

Reading Log #6

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February 23rd 2018

This reading log is based on the article “Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons,” written by Mary Kelm. The focus of this article is on the medical services provided by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) to the First Nations people. More specifically, the poor quality of care they received and the complaints the Aboriginal people had about this poor quality. The DIA “did not try to recruit doctors, nor does it seem that they did much checking on those who volunteered for the service.”¹ It appears that a lot of these doctors only took the position for a relaxed lifestyle and steady pay. It was so difficult to find doctors that the DIA was willing to take almost anyone as a doctor, regardless of their age and competence.² They even let alcoholic doctors practice medicine because having some representation was considered better than none, even though his patients feared for their lives.³ It seems that medical missionaries and field matrons provided better care for the First Nations people even though they were trying to assimilate them the most. Missionaries were better suited to serve Indigenous people due to the fact that they knew exactly what they would be doing and had to support from the church,⁴ as well their main objective was to serve and convert First Nations people.⁵ Along with this, the DIA offered funds to religious hospitals to accept and treat Aboriginal people.⁶ This article was based on the first half of the 20th century when Residential schools were being used and children were getting tuberculosis from the poor health conditions. Although this is a very convincing article, I must look at it critically as I know the poor quality of care the First Nations received in the religious residential schools. This relates to the overall historiography on the topic because it

presents another view on the role of Euro-Canadians and religious figures in the lives of First Nations people. I want to know exactly how the missionaries helped out the First Nations people in regards to care. How often did they see them, did they take their problems seriously ? Along with how the First Nations felt about their purpose of conversion.

This reading log is based on the article “‘The Rising Generation’: Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70,” written by Cynthia Comacchio. The focus of this article is on the “youth problem” created by “adult fascination with the lives- actually the lifestyles- of the young”.⁷ Although people aged 12-24 had the best health and the lowest mortality rate in the time period, “mental hygiene” of the young became a primary concern for all adults.⁸ The understanding of puberty as a time when adolescents are vulnerable to the temptations of the adult lifestyle, but are not able to handle them yet, came into view.⁹ This led to thinking that adolescents need medical intervention to help them with their problems and although this was widely believed, it seems there was little push to actually help them. The main ‘help’ provided was an increase in high school programs of “health supervision and education”.¹⁰ The medical world still did not focus on helping these young people as of 1985, there were still no paediatric doctors that concentrated on adolescents primarily and of the 21st century, it was still not even a sub specialty.¹¹ This relates to the overall historiography of the topic because it helps us shed light on where all the stereotypes of teenagers being rebellious and a problem came from and how we can work on normalizing this more. What I liked in this article is that it did mention that having a hard time mentally was a part of being an adolescent and that we need to nurture it instead of medicalizing it.

This reading log is based on the chapter “Abortion and Women’s Mental Health,” in the book *Abortion: A Positive Decision*, written by Patricia Lunneborg. The purpose of this chapter is to examine how getting an abortion may affect a woman’s mental health either positively or negatively. This chapter began with a personal story about abortion which was a great hook and catches attention quickly. It is from the perspective of a woman who got an abortion at the age of 22 who’s main question was “why destroy your stability or self-esteem for another child in this world of too many unwanted or abused children?”¹² This article provided a great deal of personal stories of abortion as well as drew from many different studies done on abortion. This article found that women often felt more depressed and had lower self esteem when faced with an unwanted pregnancy and having the abortion usually brought it back up to normal or even better.¹³ Abortion was the first major decision in a lot of these women's lives as their parents or significant others often made decisions for them.¹⁴ Making the choice to have an abortion made women feel stronger and more in control of their lives,¹⁵ as well it made women more aware and attentive to using contraceptives properly.¹⁶ After women had their abortions, the most common feeling experienced was relief.¹⁷ These women generally had more energy and a new outlook on life, but unfortunately around 17% felt depressed afterwards¹⁸ and 7% said they regretted it and/or would never get one again.¹⁹ Along with this research, it was also found that women felt more mature after and younger women realized they were more mature than they thought they were.²⁰ The majority of women said “their behaviour and attitudes had changed in the direction of greater self management”²¹ and “ they learned they could get through difficult times, were stronger than they thought, could stand up to social pressure, and could make difficult decisions.”²² I really enjoyed this chapter because it gave a positive outlook on abortion and

women's feelings towards it. This chapter relates to the overall historiography on the topic because it shows that even when abortions were illegal, most women did not feel ashamed or regret their decision which shows that mental health and post abortion syndrome cannot be used as a reason to stop women from having abortions done.

Notes

- ¹ Kelm, Mary Ellen, "Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons." In *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 131.
- ² Kelm, Mary Ellen, "Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons." In *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 132.
- ³ Kelm, Mary Ellen, "Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons." In *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 132.
- ⁴ Kelm, Mary Ellen, "Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons." In *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 144.
- ⁵ Kelm, Mary Ellen, "Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons." In *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 145.
- ⁶ Kelm, Mary Ellen, "Doctors, Hospitals, and Field Matrons." In *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Health and Healing in British Columbia, 1900-1950*, Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998: 135.
- ⁷ Comacchio, Cynthia, "'The Rising Generation': Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 19 (2002): 165.
- ⁸ Comacchio, Cynthia, "'The Rising Generation': Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 19 (2002): 140.
- ⁹ Comacchio, Cynthia, "'The Rising Generation': Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 19 (2002): 143.
- ¹⁰ Comacchio, Cynthia, "'The Rising Generation': Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 19 (2002): 166.
- ¹¹ Comacchio, Cynthia, "'The Rising Generation': Laying Claim to the Health of Adolescents in English Canada, 1920-70," *Canadian Bulletin of Medical History*, 19 (2002): 167.
- ¹² Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 89.

- ¹³ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 99.
- ¹⁴ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 93.
- ¹⁵ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 93.
- ¹⁶ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 95.
- ¹⁷ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 90.
- ¹⁸ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 92.
- ¹⁹ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 98.
- ²⁰ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 97.
- ²¹ Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 98.
- ²² Lunneborg, Patricia W. "Abortion and Women's Mental Health." In *Abortion : A Positive Decision*. New York : Bergin & Garvey, 1992: 98.

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