



Now what was the rationale for those residential schools? Ah, yes, to take the native out of the child. So then what is left – a vacant, unidentifiable child.

Now we are often told that the children are our greatest treasure. So to mutate, to erase the essence of, to de-identify these children means that we do so to ourselves. For if we fear so greatly “identity” – of that which establishes each one of us as an individual, unique and unlike anyone else - then we must fear life and love and beauty themselves, which makes us empty and devoid of essence and unidentifiable. So we harm ourselves when we harm others.

In my square, I constructed a dark and brooding building with rows of cut-out children’s figures all imprisoned behind a tall spiky fence. Some of the dolls’ faces are erased with red thread-scribbles. It is a negative image, just like a portrayal of war.

Lewis Carroll (Alice in Wonderland/Through the looking glass) wrote a little poem these children will never understand:

*I'd give all the wealth that years have piled,  
The slow result of life's decay,  
To be once more a little child  
For one bright summer day.*

Thank you Alice for caring and opening doors for so many of us.

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