Nations person as s/he is portrayed in the media and in scholarly literature.
40. Brooks Higginbotham, ibid., 185.
41. Spain, ibid., 120 – 121.
43. Brooks Higginbotham, ibid., 184. It could also be argued that gender shaped this racial space or that both shaped each other.
44. Spain, ibid., 149.
45. See also: Gilchrist, ibid. Roberta Gilchrist’s work also seeks to establish gender and gendered space as analytical categories to better understand women’s experiences. Like Spain, Gilchrist looks at actual spaces, specifically, plans of nunnery churches to see how conceptions of gender in the Middle Ages impacted space.
46. Spain, ibid., 149.
47. Sutherland, ibid., 83.


55. Raibmon, ibid. See also, McClintock ibid., 167–172.


58. Edmeston, ibid., 8.


60. Interview with Myra Sam, conducted by Jody Woods and Christie Shaw, June 12th, 1998, 11.

61. See Higginbotham, ibid., 195.

62. Raibmon, ibid., 73-75.

63. Raibmon, ibid., 73.


65. Interview with Mrs. Myra Sam, ibid., 2.


67. Two of four interviewees who engaged in formal interviews consented to having their interviews recorded. One interviewee met with me on three separate occasions for informal ‘walking tour interviews’. He wished not to be recorded.

68. Appendix II, an aerial photograph of the site circa 1946 is from the Chilliwack Archives. W.S.Barclay Fonds. Box 859. Appendix IV is a 1996 site plan produced by the Sto:lo Nation which is currently given out to the public.

69. Interview with Myra Sam, ibid., 28.

70. Interview with a female Sto:lo elder, conducted by Jody Woods and Christie Shaw, June 4th, 1998.

71. Willis, ibid., 37 – 38.

72. Interview with a female Sto:lo elder, ibid.

73. Several photos showing children in this apparel are available at the Chilliwack Archives. W.S. Barclay Fonds. Box 859.

74. Interview with a female Sto:lo elder, ibid.

75. Willis, ibid., 37 – 38.


78. Barman, ibid., 86.

79. The Big house is the house on Vedder Street that was formerly the school principal’s and head doctor’s house.

80. From a series of informal, unrecorded interviews with a Sto:lo person, ibid.

81. Behind the big house, facing Vedder Road.

82. Interview with female Sto:lo elder, ibid.

83. Interview with Myra Sam, ibid., 28.

84. Willis, ibid., 44.

85. Interview with a female Sto:lo elder, ibid.

86. Woods, ibid.

87. Interview with Myra Sam, ibid., 15-16.


90. Interview with Myra Sam, ibid., 1.
93. Interview with a female Sto:lo elder, ibid.
94. Interview with Myra Sam, ibid., 4.
95. Ferrier, ibid., 26.
98. Interview with Myra Sam, ibid., 1.
99. Interview with Myra Sam, Ibid., 15.
100. See page 9 for a discussion of this point.
101. Interview with Bev Julian, ibid., 16.
102. Interview with Bev Julian, ibid., 17.
103. Furniss, ibid., 22.
104. Guss, ibid., 92.
106. Interview with Bev Julian, ibid., 9.
108. Willis, ibid., 46.
110. Willis, ibid., 45.
111. Haig-Brown, ibid., 19.
112. Sutherland, ibid., 81, 88, 90.
113. Interview with Bev Julian ibid., 6.
114. Acoose in Jaine, ibid., 5.
118. Interview with a female Sto:lo elder, ibid.
119. Bell, Rosa. “Journeys” in Jaine, ibid., 8 – 16. 8
120. McClintock, ibid., 167 -172.
121. Haig-Brown, ibid., 21.
122. Interview with Bev Julian ibid., 6.
123. Interview with Bev Julian ibid., 6.
124. Edmeston, ibid., 8
125. Sterling, ibid., 9 - 10.
126. Interview with Bev Julian ibid., 6.
127. Interview with Bev Julian, ibid., 9 - 10.
128. Interview with Bev Julian, ibid., 10.
129. Interview with Bev Julian, ibid., 10.
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