

Fragments of Truth: Residential Schools and the Challenge of Reconciliation in Canada. By Naomi Angel. Edited by Dylan Robinson and Jamie Berthe. Durham: Duke University Press, 2022. 217 pages. \$99.95 cloth; \$25.95 paper; \$25.95 ebook.

There is something powerful about knowing an individual has made such an impact in the world that others complete and publish their work after they pass. In honoring the memory, work, and efforts of Naomi Angel, editors Dylan Robinson and Jamie Berthe have finished *Fragments of Truth: Residential Schools and the Challenge of Reconciliation in Canada*. Through their history with Angel—Robinson as a Stó:lō ethnomusicologist and research collaborator of Angel's and Berthe beginning her doctoral studies with Angel and sharing similar focus and lived experiences—both are uniquely situated to finish her work after her passing from genetic breast cancer. Robinson and Berthe believe Angel's *Fragments of Truth* will aid in understanding present conditions surrounding Canada's Indian residential schools' (IRS) Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) after its conclusion, despite only covering Angel's experience with the process. Although Robinson and Berthe fill in gaps left within Angel's work from her premature death, their contributions are largely unnoticed as readers are drawn into *Fragments of Truth*, Angel's story, and her work.

With her stated goals for *Fragments of Truth* being to both understand the context for the IRS TRC as well as recognition and creation of a space for the ways reconciliation takes place outside of the commission, Angel begins with an introduction in which she claims to be a "vulnerable observer" (xiii) before discussing various such commissions across the globe, including Australia's Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR). Circling back to Canada, Angel briefly gives the timeline for its IRS system, connecting the history of Canada as a nation of benevolence and tolerance with the IRS system and the IRS TRC. Angel argues that the TRC is a product of Canada's project of "benevolent assimilation" (xiv), supported with a brief national history leading up to the creation of the commission. Angel contends reconciliation is an "opportunity for cultivating new ways of seeing" (48), including understanding images as reminders of the past and avenues for "active engagement and resignification" today (53). Using images in this way, Angel asserts, allows Canada's regimes of visibility to be disrupted, contested, and renegotiated (52).

Continuing these arguments, Angel dives deep into the relationship between reconciliation and the archive as a memory institution. Angel focuses on several images in multiple forms and ways, including Thomas Moore's well-known before-and-after photos, in addition to pamphlets and information produced by Canada and the church promoting the IRS system while portraying both as benevolent actors. Angel acknowledges that the power of these images comes from the structures that shaped their making (61), but that they also highlight ways Indigenous communities return and reclaim the archives (xiv). Angel argues that this reclamation, combined with the acknowledgment of gaps in archival records caused by erasures, is key during the reconciliation process.

Next, Angel discusses two IRS TRC events she attended: Winnipeg and Inuvik. Through her first-person discussion and inclusion of her own photos, Angel looks at the role of effect and uses of testimony and performances at the events. Angel contends that by sharing their experiences, IRS survivors created “political affective spaces” (18). Angel uses her field notes to draw readers into the events, including her embarrassment of missteps and uncertainty in belonging. Rather than focusing on pain narratives, Angel attests that these gatherings represent reclamations of “power and agency by former students and intergenerational survivors” (99). Angel provides an honest assessment of these events, acknowledging impediments to the TRC process such as restrictions placed on the collection of testimonies and the attendance of religious and church representatives at the events. Throughout her discussion, Angel is able to add depth to the gatherings for readers along with explanations of what the events contributed to the reconciliation process.

Shifting focus from the TRC to the sites of former schools, Angel asserts that these sites are living archives where questions about reconciliation’s forms are played out (126). Arguing that land and landscapes are living, have stories to tell, and are powerful sites of memory, Angel uses school sites to explore how communities embark on their own processes of reconciliation through remembering and reclamation of the sites apart from the TRC. Specifically underpinning her argument, Angel discusses Blue Quills Indian Residential School, now Blue Quills First Nations College, the first school in Canada administered by Indigenous peoples (138). Angel also examines Portage la Prairie Residential School, which has been reclaimed by Indigenous peoples and is now a heritage site. Using these two sites along with others, Angel looks at how the reconciliation process can be understood as a ghostly encounter (129) as survivors reconcile with experiences and memories.

Overall, Angel with Robinson and Berthe have done a beautiful job of writing on a difficult and multifaceted topic. As a PhD student in American Indian studies hoping to work in and with communities looking at specific Indian boarding schools within the United States, I appreciate the methods Angel, Robinson, and Berthe used throughout *Fragments of Truth*. American Indian studies and Indigenous studies scholars and students will find value in learning about the TRC process and IRS; they will also see how a conscientious researcher approaches research within Indigenous communities, as well as how research can be beneficial to Indigenous communities. In addition, information professionals, practitioners, and data stewards in all information institutions will benefit from reading this book. Since information of all types is contained within all manner of archives and information institutions, information professionals must be aware of the importance of residential school information and memories to Indigenous communities. Finally, *Fragments of Truth* is a powerful story of one woman’s journey of looking at the IRS TRC, and the layers and fragments of meanings behind the concept of “truth.” For anyone hoping to earn a greater understanding of both Indian residential schools and the path towards truth, *Fragments of Truth* is a must-read.

Jewel Cummins
University of Arizona

