

**Caring for Difficult Knowledge:
Prospects for the Canadian Museum for Human Rights**

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Workshop Schedule

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2013

- 4:30-5:00pm Check-in/registration
- 5:00-5:30 pm President's Welcome – Lloyd Axworthy & Opening Remarks – Angela Failler (UW)
- 5:30-7:00 pm **Keynote Lecture:** Erica Lehrer (Concordia University) – “Exhibition as Research: Critical Curating and Difficult Knowledge in Practice”
- 7:00-8:00 pm Reception (sponsored by the President's Office)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2013

- 9:00-9:15am Check-in & coffee
- 9:15-10:45 am **Session 1:**
[moderator: Catherine Taylor]
Mireille Lamontagne (CMHR) – “Let's talk...and Play!: Using Dialogue and Interaction to Learn and Teach at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights”
Marilou McPhedran (UW) - "Difficult Dynamics in Teaching Lived Rights - a case study of the Adventures in Global Citizenship Summer Institutes partnered with CMHR 2011-2013"
Kathryn Ready (UW) – “Do the Rights Thing?: Literature, Human Rights, and Graduate Pedagogy at The University of Winnipeg and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights”
- 10:45-11:00 am Break
- 11:00am- 12:00pm **Session 2:**
[moderator: Tracy Whalen (UW)]
Debbie Schnitzer & Kathleen Venema (UW) - “A Museum in Miniature: Reflections on a Pedagogy of Care-full Witnessing”
Doris Wolf, Leah Gazan, Mary Jane McCallum & Heather Snell (UW) – “The Child Witness to CMHR's Representation of Canada's Residential School Legacy”
- 12:00-1:00 p.m. Lunch (sponsored by Jino Distasio, Office of the Associate Vice-President, Research and Innovation)
- 1:00-2:30 p.m. **Keynote Lecture:** Rita Kaur Dhamoon (UVic) & Olena Hankivsky (SFU) – “Public Knowledge, Power, and Processes: a Case Study of the CMHR”
- 2:30-2:45 p.m. Break

Abstracts

KEYNOTE

Exhibition as Research: Critical Curating and Difficult Knowledge in Practice.

– Erica Lehrer (Concordia University)

Dr. Erica Lehrer is Associate Professor of History and Sociology/Anthropology, as well as Director of the Centre for Ethnographic Research and Exhibition in the Aftermath of Violence (Craphi 1(hi)81 .(r)4(01Mll)n7(i)2(ll)n77(i)2(ll ()Tonc)1(e)4()]TJ 0.006214(m)-3())]TJ 0066 Td]TJ .04 0 Td ()

far. Each of these four moments marks a particularly resonant experience of: “caring for” difficult knowledges and texts (Lehrer and Milton 4); witnessing projects of “witnessing” (11); “a pedagogy at peace with its partiality!” (Simon, “Afterword” 197); and “not just looking but watching!” (203). We will specifically highlight: a remarkably successful instance of students “becoming friends with a text”; the process by which powerful affective bonds were developed during an activism workshop; the deep “grammar” we’ve learned in order to foster collective planning for collaborative action; and the ways in which service learning functions to foster peace-making identities. Our presentation will also look forward, toward our next version of the course and the pedagogical practices by which we might engage our students as a counterpublic, practiced in caring for difficult knowledge and prepared to contribute to a larger discourse on human rights.

The Child Witness to CMHR’s Representation of Canada’s Residential School Legacy
– Leah Gazan, Mary Jane McCallum, Heather Snell, & Doris Wolf (University of Winnipeg)

We propose to explore the ways the Canadian Museum for Human Rights is curating the difficult knowledges surrounding Canada’s residential school history and human rights record in relation to Aboriginal peoples. Our interest lies in the ways that the Museum’s galleries in conjunction with its educational programs conceptualize / construct the child attendee / witness to this history. Within childhood studies, critics frequently allude to what has been called the “split agenda” of children’s texts of atrocity – the competing desires to expose young readers to the horrors of history to teach them something important about the past that they can bring into the present and at the same time to protect them from the worst of that history based in idealized notions of childhood innocence. This split agenda becomes an ethical issue that negotiates the tension between a fear of secondary traumatization of the contemporary youth witness and a strongly perceived need to portray historical records of atrocity such as Canada’s residential school legacy with accuracy and integrity. Building on this idea of a split agenda, we would like to explore how both the Learning and Da ie10(u)2(i)2(l)2 D handDeegar7(h)1(e)6(s)-4(e)4()4()6(L

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Public Knowledge, Power, and Processes: a Case Study of the CMHR.

– Rita Kaur Dhamoon (University of Victoria) & Olena Hankivsky (Simon Fraser University)

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is envisioned as a place to learn about the struggle for human rights in Canada and internationally. Yet, over recent years, it has produced an “Oppression Olympics,” whereby some members of some groups (e.g. Ukrainians, Polish, Jewish) are competing for the mantle of the most oppressed, producing zero-sum thinking about horrific events that are deemed to be hierarchically valuable to public understandings of human rights and genocide. Knowledge about human rights abuses and genocide is itself difficult, namely “emotionally charged.” Drawing on the literature on the ethics of care, critical race theory, and Rothberg’s theory of multidirectional memory, we argue that this difficult knowledge has been made even further fraught because of the Oppression Olympics. In particular, we focus on the processes of consultation adopted by the Museum, and the role of the State in exacerbating the exchange, transfer, and mobilization of “difficult knowledge.” Our aim is to identify the challenges and possibilities of articulating difficult knowledge in the public realm.

Session 3: Museum-Public Interfacings

The Individual vs. the Collective in Neoliberal Times: The Canadian Museum for Human Rights and Rhetorics of Accountability in Winnipeg Print Media

– Heather Milne (University of Winnipeg)

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights holds the potential to facilitate occasions for museum-goers to reflect upon the concept of human rights, learn about human rights struggles, grapple with past and present atrocities, and become inspired to take up causes in the name of social justice. In spite of its promise as a site of critical engagement and activism, however, this museum has met with a considerable degree of opposition from some members of the Winnipeg public. Outcries over perceived oversights in the museum’s programming, dislike of its bold architectural design, and objections to the cost of building construction, exhibition development, and staffing have erupted frequently in local media, and especially in the pages of the *Winnipeg Free Press*, where the Canadian Museum for Human Rights has become a target for right-wing fiscal

rights ignored by museum” (January 25, 2012). In considering these competing and conflicting understandings of rights, I read newspaper columns and the comments left by readers as a manifestation of a particular form of difficult knowledge that emerges when the building of a state-funded institution dedicated to reflection on human rights collides with a neoliberal discourse of fiscal accountability that conflates morality with the rights of the individual (at the crux of this conflict lies the Stephen Harper government, in charge of building this national museum but beholden to its Conservative base). I further consider the extent to which objections to the museum as a “waste” of taxpayer’s money might mask an underlying anxiety over and resistance to the difficult knowledge future museum-goers might encounter upon engaging with the exhibits in the CMHR. Learning from difficult knowledge holds the potential to radically challenge museum-goers’ preconceived assumptions and invites participants to implicate themselves in the suffering of others rather than viewing knowledge as something to consume passively. The participatory ethos of difficult knowledge is not only incompatible with a neoliberal framework but also holds the potential for its undoing.

Governing Difficult Knowledge: An Institutional Analysis of the Canadian Museum of Human Rights

– Karen Sharma (University of Wi

Session 4: Material Rhetorics and Discursive Landscapes

Climbing the slippery slope of the Tower of Hope: Narratives of progress in the design and discussion of the CMHR

– **Chris Campbell & Larissa Wodtke** (University of Winnipeg)

In the effort to establish the physical structure of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

“The Conversation Has Begun” Monologue of Containment OR Interactive Invitation?
– Jaqueline McLeod Rogers & Tracy Whalen (University of Winnipeg)

A museum in progress is a particularly vibrant site of dialogue and shifting understandings: between the architectural structure itself and its urban surroundings; between the various signs and messages authorized and posted by museum administration and the imagined public who would read them; between the story these signs attempt to tell and their various interpretations. A key question we will consider is how the linguistic landscape (LL) of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights interacts with the project of engaging publics in the task of caring for difficult knowledge. As researchers, we are interested in exploring the material and linguistic landscape surrounding the Museum, considering how it is being constructed and for whom.

In our presentation, we will explore how the Museum makes itself present not only in the geographical landscape but also in the discursive landscape of the surrounding area. We use linguistic landscape analysis and rhetorical theory to study how “the discursive environment . . . constituted by its surrounding signage and billboard campaigns” attempts to shape public perceptions of the CMHR and whether it is, in fact, drawing publics into an open “conversation” about the unfolding process of developing a site for the negotiation of difficult knowledge. Linguistic landscape analysis, which has been developing rapidly over the last few years, argues that the linguistic landscape, made up of more than official text-based signs, also includes visual images, unauthorized words and images, and social discourses, embracing spoken as well as written language (Shohamy et al. 2010). Rhetorical criticism, which studies how symbols construct and deflect versions of reality for fellow symbol-users, offers resources to examine the symbolic play of presence and absence in the Museum’s various texts. In their canonical book, (1969), Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca theorize presence as an argumentative strategy that gives some messages a “standing-out-ness” or figural salience (and makes other elements absent), and these strategies cultivate a public that is receptive to particular arguments and interpretations.

Using such theories, we will examine the signs on the Museum site, informational brochures, and the dedicated website to see how the emerging project represents itself to the public—how it is attempting to shape public ideas, opinions and expectations about what a museum dedicated to human rights might be. There is so much about this Museum that is immaterial and postponed; we are fascinated by the attempts to create a tangible sense of museum presence when so much is uncertain, undeveloped, and absent.

Perelman, Chaim, and Lucie Olbrecht-Tyteca. . Notre
Dame, IN: U of Notre Dame P, 1991.

Shohamy, Elana, Eliezer Ben-Rafael, and Monica Barni.
Multilingual Matters, 2010.

. Bristol, UK:

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Session 5: Present Absences / Absent Presences

Present but Invisible: Disability at the Canadian Human Rights Museum

– Michelle Owen (University of Winnipeg) & Nancy Hansen (University of Manitoba)

The Canadian Human Rights Museum, located in Winnipeg and scheduled to open in 2014, is a site of both hope and contestation.

Like many other disenfranchised groups, disabled people want their stories to be told. Furthermore people with non-conformist bodies have always existed although it is rare to find historical accounts acknowledging their existence. Even today people with disabilities are marginalized by poverty and ableist views, based on an elusive concept of what is “normal.”

To put this issue in context an estimated one billion people world-wide have some form of disability or impairment. Disabled people have a rich history dating back centuries but only recently has it begun to be documented (See Disability a New History <http://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/series/r4disability>) In 2008 the School of Disability Studies at Ryerson University displayed pieces from a seminar on disability history. This exhibition, entitled “Out from Under: Disability, History & Things to Remember,” was powerful and inherently activist in tone. Visitors learned about hidden parts of Canadian history, such as life in institutions, through objects like tools and clothes.

The question is how courageous and creative will the CMHR be in its re-presentation of disability? How will it care for, present and interpret the often difficult hidden history and knowledge of disability? What will the public learn from this venture? Disability will be present at the museum, but will it be visible? Disability at museums is usually framed in terms of access to ramps, toilets, restaurants, etc. There is little understanding of disabled people's engagement with, or involvement in, history despite the fact that many of Western culture's most revered leaders, writers and artists were disabled. This aspect of their lives has been subjected to a form of cultural erasure, as if acknowledgment will diminish their accomplishments.

Representations of disability must go beyond well beyond the well-documented athletic exploits of white men such as Terry Fox and Rick Hansen. This pervasive image of disability must be troubled by the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, aboriginality, sexuality, class, and so forth. Moreover there are a spectrum of disabilities and chronic illnesses – many that are not easy to portray.

Individuals without permanent housing as curators: Addressing homelessness at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights

– Lukas Benjamin Thiessen (University of Winnipeg)

In their 2011 book Erica
Lehrer and Cynthia F. Milton challenge museum professionals to work with a variety of stakeholders.¹ This paper invites curators to work with individuals without permanent housing to address the “difficult knowledge” of homelessness. In the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan 2013 “the policy lens dramatically shifts across the country from supports for 'helping the homeless' to 'ending homelessness.’”² The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is implicated in efforts to end homelessness as CEO Stuart Murray participated in CEOs for Downtown Sleepout which raised money for this purpose.

Museums in the UK

Chris Campbell is a member of The University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group. He works as research program coordinator at The University of Winnipeg for the CSG and on two LGBTQ-inclusive education research programs, the Every Teacher Project and the National Inventory of Interventions to Support LGBTQ Students in Canadian Schools.

Jennifer Clary-Lemon is an Associate Professor in

Nancy Hansen is an Associate Professor Director of the Interdisciplinary Master's Program in Disability

Serena Keshavjee is an Associate Professor of art history at the University of Winnipeg and a member of the University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group. She is interested in the relationship between art and science in late nineteenth-century France. She has published on the Symbolists interest in Spiritualism and Anarchy, and has examined how fin-de-siècle "scientific" religious were received by French artists. In 2009, she edited a special issue of RACAR on "The Visual Culture of Science and Art in France." She is currently researching social Lamarckianism and art for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant.

Mireille Lamontagne holds an Advanced B.A. in Anthropology from the University of Manitoba, a Cultural Resource Management (Museum Studies) Diploma and a Professional Specialization Certificate in Cultural Sector Leadership from the University of Victoria. She has 20 years of experience working in interpretation and program development, museum development, principles, and practices, as well as ancient Indigenous cultural heritage. She worked throughout the 1990s for The Manitoba Museum as an Education Interpreter/Program Developer, at Parks Canada as the Cultural Resource Manager for Manitoba's National Historic Sites, and with the Department of Canadian Heritage managing the Museums Assistance Program and the Aboriginal Peoples! Cultural Programs for the Prairies and Northern Region. Mireille has designed and delivered a wide range of museum education programs for

Jaqueline McLeod Rogers is a Professor in the Department of Rhetoric, Writing and Communication the Acting Chair of the Department of Rhetoric, Writing and Communications at the University of Winnipeg. She is a member of the University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group. She has published (1991), (1996) and continues writing and editing composition textbooks for Canadian students with Pearson and Nelson. Extending her commitment to feminist rhetorics and scholarship, she serves on the Advisory Board and as a member-at-large of the executive of an active international group, the Coalition of Women Scholars in the History of Rhetoric and Composition (2012-2014). She has published on place in a recent special issue of ("Writing Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada: Dwelling and Crossing"), and is continuing to research the connections between rhetoric and geography by looking specifically at writing and walking the city in a chapter, "Practising Flaneury," just published in a book about (P. Goggin, ed., Routledge, 2013). She is currently co-editing a collection of new articles (with department colleagues Catherine Taylor and Tracy Whalen) for a book with the working title

Marilou McPhedran was named a Member of the Order of Canada (1985) in recognition of her co-leadership of the social mobilization resulting in stronger gender equality protections in the Canadian constitution (1982). A co-founder of LEAF - the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund to conduct constitutional equality test cases and interventions, METRAC -

Wade Nelson is an Instructor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Winnipeg and a member of The University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group. Wade is trained in

Armando Perla is a Curator and Researcher at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR) and holds a Master!

Debbie Schnitzer is a member of the University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group. Her critical and creative projects involve the exploration of archival locations and educational offices/officers, memorial sites, events, and memory communities in relation to official and unofficial German and Jewish narratives of the Shoah. A second novel in progress, *the woman who swallowed West Hawk Lake*, explores the legacy of "recovered" Aryanized Jewish property in a Canadian landscape through the eyes of two children, themselves the descendants of offspring manufactured by the Nazi's Lebensborn program. Debbie is also part of an eco%arts collective, *River On The Run*, conjoining interests in art and activism, poetry and eco%publics which focus on water rights and the politics of water talk/in/action. With Mavis Reimer, Rocky Cree storyteller, William Dumas, artist Leonard Paul, and a group of researchers, Debbie contributed to the creation of the picture book, *Pisim Finds Her Miskanow* (Highwater Press, 2013) and is currently developing a teacher's guide with Margaret Dumas, a member of that research team. The picture book follows the life of a young Rocky Cree woman over a week's journey in Proto%Contact Northern Manitoba and is based on the 1992 archaeological findings conducted at a burial site at Nakami Bay, South Indian Lake. Debbie has lived and taught in First Nations communities, worked with popular education, arts%based inquiry, community%university partnerships, and collaborated with Kathleen Venema in a variety of teaching, experiential learning, and research projects at the University of Winnipeg. This is the collaborative process she and Kathleen will represent at our workshop, "A Museum in Miniature: Reflections on a Pedagogy of Care%full Witnessing".

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Karen Sharma is a student in the University of Manitoba and University of Winnipeg's Joint Masters Program in Public Administration. Her research interests focus on the intersections between traumatic histories and public policy. Karen's most recent paper, "Mea Maxima Culpa: The Political Apology as an Instrument of Public Policy in Canada" won the Institute of Public Administration of Canada's Willard J Condo Memorial Prize and a National Student Thought Award. Professionally, Karen has extensive experience working with government. At present, she manages the Secretariat of a national working group under the Forum of Labour Market Ministers, tasked with improving the system of qualifications recognition for internationally educated and experienced individuals.

Heather Snell is an Associate Professor in the Department of English at the University of Winnipeg. Her primary field of interest is postcolonial cultural studies. Her fascination with postcolonial representations of children has increasingly led her toward research in young people's texts and cultures. Her research and teaching straddle the fields of postcolonial cultural studies and research in young people's texts and cultures to examine postcolonial representations of youth and local engagements with notions of "the global child" and "global citizenship" in texts for and about young people.

Catherine Taylor, leader of RISE UP, is Professor of Rhetoric, Writing & Communications and Professor and Director of Academic Programs in the Faculty of Education at The University of Winnipeg. She is a member of the University of Winnipeg's

Kathleen Venema is a member of The University of Winnipeg's Cultural Studies Research Group and