

**THE BIOPOLITICS OF INDIGENOUS REPRODUCTION:
COLONIAL DISCOURSE AND THE OVERREPRESENTATION OF
INDIGENOUS CHILDREN IN THE CANADIAN CHILD WELFARE
SYSTEM**

by

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Abstract

From its inception, Canada's 'Indian policy' has sought to undermine the bond between indigenous children and their communities. Each era has seen a new reason and corresponding tactic to remove indigenous children. They have been institutionalized in residential schools, placed in foster homes, provincial 'care' facilities, and adopted by Euro-Canadian families. While it is widely accepted that the forceful removal of indigenous children during the residential school era and the “Sixties Scoop” was a colonial strategy, contemporary child welfare practices seem to escape the same scrutiny. This seems to be the case even though indigenous children continue to be removed en masse and are vastly overrepresented in the Canadian child welfare system. Indeed, there are more indigenous children in 'care' today than ever before in Canadian history, including the residential school era and following the “Sixties Scoop”. Given these trends the colonial effect of contemporary child welfare practices seems evident.

This project thus seeks to problematize child welfare practices in relation to indigenous peoples. In particular, it is the aim of this thesis to shed light on some of the narratives that underlie these practices. Through a critical discourse analysis this thesis illuminates how news media in Alberta and Manitoba disseminate controlling images of indigenous peoples and their children. I argue that the discourses in both provinces normalize the removal of indigenous children while naturalizing colonial control.

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Chapter One

Introduction

In *The History of Sexuality* Michel Foucault (1990) reminds us that the emergence of biopower inscribed racism (in its modern, statist form) in the mechanisms of the normalizing state (149). Racism, thus, is not an effect but rather a *means* of creating a ‘biologized’ internal Other against whom society must defend itself (Stoler 2006:59). Because of this, concerns over reproduction are at the core of a biopolitical state (Foucault 1990:139). The reproduction of those deemed undesirable is constructed as problematic or even threatening to the well-being of the dominant majority. In this conception the (literal and social) death of the internal Other (i.e. the inferior, degenerate, abnormal) “will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer” (Foucault 2003:255). This logic warrants the regulation or outright prevention of the Other's reproduction in the eyes of the dominant majority (Foucault 2003:255). Such an idea becomes especially powerful in a settler-colonial state, such as Canada. Indeed a colonial settler society, which can only exist through the dissolution of indigenous peoples and the establishment of a new social body on the expropriated landmass (Wolfe 2006), must have at its core an obsession with indigenous reproduction. For this reason, a colonial settler society is inherently eliminatory in that the dominant culture must “destroy to replace” (Wolfe 2006:390). The mere existence, let alone reproduction, of the indigenous population is counterproductive to the colonial project.

In the Canadian context, such an obsession has historically manifested itself through various tactics of population control. These ranged from outright extermination

(Stevenson 1999:2), sexual violence against indigenous women (Weaver 2009), sterilization abuses (Grekul et al. 2004), to oppressive policies of the *Indian Act* that seek to 'define' indigenous peoples 'out of existence' (Lawrence 2004). One especially detrimental strategy was the wholesale removal of indigenous children from their families and communities. This was achieved through residential schooling and child welfare services during the now infamous “Sixties Scoop” (Walmsley 2005). This latter tactic is especially powerful in a settler-colonial state, for the removal of indigenous children not only constitutes an attempt at cultural genocide (Dubinsky 2010:5; Monture-Angus 1995:193), but also forcibly transforms the child into an element that reifies and strengthens the colonial body. This is not only a highly symbolic, but also a very effective method in regulating the reproduction of indigenous communities.

While the colonial functions of the residential school system and the “Sixties Scoop” have been well documented (see, for example, Walmsley 2005; Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003; Fournier and Crey 1997; RCAP 1996; Johnston 1983), contemporary child welfare practices seem to escape the same scrutiny – even though it is apparent that child welfare practices today mirror those of the past. Indigenous children have been entering the child welfare system at alarming rates. Between 1995 and 2001, the number of First Nation children placed in out-of-home¹ ‘care’ increased by 71.5% nationally (Gough et al. 2005). Further, 30-40% of children removed from their homes between 2000 and 2002 were indigenous, while comprising less than 5% of the overall child population in Canada (ibid).² Indigenous children are more readily removed from their

1 “Out-of-home” care refers to the placement of children in group homes, foster homes, accommodations with relatives, or similar arrangements.

2 Unfortunately, these Canada-wide estimates may grossly underestimate the disproportionate representation of indigenous children in care. There currently are no concrete statistics on the number of

homes than non-indigenous children (MacLaurin et al. 2003), once removed they stay in the system for longer (ibid), and their overrepresentation continues to grow larger (CECW 2011). Placed in such contrast, the colonial effect of current child welfare practices toward indigenous communities is apparent. Indeed, there are more indigenous children in 'care' today than ever before in Canadian history, including the residential school era and the "Sixties Scoop" (Little forthcoming; Gough et al. 2005; Blackstock 2003).

It is the aim of this thesis to draw attention to the continuation of this colonial practice and engage with narratives that normalize the removal of indigenous children by the Canadian settler society. In what follows I critically examine how indigenous 'parenthood' and 'childhood' are discursively constructed as problematic so as to justify interventions by child welfare authorities. For this purpose, I analyze those controlling images that are being evoked of indigenous women, men, and children in connection with child welfare. For the reason that child welfare services fall under the jurisdiction of provincial and territorial authorities, and a nation-wide study of colonial narratives goes beyond a scope of this thesis, I focus on current media discourses prevalent in two specific provinces: Manitoba and Alberta. Data was collected from 198 newspaper articles and editorials taken from the two most widely circulated dailies of each province, within a one-year timeframe (January 1, 2010 – January 31, 2010). For Alberta, newspaper articles and editorials were taken from the *Calgary Herald* and the *Edmonton*

children placed in out-of-home care on a national level (Mulcahy and Trocmé 2010). Child welfare services are a provincial and territorial responsibility and are therefore based on different foundational legislation, making it difficult to generate Canada-wide statistics. Furthermore, not all provinces provide information on placement rates according to indigenous ancestry, making it impossible to generate concrete numbers of indigenous children and youth currently in out-of-home care.

Journal. For Manitoba, the newspapers consulted were the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun*.

In both provinces the numbers of indigenous children in the child welfare system are truly staggering. Manitoba has the highest number of children in ‘care’ compared to all other provinces and territories (24.4 per 1000 children). In 1997, at least 70% of these children were indigenous (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000) and by 2000 this number had risen to almost 80% (Gough et al. 2005). The most recent estimates indicate that this percentage has already climbed to 86% (Manitoba Office of the Children’s Advocate in Rabson July 19, 2010:A3). It is interesting to note that during the decade following the “Sixties Scoop”, the number of indigenous children in care tripled in the city of Winnipeg, while the number of non-indigenous children declined (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000). Likewise, in Alberta, indigenous children are overrepresented at every stage of intervention by child welfare authorities. They experience higher rates of ongoing service, child welfare court interventions and out-of-home placements (MacLaurin et al. 2005:118). According to most recent estimates, indigenous children make up 64% of children in ‘care’ in this province (Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel 2010:6). Within the next five years, this number is expected to increase to 70% (ibid).

This then illustrates the central tenet of this project, namely that concerns over indigenous reproduction remain paramount to the Canadian settler society and that the overrepresentation of indigenous children in ‘care’ is a manifestation of biopolitical control. Colonial imaginings construct indigenous reproduction as problematic and thus render its regulation necessary to the well-being and survival of the non-indigenous

settler society. Anti-indigenous discourses framed the justifications for colonization, large-scale annihilation (Smith 2005) and assimilation of indigenous populations (Morgensen 2010). More importantly, they continue to do so today. I will make the argument that contemporary media discourses in Alberta and Manitoba disseminate controlling images of indigenous peoples that naturalize colonial control. Newspaper articles tell stories that justify the continued marginalization of indigenous peoples while espousing assimilatory aspirations for their children.

At a time when the government of Canada sings its praises of multiculturalism and national myths tell the story of racial equality, a discussion that places Canada in the role of a colonial state, operating according to a biopolitical rationale, may seem antiquated – if not out of place entirely. Yet, as will become evident throughout the following chapters, it is highly appropriate. The national narratives the settler society tells of its origins, historical development, and future aspirations, and the colonial stories told of those who are considered not to belong, spin a discursive web in which settlement is naturalized, capitalism entrenched, and white supremacy ultimately upheld.

Colonial Narratives

While overt genocidal or eugenic rhetoric is usually absent from public discourses in a liberal state, it is nevertheless possible to detect such a logic through a critical discourse analysis. To analyse how indigenous reproduction is constructed as problematic and the removal of indigenous children normalized, it is necessary to examine those stories that disseminate controlling images of indigenous 'womanhood' and childhood. The reason why the focus partially rests on indigenous women is because, as Yuval-Davis

(1997) has explained, in discourses around nationhood 'woman' is commonly constructed as both the biological reproducer of the nation and critical in its cultural construction (4). Thus, for the reason that women are imagined as cultural and biological reproducers, colonial narratives and strategies of control primarily focus on the subjugation and regulation of indigenous women. Indeed, as has been pointed out by Andrea Smith (2005), colonialism is a fundamentally *gendered* project. It has been through sexual violence and the imposition of European gender relations in indigenous communities that hierarchy was naturalized and settlers were able to colonize indigenous peoples (Smith 2005:23). In this sense, an attack on indigenous women's bodies and control over their social realities (Acoose 1995) is a strategy of undermining indigenous communities at large. Because the subjugation of indigenous women is crucial to the success of colonialism, it is in the colonial narratives of indigenous 'womanhood' that one can discern some of the core tenants of colonial control in Canada.

The reasoning behind researching data on the discourses around indigenous children is twofold. First, as Markens (2007) points out, there has been a general shift in the discursive politics of reproduction to a "fetal rights" discourse and advocacy in the name of "children's best interests", effectively diminishing the role and rights of women (52-56). Secondly, from its very inception, Canada's 'Indian policy' sought to sever the bond between indigenous children and their communities (Fournier and Crey 1998:17). Each era of indigenous politics in Canada saw a new reason to remove indigenous children from their families, placing them in residential schools, foster care, or handing them over to Euro-Canadian adoptive families (ibid; see also, Monture-Angus 1995:191-215). All of these policies were portrayed as 'civilizing missions' (Walmsley 2005:9) and

consistently justified as being 'in the best interests of the children' (ibid:13). It can thus be inferred that contemporary justifications are cast in a similar language.

For A Structural Critique

I come to this project as a white settler and am (at least partially) aware of my precarious situation as a critic of settler colonialism who nonetheless is implicated in its very project. By writing this thesis I do not want to contribute to a discourse that (in an effort to critique the forms of social injustice indigenous peoples, and women in particular, are confronted with) tends to stereotype indigenous women as some “mother-earthly mass of battered bodies” (LaRocque 2007:67). Even though indigenous women are “among the most stereotyped, dehumanized and objectified of women” (ibid:53), I do not wish to further their marginalization by telling stories of their victimization. Rather than looking at the marginalization of indigenous peoples this project is intended to be a critique of those structures that *create* this marginalization. To a certain extent then, this project is informed by Queer theory's turn towards a “subjectless critique” (see, for example, Smith 2010). As Eng et al. (2005) put it, “a subjectless critique establishes ... a focus on a 'wide field of normalization' as the site of social violence” (quoted in Smith 2010:44). Such a critique focuses on those structures that represent a multi-faceted oppressive framework for certain marginalized groups of people. This project then is driven by a desire to illuminate some of the normalizing logics of settler colonialism in Canada, and to point out that these discourses materialize in oppressive ways. By taking such a perspective I wish to escape the “ethnographic entrapment” (Smith 2010:44) by which indigenous peoples are rendered simply as objects of study and instead can

foreground colonial heteropatriarchy as a key logic that governs Canada today.

Thus, it becomes evident that this project comes with a larger purpose. Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) reminds us that “in a decolonizing framework, deconstruction is part of a much larger intent” (3). Taking apart the dominant discourse and revealing some of the underlying agendas cannot suffice. Research is inherently relational (Wilson 2008) and may not be divorced from a larger commitment to social justice (Smith 2008:116). The intention behind a structural critique of colonialism in Canada is to engage in an effort to denaturalize settlement. Thus, this project strives to be an (even if small) act of decolonization in itself. In this sense, this project is primarily addressed to members of the dominant majority. Not as yet another study 'on' or 'about' indigenous peoples, but rather as an appeal to critically examine and re-conceptualize one's implication in the colonial project. We, members of the dominant majority, have the privilege to not acknowledge or problematize our positionality. Yet, self-interrogation is necessary to address racism and colonialism in Canada. Further, the goal is not to 'feel bad' or worse – to 'feel good about feeling bad' – but to realize the multiple forms of oppression that exist in Canada, our complicity in them, and to strive towards ways of dismantling them. As Taiaiake Alfred puts it, “There needs to be struggle in order to lay out a path to co-existence, and that the process of being uncomfortable is essential for non-Indigenous people to move from being enemy, to adversary, to ally” (quoted in Yee 2011:11-12). We need to make transformative use of the empathy developed towards others (Cannon 2011). We need to problematize 'normalcy'.

In the next chapter I will outline my theoretical framework, which takes shape in the pairing of French post-structuralism (specifically Foucauldian theory of biopolitics)

with indigenous feminist theory as expressed in the work of Andrea Smith. In this section I will illuminate the relationships between colonialism, biopolitics, and reproductive control. This is followed by a discussion of the theory of discourse that underlies this project, and similarly of my methodological commitments, which are informed by both Western and indigenous traditions. The last part of this chapter explains how the research was carried out, such as the setting up of the project, the collection, categorization, and analysis of data.

After having laid out my theoretical and methodological commitments, the structure of this project will unfold rather organically. In Chapter Three, I provide some needed context in order to situate this project historically and conceptually. This chapter examines the systemic and systematic removal of indigenous children by the settler society. I begin by examining the institutionalization of indigenous children through the residential school system (see, for example, Walmsley 2005). This is followed by a discussion of the post-war expansion of provincial child welfare services into indigenous communities and the resulting wholesale removal of indigenous children, commonly referred to as the “Sixties Scoop” (see, for example, Fournier and Crey 1998). This serves as a segue into an examination of contemporary child welfare practices and the ongoing apprehension of indigenous children. Throughout this chapter I make the argument that current child welfare practices effectively represent a continuation of those that came before. The residential school system, the “Sixties Scoop” and contemporary child welfare practices represent different facets of the same colonial strategy, that is the forceful removal of indigenous children from their families and communities.

Chapter Four represents the central analysis of my research. Here I provide a

discussion of my research findings concerning the media discourses in Alberta and Manitoba. For the reason that both provinces share certain core narratives, this chapter is thematically structured. First, I analyse how media discourses disseminate controlling images of what is considered a homogenous ‘aboriginal culture’.³ Subsequently, I examine the colonial narratives surrounding ‘aboriginal women’. Such an analysis reveals four mutually reinforcing images, namely the ‘substance abuser/pregnant drunk’, the ‘prostitute/sexual deviant’, the ‘baby-machine’, and above all, the ‘unfit mother’. All of these images carry specific messages concerning moral worth, desired levels of fertility, and (in)ability to care for offspring. The next section will discuss the colonial construction of ‘aboriginal men’, who are portrayed as violent criminals and a ‘threat to society’. In their role as fathers, they are imagined as directing their violent nature towards their families. An analysis of ‘aboriginal children’ constitutes the last section of this chapter. Indigenous children are portrayed as ‘helpless yet hopeless’ victims whose lives are being destroyed by their neglectful mothers, yearning to be saved from their destructive environments by the Canadian settler society. These children are imagined as permanently damaged and forsaken and are said to hold the terrifying potential to become what the colonial discourse accuses their parents of being. They are believed to overwhelm the foster care system, be prone to unlawful conduct, and inevitably represent a tremendous burden for Canadian taxpayers – as future criminals and/or welfare

³ Throughout this project it is important to bear in mind that the categories such as ‘aboriginal women’, ‘motherhood’, ‘aboriginal culture’, ‘aboriginal men’, ‘childhood’, and so on, are fictional creations – they are part of a colonial imagery that creates a world according to its own logic. I do not wish to imply that an essentialist category such as ‘aboriginal woman’ exists ‘out there’ in a positivistic sense. Similarly, this is not an attempt to tell counter-narratives of ‘indigenous womanhood’. Rather, by looking at the colonial narratives around indigenous peoples, I am trying to unmask certain categories as colonial constructions. They are constructions that are created for a certain end, and that is to normalize colonialism.

recipients.

Such colonial stories of neglect and abuse depict indigenous peoples as incapable of parenthood, while portraying Euro-Canadian settlers as potential ‘saviours’ of their seemingly forsaken children. In combination, the prevailing narratives of ‘aboriginal culture’, ‘aboriginal women/mothers’, ‘aboriginal men’ and ‘aboriginal children’ normalize the continued removal of indigenous children while naturalizing settler colonialism. These stories represent white heteropatriarchal interests in defining and controlling indigenous peoples’ reproduction. Combined with the violent underpinnings of liberal universalism (Turner 2006), these narratives result in the disavowal of any accountability for racism and colonialism in Canada.

Chapter Five brings together the central themes of this project and thus serves as a final point of discussion. After providing a brief summary of the main arguments I conclude by pointing out that colonialism may best be understood as both a discursive and institutional practice. Anti-indigenous discourses continue to materialize as oppressive strategies of control. The national narratives the settler society tells of itself and of those who are considered antithetical to the colonial project, spin a discursive web in which settlement is naturalized and colonial heteropatriarchy entrenched as the normalizing logic of Canadian society. I end this chapter by providing some thoughts on future directions and potential ways of moving forward creatively.

Chapter Two

Theorizing Biopower, Decolonizing Methodologies

In this chapter, I outline my theoretical framework, methodological considerations, the theory of discourse upon which my analysis rests, and address the criteria specific to this research project, such as its scope, the research questions asked, and the selection and categorization of the research data. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) points out, “language and the citing of texts are often the clearest markers of the theoretical traditions of a writer” (4). My theoretical and methodological commitments are informed by both, Western (in particular French post-structuralist) and indigenous theorists.

Following Foucault's advice that theories are toolboxes, the concept of 'biopower' is used as the foundational theoretical framework for this project. Not only is this conceptual schema useful in theorizing the historical treatment of indigenous peoples⁴ on Turtle Island by the early settlers, it is similarly useful in understanding the power dynamics of indigenous-settler relations in Canada today. Foucault explains that state

⁴ The term 'indigenous peoples' is problematic insofar as it collectivizes or homogenizes many diverse populations whose experiences of colonialism differ greatly. As Bonita Lawrence (2003) reminds us, “for indigenous people, to be defined as a race is synonymous with having our Nations dismembered” (5). Yet, indigenous peoples also share similar experiences as a network of peoples who have been subjected to the colonization of their cultures and lands, and whose rights to a self-determining autonomy have been denied by a colonizing society (Smith 2008:8). Therefore, I use the term 'indigenous peoples' because it seeks to internationalize the issues, struggles and experiences of some of the world's colonized peoples (Smith 2008:7). It draws attention to imperialism and colonialism as an international phenomenon, requiring international resistance. The final 's' in 'indigenous peoples' is a way of recognizing the differences amongst and multiplicity of the various indigenous populations (ibid). It is also highly politicized in that it implies an inherent right to self-determination (Maaka and Fleras 2005:31). In this sense, it has been given legitimacy to describe the experiences of the original inhabitants (and their descendents) of Turtle Island by the American Indian Movement (AIM) (Smith 2008:7). Unfortunately, the term also eclipses the local specificities of colonialism in favour of a macro-level analysis. However, for the purpose of this particular project in which I attempt to offer a critique of settler colonialism in Canada, a broad analysis seems adequate even if colonial rule may manifest itself differently in distinct contexts and locales.

racism is an instrumental function of the biopolitical state. While it may manifest itself at specific points in time, “racism does not merely arise in moments of crisis, in sporadic cleansings. It is internal to the biopolitical state, woven into the weft of the social body, threaded through its fabric” (Stoler 2006:69). This helps us to understand that the marginalization of indigenous peoples in Canada today is not an anomaly in an otherwise largely egalitarian state – it is instrumental to the continuation of the colonial project.

I begin this chapter by outlining the concept of 'biopower' and subsequently show its applicability to the concepts of race, racism and reproductive control (of which the removal of indigenous children from their communities is but one example). Since Foucault's framework comes with its own limitations I will draw from other theorists, most notably Andrea Smith, to 'fill in the gaps'. This becomes crucial for situating discussions concerning the removal of indigenous children in the context of colonial control as it relates to population management.

Biopower – “State Control of the Biological”

Sovereignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die (Foucault 2003:247).

Foucault illustrates the concept of biopower by situating it in a framework, in which he juxtaposes the punitive power of the pre-modern sovereign with the disciplinary-regulatory power found in the modern⁵ (i.e. liberal) state (Foucault 1990:138-139). He explains that in Western pre-modern societies power was vested in a

⁵ I use the term 'modern' because I wish to stay true to Foucault's own terminology, in which context 'modern state' refers to a liberal democratic society. It is not my intent to evoke the notion that this form of governance is superior to others.

central authority – or sovereign. One of the sovereign's basic powers was the right of life and death (Foucault 2003:240), allowing him/her to decide whether his/her subjects may stay alive or be killed (Foucault 1990:135; 2003:240). The sovereign exercised this right by either exercising the right to kill, or by refraining from killing. In other words, the power of the sovereign was vested in the “right to *take* life or *let* live” (Foucault 1990:136; 138; emphasis in original; see also 2003:241). In this kind of society, social order was enforced through repression and force in which public spectacles of torture and execution served as manifestations of this kind of power (Foucault 2007:7). Foucault (2003) calls this type of political right, the “right of the sword” (240).

In the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries, a more subtle and less spectacular form of power emerged, replacing the punitive power of the sovereign with institutionalized disciplinary power. During this time, techniques of power largely focused on disciplining and controlling the individual body (see Foucault 1995). This is the form of power he sets out in *Discipline and Punish*. In his *Lectures at the Collège de France (1975-1976 and 1977-1978)* and *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault adds more nuance to this type of power.

Foucault explains that with the decline of sovereign power and the shift towards disciplinary regimes, biopower begins to take shape as well. This new technology of power emerged during the second half of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century (see Foucault 2003:242). It is at this time that the theory of political right underwent a great transformation (Foucault 2003:241) accompanying a shift in the mechanisms, techniques, and technologies of power in Western states (Foucault 1990:136; 2003:241; 2007:8). We now experience a situation in which the right of death

has largely been permeated by a life-administering power (Foucault 1990:136) – the “power to *foster* life or *disallow* it to the point of death” (ibid: 138; emphasis in original). This is not to say that the sovereign's old right (i.e. “to take life or let live”) was replaced by this new right (i.e. “to make live and to let die”), but the former came to be complemented and penetrated by the latter (Foucault 2003:241). Similarly, this new form of power does not replace disciplinary technology, nor is it a variant form of discipline – it modifies and complements it to some extent. This is for the reason that this new non-disciplinary technique of power exists at a different level – it is not addressed to “man[sic]-as-body” but to “man[sic]-as-species” (ibid). He writes:

...after a first seizure of power over the body in an individualizing mode, we have a second seizure of power that is not individualizing but, if you like, massifying ... After the anatomo-politics of the human body established in the course of the eighteenth century, we have, at the end of that century, the emergence of something that is no longer an anatomo-politics of the human body, but what I would call a “biopolitics” of the human race (Foucault 2003:243).

We see this “power over life” evolve in two (mutually reinforcing) forms. The first centres on the individual body as a machine, whose functions and performances have to be disciplined (Foucault 1990:139), who can be placed under surveillance, and if necessary, punished (Foucault 2003:242). The second form focuses on the species body, “the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes”, such as birth rate, mortality rate, level of fertility, rate of reproduction, overall level of health, including the conditions that may cause these to vary (Foucault 1990:139; 2003:243). In other words, biopower is concerned with the management of life itself; it is a political technology that “brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge/power an agent of transformation of human

life” (Foucault 1990:143).

Thus, the modern state is concerned with managing the population “through an entire series of interventions and *regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population*” (Foucault 1990:139; emphasis in original). Because this new technology is addressed to a multiplicity of human beings – to the extent that they form “a global mass” (Foucault 2003:242) – we see the emergence of the '*population*' as a conceptual framework and category of concern. Biopolitics treats the population as a set of coexisting beings with specific “biological and pathological features” (Foucault 2007:367). In short, biopolitics is concerned with the population – the population “as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem, and as a power's problem” (Foucault 2003:245; see also 1990:24-25).

A second element new to this era, aside from the appearance of the '*population*', is the nature of the phenomena of concern and the mechanisms of control required to address them. The phenomena central to biopolitics are collective in nature, and pertinent only at the mass level (i.e. the level of the population). They are aleatory events that have to be studied over a certain period of time (Foucault 2003:246). This necessitates the emergence of new mechanisms with particular functions that differ from disciplinary mechanisms. The mechanisms specific to biopolitics include statistical estimates, forecasts, and overall measurements (Foucault 2003:246). The purpose of these mechanisms is not to alter any given phenomenon or an individual human being as such, but to intervene at the level of generality at which these phenomena occur (Foucault 2003:246), without losing sight of the particulars (Foucault 2007:246). For example, it becomes the state's concern to modify the mortality rate, to stimulate the birth rate, and to

increase the life expectancy of the population (Foucault 2003:246). Most importantly, *regulatory* mechanisms must be put in place “to establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis, and compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field” (Foucault 2003:246). The objective of the state is to improve the well-being of the population – to increase its wealth, health, and longevity (Foucault 2007:105). It does so by acting directly (for example, through campaigns to increase the birthrate), or indirectly through techniques that remain hidden from the individuals concerned (Foucault 2007:105). In other words, biopolitics is a matter of taking control over life and the biological processes of the population, while ensuring that individual subjects are not disciplined, but “*regularized*” (Foucault 2003:247; 2007:66; emphasis added). The modern state thus put the concept of the population and the mechanisms for ensuring its regularization at the centre of its concerns (Foucault 2007:365). Biopower is not addressed to the individual body, but to the species as a whole. Its fundamental aim is not the disciplinary technology of individual *dressage*, but a *regularization* of its internal dangers, a “bioregulation by the state” (Foucault 2003:250; Stoler 2006:82).

What becomes essential in a society governed through biopower is the “action of the norm” (Foucault 1990:144; 2007:57) as a corrective and regulatory mechanism. The *norm* is the one element that can circulate between the disciplinary and the regulatory, making it possible to control both the disciplining of the individual body, and regularizing the aleatory events that occur in the biological mass (Foucault 2003:252-253). According to Foucault (2003), a normalizing society is “a society in which the norm of discipline, and the norm of regulation intersect along an orthogonal

articulation...[Power] succeeded in covering the whole surface that lies between the organic and the biological, between body and population” (253). In a normalizing society, the population is distributed (around the norm) according to value and utility (Foucault 1990:144). It divides between those who are considered desirable and those who are not; it divides the normal from the abnormal (Foucault 2007:57), and the good from the bad (ibid:65). Yet it is not the abnormal or normal that is foundational in disciplinary normalization, it is the norm (Foucault 2007:57) with its corresponding distributions of “normality” (ibid:63). The constructions of the abnormal and threatening individual, are both framed within a “theory of social defence” and degeneracy, which will be fundamental to the articulation and manifestation of racism in modern states.

To sum up thus far we can point out that is in the modern state that we witness two technologies of power - the “disciplinary technology of the body” and the “regulatory technology of life” (i.e. biopower) (Foucault 2003:249). Because these two sets of mechanisms – one disciplinary and the other regulatory – do not exist at the same level, one does not replace the other; rather they can be articulated with each other (Foucault 2003:250). Both technologies were established at different times and both were superimposed. The former centres on the body, is disciplinary, and individualizing in effect. The latter centres on biological processes characteristic of human masses, and aims to establish a sort of equilibrium (or 'homeostasis') that safeguards the security of the mass from internal dangers (Foucault 2003:249). Unlike the disciplinary mechanisms employed by particular institutions (e.g. schools, workshops, armies), the management of the “biosociological processes of human masses” involves the state apparatus (Foucault

2007:107).⁶ Liberalism appears as the form of rationality specific to the mechanisms of biopolitical regulation (Foucault 2007:351-353). Foucault (1994) calls this new form of power “one of the great inventions of bourgeois society” because of its superimposition “upon the mechanisms of discipline in such a way as to conceal its actual procedures, the element of domination inherent in its techniques” (219). It is this “technology of power centered on life” that brings about a normalizing society and a new form of racism inscribed within its mechanisms (Stoler 2006:33).

Biopower and State Racism

Once the State functions in the biopower mode, racism alone can justify the murderous function of the State (Foucault 2003:256).

While 'race' and racism are not among Foucault's most well-known areas of inquiry, they are certainly not marginal to his work.⁷ In *The History of Sexuality* he examines how a discourse of sexuality constructs and ultimately incorporates a racist logic. In the *Lectures at the Collège de France (1977-1978)* he attempts to trace a genealogy of 'race', the accompanying forms of racisms,⁸ and explains how the rise of biopower transformed and ultimately inscribed racism in the functioning of the normalizing state (see, in particular, Foucault 2003:254-263).

Foucault turns to the issue of racism by pointing at a basic paradox of the modern state: How does a biopolitical state, a power invested in managing and improving the quality of life, exercise the right to kill? For Foucault (2003), this is the moment in which

⁶ Foucault greatly expands on this idea in the latter part of his *Lectures in 1977-1978* when he turns his attention to the study of 'governmentality'.

⁷ For a similar argument see, for example, Stoler (2006).

⁸ I will refrain from providing a summary of this genealogy as my focus rests on the functions of racism in the biopolitical state.

racism becomes instrumental, in that “racism justifies the death-function in the economy of biopower” (258). He defines racism as a way of introducing a “break between what must live and what must die” (Foucault 2003:254). This allows the state to fragment human beings, “to subdivide the species it controls, into the subspecies known, precisely, as races” (Foucault 2003:255). The first function of racist discourse is the categorization of human beings into “races” (i.e. racialization), the hierarchization of these categories, and their classification as 'good', 'bad', 'fit' and 'degenerate' (ibid). It is therefore within these technologies of power that internal Others will be constructed and state racism will be conceived. This gives rise to a rhetoric around the 'defense of society', which is framed in terms of “an internal war” against internal Others (Foucault 2003:216), who are constructed as the 'abnormal' and 'dangerous'. These internal Others are imagined to threaten the 'health' and 'well-being' of the population and their exclusion is thus deemed necessary. In this reality, the state must function as the defender of the purity, integrity and superiority of the dominant (or 'normal') 'race' (Foucault 2003:66). It must protect the population from the dangers arising from within the social body (Foucault 2003:142).⁹

In a biopolitical state, the imperative to kill is acceptable only if it leads to the eradication of this biological threat and the improvement of the species as a whole. The construct of 'race' or racism is the “indispensable precondition” that makes murderous violence acceptable. Simply put, if the biopolitical state “wished to exercise the old sovereign right to kill, it must become racist” (Foucault 2003:256). Therefore, racism is

⁹ Foucault does not claim that racism was invented by the modern state, nor that it emerged at this point in time. He explains that racism had already been in existence for a long time before the rise of regulatory-disciplinary power. Yet its function differed; racism took on a different form in the modern state (see, for example, Foucault 2003:254).

instrumental for the proper functioning of regulatory-disciplinary power, to the extent that the state can barely function without becoming involved with some form of racism at one point or another (Foucault 2003:254). In this sense, the emergence of biopower inscribed racism in the mechanisms of the normalizing state, in which it then functions as the basic mechanism of power (Foucault 1990:149).

The second function of state racism is to bring the relationship of war into the internal workings of the modern state and establish a *biological* type relationship between 'my life' and 'the life of Other'. This is expressed as a positive correlation between the right to kill (the Other) and the improvement of life (for the dominant majority):

The more inferior species die out, the more abnormal individuals are eliminated, the fewer degenerates there will be in the species as a whole, and the more I – as species rather than individual – can live, the stronger I will be, the more vigorous I will be, I will be able to proliferate...the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or the degenerate, or the abnormal) is something that will make life in general healthier: healthier and purer (Foucault 2003:255).

While this legitimizes murderous violence, the death of the Other may not necessarily mean murder as such. The Other's elimination may also take more subtle forms, such as “indirect murder”, for example, by “increasing the risk of death” (Foucault 2003:256), or eradication through “political death, expulsion, rejection” (ibid). Jonathan Inda (2002) calls this latter form of elimination the 'social death' (104) of the internal Other. This more common form of exclusionary practice in contemporary society functions through marginalization, criminalization and often incarceration (Inda 2002:104). Andrea Smith (2006) reminds us that in a settler colonial context, the elimination (literally and figuratively) of the indigenous population may be accompanied by the settler society's

denial of their existence. She explains that according to this logic, “indigenous peoples must disappear” and in truth “must *always* be disappearing” (2006:68; emphasis in original) to allow the non-indigenous settlers to imagine themselves as the rightful owners of the land. Indigenous peoples may therefore be rendered a “permanent 'present absence'” in the colonial imagination (Shanley in Smith 2006:68; see also Smith 2005:9). Rendering indigenous peoples 'invisible' is one way to justify their continued marginalization. This allows the colonizing society to envisage itself as rightfully appropriating everything that is and was indigenous, such as land, resources, spirituality, and culture.¹⁰

The state may thus employ a variety of techniques to eliminate the Other, ranging from acts of genocide, barring access to positions of power, even pro-natalist campaigns aimed at stimulating the birthrate of desired segments in the population.¹¹ Whether the death be literal or social, the logic is the same in that the elimination or exclusion of some is deemed to ensure the well-being of others.

Biopower, Settler Colonialism and Reproductive Control

While Foucault analyzes biopower and state racism primarily as an internal function of the modern state,¹² we can easily discern the applicability of these concepts to colonial contexts. We can speculate that it is precisely in these circumstances that state

¹⁰ It is not my intention to imply that these strategies take the same shape or form, nor that they are employed equally, in all colonial contexts.

¹¹ See, for example, Krull, Catherine (2003) for an examination of pro-natalist campaign's in Quebec in the 1990's. See also Bannerji, Himani (2000) for an elaboration on the racial connotations of pro-natalist campaigns in Canada.

¹² Colonialism is not central to Foucault's analytical concerns (Stoler 2006:28) as he largely focuses on the internal divisions in European societies and the rationale behind exposing the state's own citizens to death (rather than colonial violence which involves the subjugation of 'external' Others).

racism may take its most virulent form. This is for the reason that racism manifests itself at certain “privileged moments” where murderous violence is required (Foucault 2003:257). This certainly seems to be the case with colonization and colonizing genocide that is rendered indispensable to the success of the colonial project itself. As Ann Stoler (2006) points out, in the nineteenth century, “race” becomes the organizing logic of an imperial order, in which ideas of modernity and the civilizing mission were conceived (27). Western fantasies of cultural superiority not only rationalized the conquest of the Americas, but furnished “the psychological scaffolding” for the oppressive structures of colonial rule (Stoler 2006:27), imagining the West as rightful ruler and colonizer (Foucault 2003:78).

Colonialism may come in varying formations and structures. In Canada, the occupation of Turtle Island took the form of settler colonialism. Zureik (2010) explains that settler colonialism involves the occupation and permanent settlement of a territory or country (2). These large-scale undertakings often involve “the displacement and at times extermination of the indigenous population, whose status was reduced from a majority to a minority – if not in numbers, at least in terms of power relations” (Zureik 2010:3). The initial process of colonization then becomes normalized and institutionalized so as to create an oppressive framework that ensures the continued exploitation of indigenous peoples (and their descendants) to the benefit of the colonial settler society.¹³ While the

¹³ I acknowledge that there are vast differences amongst settlers, based on race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, and so on. It is not my intent to claim that every settler benefits from the theft of indigenous land and resources equally. There are very real differences in power relations amongst the settler society and I do not wish to trivialize these intersecting forms of oppression. I also recognize that members of the settler society may even be dispossessed indigenous peoples from other parts of the world. Thus, when I refer to 'the settler society', unless stated otherwise, I have in mind those who belong to the dominant majority – usually the “white and most often British settlers” (Mackey 2003:89) and their descendants.

colonial violence enacted upon indigenous peoples today may differ from the violence during the initial phases of colonization, Canada remains colonial in effect, complete with its legislative and administrative infrastructure. Canadian society continues to function according to the “colonization principle” (Gordon 2008:xix) – a commitment to administer and manage the lives of the people, normalize colonization, and exploit the land's resources.¹⁴ Nandy points out that a colonial state may move through different phases of colonization, from “rapacious bandit-kings” to “well-meaning middle class liberals” (quoted in Smith 2008:44).¹⁵ Each phase is driven by differing ideologies and economic needs (Smith 2008:44; Stevenson 1999:49). Yet it remains a colonialism based on white supremacy and fuelled by global capitalism (Cannon 2011), with real consequences for the people being colonized.

It is particularly in a *settler-colonial* context that the death of the internal Other becomes pivotal. Indeed, the success of the colonial endeavor is intimately bound up with it, since the settler society must “destroy to replace” (Wolfe 2006:390). Let us recall that racism is “not an *effect* but a *tactic* in the internal fission of society into binary oppositions, a means of creating 'biologized' internal enemies, against whom society must defend itself” (Stoler 2006:59; emphasis in original).¹⁶ The discursive construction

14 It is not my intent here to enter into an in-depth discussion whether Canada remains a colonial state or constitutes a largely egalitarian post-colonial society. My argumentation rests on the premise that Canada remains colonial in effect and I may refer the reader to: Green, Joyce A. 1995. “Towards a Detente with History: Confronting Canada's Colonial Legacy.” *International Journal of Canadian Studies*. (12)

15 See also, Turner (2006) for an examination of the liberal discourses prevalent in Canadian society that continue to reinforce settler colonialism. Similarly, Sherene Razack (1998) explains how a modern liberal discourse of justice and equal rights simultaneously hides and creates hegemonic relations along the intersections of race, gender, and class.

16 I recognize the existence of multiple forms of oppression and categorizations. It is surely too simplistic to represent a colonial society in terms of a binary solely based on race. The process of colonization is also a fundamentally gendered and sexualized project (Smith 2005). Morgensen (2010), for example, points out how colonization constructed indigenous peoples “as queer populations marked for death” (102). However, at this point I merely wish to draw attention to the function of race in marking who would be colonized and who would be the one colonizing (see also Deliovisky 2010:39).

of indigenous peoples as a threat to the well-being of the colonizer, and narratives of “incessant purification” (Smith 2005), justified and continue to justify the subjugation and annihilation of indigenous populations. As Andrea Smith (2005) so aptly puts it, in a colonial society, the creation of the internal Other is effected “through the metaphorical transformation of Native bodies into a pollution of which the colonial body must constantly purify itself” (9). The colonial mindset renders indigenous bodies inherently dirty and tainted by sexual sin (Smith 2005:10), which provides a reason and simultaneously a justification for the use of violence against them. Through this, indigenous peoples are rendered “inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable” (Smith 2008:312).

In such a context, it is not only the death of the internal Other that “will make life in general healthier” (Foucault 2003:255) for the settler society. Control over and regulation of the Other's reproduction becomes equally crucial in the eyes of the dominant majority (ibid). To ensure the success of the colonial project, the settler society must not only strive for the elimination of the indigenous populations but simultaneously needs to establish a new social body on the expropriated land base (Wolfe 2006). The management of reproduction, while a concern to any state that works according to a biopolitical rationale (see Foucault 2003:246; 1996:139), is foundational to a settler-colonial state. Not only is the mere existence of indigenous peoples threatening to the well-being of the settler society – indeed their existence serves as a constant reminder of the precarious nature of the colonial nation state – their reproduction is in fact counterproductive to the colonial project (Smith 2006; Wolfe 2006:390). Just as the elimination of the Other is constructed as necessary to ensure the well-being of the

dominant majority (Foucault 2003:66), the practices of biopower similarly construct the (physical and cultural) reproduction of the Native-as-Other as problematic. This warrants the regulation or outright prevention of indigenous peoples' reproduction. Naturally, the opposite is true as well in that valuable segments of the population are encouraged to reproduce (Bannerji 2000). In this sense, the role of the “reluctant breeder” is usually forced onto white (preferably middle-class) women, since they are part of the dominant majority and therefore responsible for “counterbalancing” the non-white populations (Bannerji 2000:69). It is them who are encouraged to reproduce to facilitate the process of white nation-building (Deliofsky 2010).

Reproductive control is further intimately connected to sexuality. As Stoler (2006) points out technologies of sex are crucial to the mechanisms of biopower, in that sex occupies the “discursive interface, linking the life of the individual to the life of the species as a whole” (4). Sexuality is subject to disciplinary control as it pertains to the individual, but must also be regularized at the level of the population (Foucault 2003:251-252), since this allows control not only over the growth and health of the social body as such but also of the internal make-up of the population. The disciplinary and regulatory management of the sexual practices of both, colonizer and colonized are foundational to “the colonial order of things” (Stoler 2006:4). Unregulated sexuality constitutes a threat to the social body. Foucault explains that a bourgeois discourse of sexuality (or technologies of sex) furthermore provides a cultural susceptibility for racism. In the nineteenth century, technologies of sex most fully articulate a racist logic by drawing on the pseudo-scientific theory of degeneracy (Foucault 1990:118-119), which ultimately entrenched the relationship between racism and sexuality (Stoler

2006:31). The theory of degeneracy ascribed abnormality on individual bodies, portraying particular deviations from the norm as both internal dangers to the population and as inheritable legacies that pose a threat to the well-being of the race (Foucault 1977:204 in Stoler 2006:31). As Stoler (2006) points out, we can see variations of this theory in colonial contexts. Notions of degeneracy were directed at both the colonized populations at large and the “racially-hybrid” offspring within the European colonial body (Stoler 2006: 32).

Such a conceptual framework provides us with the tools to analyze indigenous-settler relations in Canada from a new angle. We can see that the violence inflicted on indigenous peoples during the initial stages of colonization, such as outright slaughter (Stevenson 1999:2), the distribution of infested blankets (Churchill 2001), forced starvation (Franks 2000:8; Lawrence 2004:31), and sexual violence (Weaver 2009), were attempts by the settler society to eliminate the Native-as-Other. We can further make sense of contemporary indigenous-settler relations, whereby indigenous peoples have become 'internal enemies'. Their elimination is now largely ensured through 'indirect murder' by 'increasing the risk of death' or assimilation into the colonial body. This may be facilitated by subjecting indigenous peoples to a poverty stricken existence (which entails inadequate housing, nutritional deficiencies, and related diseases) (NWAC 2006), environmental racism (see, for example, Dhillon and Young 2011), inadequate access to medical resources including pre-natal care (as is the case with many remote reserves) (see, for example, Keenan Research Centre 2009). It also involves their 'social death' through marginalization, exclusion from political and economic decision-making that directly affects their lives, or simply incarceration (Monture-Angus 1995). While

'indirect murder' is certainly the more accepted form of colonial violence in a liberal state, 'direct murder' is certainly not a thing of the past. The many murdered and missing indigenous women are but a gruesome reminder of 'direct murder'-as-tactic that continues on today (see, for example, NWAC 2010). Similarly, certain policies, such as the recent elimination of funding by the federal government to agencies addressed to combat this femicide (such as Sisters in Spirit), continue to 'increase the risk of death' for indigenous women and thus ensure their continued elimination. This further illustrates the gendered nature of colonialism (see Smith 2005; 2008), which will be discussed shortly.

Cultural genocide, and in particular the removal of indigenous children from their communities, has also been an integral part in the state's efforts to control indigenous reproduction (see, for example, Churchill 2004; Johnston 1983; RCAP 1996; Walmsley 2005). During each new era of indigenous-settler relations, the settler society created a new reason and corresponding tactic to remove indigenous children (Fournier and Crey 1998:17). Be it through residential schooling, foster care, or adoption – each strategy ensured a disruption of indigenous kinship relations (ibid) and a simultaneous strengthening of the colonial body. These tactics bestow the responsibility for indigenous children on the colonial state, which not only naturalizes colonial control, but also constitutes an attempt to assimilate indigenous children into the colonial society. It is an ingenious tactic – it eliminates the internal Other while strengthening the health and well-being of the colonial population. In the language of biopolitical control, assimilating indigenous children means that the offspring of a subject peoples generally 'marked for death' become 'marked for life' as part of the colonial body. All of these strategies of control are variations of a technique of power that works according to a biopolitical

rationale, ultimately upholding and entrenching a heteropatriarchal, white-supremacist colonial order as the normalizing logic of Canadian society. The next chapter will discuss the strategies that focus on the removal of indigenous children in more detail.

There certainly are limitations to Foucault's theoretical paradigms. His analyses are fundamentally euro-centric¹⁷ and thus his selective Europe-bound genealogies of sexuality, race and racism may seem inadequate when applied to various colonial contexts. In his discussions of state racism in particular, two crucial analytical concepts are missing from his account – namely gender and empire/colonialism. His non-gendered analysis is somewhat perplexing given that disciplinary and regulatory techniques of power certainly affect(ed) women differently than men. Moral regulation in the name of bourgeois respectability (such as surveillance of sexuality, norms of motherhood), labels of pathology and deviance, racial supremacy and colonial control were always enacted differently on the bodies of women – in particular racialized women¹⁸ (Stoler 2006:93).

Colonialism, in particular, is a fundamentally *gendered* project. As Pei-Chia Lan (2008) puts it, “control of women's sexuality and reproduction is fundamental to the discourses and practices of nationalism and colonialism” (835). Smith (2005) takes this notion a step further and points out that the success of the colonial project is in many ways *dependent* on the subjugation of indigenous women (15-23). By drawing on the writings of Paula Gunn Allen, she argues that in order to colonize a people whose society was not hierarchically structured, the value of hierarchy had to be instilled and naturalized (Smith 2005:23). Indigenous peoples would not continue to tolerate colonial

17 For a sophisticated critique see, for example, Spivak (1988).

18 For a gendered analysis of the connections between sexuality, race and biopower see, for example, Stoler (2010).

domination if their own societies were not hierarchically structured (Smith 2008:312). Therefore, she writes, “it has been through sexual violence and through the imposition of European gender relationships on Native communities that Europeans were able to colonize Native peoples” (Smith 2005:139). Naturalizing heteropatriarchy translates into naturalizing social hierarchy in general (e.g. man over woman; nation-state elites over citizens; settler over Native) (Smith 2008:312).¹⁹ The success of instilling heteropatriarchy largely rested and continues to rest on gender violence (Smith 2008:312; 2005:10), as well as the regulation of indigenous sexuality and gender behaviour (Smith 2005:12). It is in this sense that sexual violence against indigenous women is seen as primary tool of colonialism and heteropatriarchy; the massacres of indigenous peoples always went hand in hand with sexual mutilation and rape (Smith 2008:312).

While it is impossible to determine whether all, if any, indigenous societies were egalitarian, a variety of sources suggest that traditional kinship, family, and gender relations changed drastically through the intrusion of colonialism. Some authors argue that many pre-colonial indigenous communities were indeed structured communally and non-hierarchically (see Allen 1992), while some are said to have been organized along matrilineal lines (Miheuah 2003:44), or were in varying degrees women-centred (Stewart-Harawira 2007; Emberley 2001:63). Gender roles are often described as less rigid in such contexts (Smith 2005:178), sometimes fluid (D'Anglure 2005:134) with considerable movement of sexes between genders (Allen 1992:196), and/or equally valued (Emberley 2001:63). Other societies are said to have rejected this binary altogether and revered individuals who identified as two-spirited (Gilley 2006). It is

¹⁹ Further, because heteropatriarchy rests on a binary gender system the colonizers targeted those indigenous peoples who did not neatly fit into the binary (see, for example, Morgensen 2010).

widely accepted that women had political and economic decision-making power (see Leigh 2009) and important spiritual roles (Allen 1992). Yet, the pressing issue here is not how the various indigenous communities were previously structured, but to point out that colonial authorities imposed their own hierarchical structures onto indigenous communities (however they were organized), and that this re-structuring was instrumental to the continued success of the colonial project (Leigh 2009:73; Jaimes Guerrero 2003). This similarly applies to the Canadian context, where indigenous women were rendered marginal through the introduction of patriarchal and heteronormative gender relations (Stevenson 1999; Silman 1987) and the forced proliferation of such relations through patriarchal laws (Lawrence 2004:51). This re-structuring continues to affect the communal structures of many indigenous nations (Green 2007) and the day-to-day lives of many individuals (Anderson and Lawrence 2006).²⁰

Methodological Considerations

By claiming that the word “research’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary”, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) reminds us of the intimate connection between academic research and European imperialism and colonialism (1). This form of knowledge production is one of the ways in which the underlying logics of colonialism and imperialism are “regulated and realized” (Smith 2008:7). Newly acquired colonies served as the “laboratories of Western science”, while the theories generated from the exploitation and exploration of the colonies and the subjugated people living within them, “formed the totalizing appropriation of the Other” (Smith 2008:39;

²⁰ From this it follows that decolonization is not only an anti-colonial, but also an anti-heteropatriarchal project (see, for example, Smith 2005:137).

see also Said 1978:2). Even today, Western research 'on' and 'about' indigenous peoples continues to be an agent in the construction of the Other and a vehicle for the dissemination of 'knowledge' about indigenous peoples. At the very least, in its objectification (and thus dehumanization) of the Other, Western research has produced a certain relationship to indigenous peoples that remains problematic.

It is thus almost impossible to think about indigenous peoples and research methodology, without paying attention to the myriad ways in which “the pursuit of knowledge is deeply embedded in the multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices” (Smith 2008:2). Theories, methodologies, and research methods need to be 'decolonized' (Smith 2008:39). This does not necessarily mean a rejection of Western theory or research methods as such. Yet, research methodologies, the methods employed, the theoretical frameworks that inform them, and the research questions asked, all comprise important factors that have to be considered critically and carefully before being utilized.

Coming to this project as a white settler who was and continues to be educated in Western institutions, I know I have to tread lightly. The academic 'disciplines' in which I was schooled are reliant upon cultural worldviews that are either opposed to other knowledge systems or have no way of adequately making sense of them. I therefore agree with Smith's (2008) notion that those of us who were trained and educated in Western institutions and steeped in Western traditions, are 'inheritors of imperialism'. Western philosophies, knowledges, and ethics form what Foucault (1972) calls a cultural 'archive' or what Smith (2008) refers to as a 'storehouse' of “histories, artefacts, ideas, texts and/or images, which are classified, preserved, arranged and represented back to the West” (44). This storehouse contains certain 'rules of practice' (Foucault 1972) which

largely remain hidden to the West, because it operates within them and takes them for granted. Similarly, ideas about research and methodology are grounded in a Western system of representation and classification. These sets of ideas are “coded in such ways as to 'recognize' each other and either mesh together, or create a cultural 'force field' which can screen out competing and oppositional discourses” (Smith 2008:47), resulting in material consequences for marginalized people. As Susan Strega (2005) points out, the hegemony of the Western worldview means it is more than simply another way to interpret the world. Rather, it is constructed as the most legitimate way to interpret the world. In the same vein, Western scientific knowledge is often positioned as the best kind of knowledge. Within the social sciences, positivism and its quantitative research methods, may be upheld as the 'gold standard' with which to discover social science “truth” and through which “proof” can be assessed (Strega 2005:228).²¹

I would be hesitant to say that I can ever fully escape my 'Western storehouse' of epistemological and ontological commitments. Yet even though this struggle will always be incomplete, post-structuralist critiques (while itself a result of this tradition) enable me to deconstruct and transcend at least some of these assumptions.²² It further acts as a bridge to some indigenous ways of knowing, which are often described as more fluid (Little Bear 2000), fundamentally relational (Wilson 2008) and reciprocal (Kovach 2005). Opposed to the illusory idea of the objective, detached, rational and impartial

21 This is for the reason that positivism assumes that there exists a rational, objective, and impartial subject that can discover truth by the application of reason. Positivist explanations are considered 'provable' and 'factual' and thus believed to produce 'verifiable knowledge' (Strega 2005:200-210). This framework, however, is questioned by researchers whose epistemological and methodological commitments regard “truth” as always partial, multiple and perspectival (ibid:228).

22 Smith (2008) points out that the idea of multiple discourses and contested stories (a notion central to poststructuralism) has always been familiar to indigenous peoples (although it has now been claimed by postmodern theories), since this is embedded in the experiences and politics of day-to-day indigenous life (33).

researcher, some indigenous theorists claim that the researcher, research project, and methods used, are intimately connected. The researcher is always imbedded in the project insofar as it is part of her. The research practice always reflects the cultural values and ideas of the researcher (Wilson 2008:6). There is also a sense of collectivity (Kovach 2005:30) and accountability to bring about change (Wilson 2008:37). According to Shawn Wilson (2008), “right or wrong; validity; statistically significant; worthy or unworthy: value judgements lose their meaning. What is more important and meaningful is fulfilling a role and obligations in the research relationship – that is, being accountable to your relations” (77). He further explains that research is “a ceremony” for the purpose of “improving your relationship with an idea” (2008:110). Similarly, Krystal Summers (2011) contends that research is always ongoing. It has no cut-off point, and as she so beautifully puts it, “research is spirit.”

Discourse and Power

Has not the practice of revolutionary discourse and scientific discourse ... over the past two hundred years freed you from this idea that words are wind, an external whisper, a beating of wings that one has difficulty in hearing in the serious matter of history (Foucault 1977:209)?

For the purpose of this project, a discourse analysis was chosen as the appropriate research methodology. It should be noted that “discourse” is a term with multiple interpretations and meanings.²³ My understanding of the term is informed by Paul Bové’s (1995) definition who explains it to be the “organized and regulated, as well as the

²³ For a brief overview of some of these varying meanings see Strega, Susan. 2005. “The View from the Poststructural Margins.” *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous, and Anti-oppressive Approaches*. Ed Leslie Brown and Susan Strega. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press. pp. 215-220

regulating and constituting, functions of language” (54).²⁴ Discourse constitutes a normalized and normalizing way of thinking. It reveals and shapes perceptions and its function is to transform our environment into one that is socially and culturally meaningful (Blommaert 2005:44). Similarly, power relations are enacted and naturalized through discourse. Power, language, institutions and social practices intersect to create specific ways of thinking, acting, and being (Foucault 1977). Foucault draws attention to the interconnectedness of knowledge, power, discourse and “truth claims” and explains this as follows:

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctified; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as truth (Foucault 1977:131).

Knowledge and “truth” are a product of discourse and power relations. Indeed, knowledge and power are so intimately connected that, according to Foucault (1977), only the term “power/knowledge” can adequately describe it. Discourse always entails a struggle over whose claims 'count' and who can speak 'truth'. Hegemonic discourses and subordinate or 'illegitimate' discourses are simultaneously constructed through “sanctioning, including, excluding, valuing, and devaluing of certain concepts, ideas, language, and worlds” (Strega 2005:219) by those who claim to speak with authority. The denial or concealment of dominance by the dominant majority similarly acts as a way to reproduce unequal power relations (van Dijk 1993:250). Therefore, discourse is

²⁴ Many theorists, such as Bloemmart (2005), fashion a much broader definition of 'discourse' as comprising all forms of semiotic activity of which language is but one manifestation (3). However, for this project the narrower definition suffices, in particular because what concerns me is the *function* of discourse.

not so much an ideological product, but rather a *tactic* of a technology of power/knowledge (Foucault 1990:125).

Scholars versed in feminist critical race theory, such as Patricia Hill Collins (2000) and Sherene Razack (1998), have drawn attention to the discursive constructions of race and racist ideology through language. Racist and colonial ideologies offer truth claims concerning historical relations, why present inequalities exist, why they justifiably exist, and the social classifications on which the future will be based (Stoler 2006: 91). Such ideological formations can only be sustained through a constant reproduction and justification that rests upon the supposed inferiorization of the Other. Yet, a framework that rest upon the marginalization of the indigenous-as-Other is also inherently fragile. Zureik (2010) explains that the process of Othering is always unstable: “it must be constantly fed by the illusory inferiority of the Other – and is thus constantly at the risk of being discredited” (5). Discourse is instrumental in the continued construction and reproduction of this ideological framework (van Dijk 1993:192). It is here that unequal power relations are produced, reproduced, challenged, and transformed (Fairclough 1992:10).²⁵

In this sense, a discursive analysis goes beyond a mere textual analysis. It certainly does entail a search for “patterns within language in use” yet, also extends to the 'extra-discursive' (Taylor 2001:6-8). It sees discourse as a reflection of wider social and cultural processes, including its structures of inequality and domination. It is a way to make 'truth claims' visible and problematize what is usually accepted as “common

²⁵ I do not mean to imply that there is a clear causal relationship in the sense that discourse is the major vehicle for the reproduction of domination, yet it is certainly implicated in this process.

sense.”²⁶ Thus, a discursive analysis may act as a sort of looking glass into the normalizing narratives present in society, since discourse is the locale where knowledge and power intersect (Foucault 1990:100-101).

From my definition of discourse and my understanding that power cannot be divorced from discourse, it comes to no surprise that my analysis falls into the realms of a *critical* discourse analysis (CDA). Van Dijk (1993) points out that CDA primarily deals with the discursive dimension of power abuse and the inequalities that are naturalized and reproduced. Such a discourse analysis, therefore, intersects with sociopolitical analysis (van Dijk 1993:252). This approach was chosen because it not only allows me to examine the justifications put forth by the settler society for the continued removal of indigenous children, but it is also a way to connect these narratives to a larger colonial project. Unlike other forms of discourse analysis, the aim of such an approach is not to add to a specific discipline or paradigm, but its motivation is tied to issues of social justice. The work of a critical discourse analyst thus becomes ultimately political. Similarly, my project acts as a critique of those structures and actors that normalize settlement and colonial control. My approach to this project may thus be criticized as being 'politically motivated', and hence 'partial' and 'unscientific'. Yet, it needs pointing out that those scholars who condemn or discredit mixing 'politics' with scholarship, thereby do just that. In particular, many “male or white scholars have been shown to despise or discredit such partisanship, and thereby show how partisan they are in the first place, e.g. by ignoring, mitigating, or excluding or denying inequality” (van Dijk

²⁶ I am using this term in the Gramscian sense, referring to dominant ideology that has become consensual or popular knowledge. It is taken for granted, remains unconscious and hence unquestioned. 'Common sense' plays a role in maintaining the status quo in so far as inequalities come to appear as natural and normal (see Hall 1977).

1993:253). Research is always embedded in a complex web of political and social conditions (Smith 2008:5). Neutral research is non-existent. It is always strategic and serves a purpose. In the words of Hampton:

Emotionless, passionless, abstract, intellectual research is a goddam lie, it does not exist. It is a lie to ourselves and a lie to other people. Humans – feeling, living, breathing, thinking humans – do research. When we try to cut ourselves off at the neck and pretend an objectivity that does not exist in the human world, we become dangerous, to ourselves first, and then to the people around us (quoted in Wilson 2008:56).

Methods

My research method involves a qualitative approach to critical discourse analysis. The object of study are newspaper articles and editorials, the content of which constitutes my empirical data. I analyse the content of these articles and editorials to tease out the 'truth claims' and underlying messages they are conveying. I further highlight those justifications that are informed by ideological assumptions (which are usually not explicitly stated) about the indigenous-as-Other. This allows me to connect how these discourses normalize settlement and ultimately uphold colonial control.

My research questions may be articulated as follows. What are the narratives that justify and/or normalize the removal of indigenous children by the settler society? How is the relationship between child welfare and indigenous peoples represented? How are indigenous women and mothers represented? Are indigenous fathers constructed in particular ways? What do these discourses reveal about indigenous children? Most importantly, how do all these different narratives intersect to normalize settler colonialism and heteropatriarchal control?

I chose to focus my analysis on media discourses because language is not a

“neutral information-carrying vehicle” (Taylor 2001:6) and newspapers in particular are not conveying objective truths (van Dijk 1991). The news media functions as a conveyor of what is considered 'newsworthy', lending it a sort of influence and authority, and simultaneously acts as a disseminator of hegemonic views (van Dijk 1991). This medium further plays an important role in the contemporary constructions of the Other. It enables the consumption of this construction, legitimizes it, and embeds it as part of common sense (Jiwani 2005:1). Thus, the news media takes part in the management of social representation (van Dijk 1993:257).

The newspaper articles and editorials were taken from four major provincial newspapers, in two provinces. Two of those newspapers come from Alberta and the other two from Manitoba. In Alberta, the newspapers selected were the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald*. The Manitoban newspapers analysed were the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun*. These newspapers were selected because they had the highest circulation (with the exception of the *Brandon Sun*) at the time this research was conducted.²⁷ Furthermore, each of these newspapers offer daily editions and are located in a different municipality. This ensures that these four newspapers reach a large audience and cover a broad geographical region. It may thus be speculated that the *Brandon Sun*, the *Winnipeg Free Press*, the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* reflect the voices and represent the interests of a significant number of people.²⁸

The *Winnipeg Free Press* is printed in Winnipeg (the capital of Manitoba) and

27 The *Brandon Sun* is the only newspaper included in this project that has the 3rd highest number of circulation in its province, following the *Winnipeg Sun* with the 2nd highest circulation (after the *Winnipeg Free Press*). However, I chose the *Brandon Sun* over the *Winnipeg Sun* in favour of covering another geographic region outside from Winnipeg.

28 Implied in this statement is the assumption that the content of the newspaper articles actually tells me something about the wider social practices in these two provinces.

published six days a week for delivery to subscribers and single-copy retail, averaging a circulation of approximately 740,000²⁹ per week. On Sundays the *Winnipeg Free Press* publishes a tabloid size edition for single-copy retail only. The *Brandon Sun* is printed in Brandon (the second largest city in Manitoba) and publishes seven days a week with an average circulation of 106,400 copies per week. Both newspapers are well established. The *Winnipeg Free Press* was founded in 1872 (which makes it the oldest newspaper in Western Canada) and the *Brandon Sun* in 1882 (the year the City of Brandon was formerly established). While the *Brandon Sun* is a less widely circulated newspaper, it is the principal newspaper in western Manitoba. Interestingly, the *Brandon Sun* and *Winnipeg Free Press* are owned by the same corporation – FP Canadian Newspapers Inc.³⁰

The Calgary Herald, published seven days a week (and printed in Calgary), circulates over 900,000 copies per week. The *Edmonton Journal*, printed in Edmonton, is also published seven days a week with a circulation averaging 731,700 copies per week. *The Edmonton Journal* and the *Calgary Herald* are both owned by Postmedia Network Inc. This corporation was founded in 2010 and is comprised of the publishing properties of the now bankrupt CanWest Global Communications Corporation. It is interesting to note that the ownership group of Postmedia Network Inc. was formed by prominent conservative Paul Godfrey. This corporation, which owns many other major Canadian

29 Excluded from this estimate is the Sunday edition, for which circulation numbers are not publicly available. The circulation number per week would thus be considerably higher if this number were to be included.

30 FP Canadian Newspapers Inc. also owns the Canstar Community News division, which publishes eight community newspapers with a combined circulation averaging 200,000, as well as a Manitoban printing and publishing business.

newspapers,³¹ is undoubtedly influenced by mainstream conservative political values (Jiwani 2005:3).

For the purpose of this analysis I considered online and print editions that appeared within a one-year time frame (January 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010) from all four newspapers. A search was carried out with the following criteria. For an article or editorial to be considered, it had to contain at least one of these keywords: “aboriginal”, “native”, “indigenous”, “first nation”. Within these articles, the search was then refined to those that bore any relation to the child welfare system. The search terms used were “foster care”, “child welfare”, “child intervention”, and further refined with, “mother”, “father”, “child”, “man or men”, and “woman or women”. Because each province has a different wording to describe their child welfare authorities, I searched for “children and youth services” and “child and family services” in Alberta and Manitoba respectively. After eliminating duplicates, the total number of articles and editorials identified was 198, with a considerably greater amount stemming from Manitoba (see Appendix A for more detailed information).³²

Alberta and Manitoba were chosen for several reasons. These two provinces are home to a comparatively large number of indigenous peoples. Similarly, the overrepresentation of indigenous children in provincial care is quite pronounced in both

31 This media conglomerate further owns the *National Post*, *The Gazette*, the *Regina Leader-Post*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, *The StarPhoenix*, the *Times-Colonist*, the *Windsor Star*, the *Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*, The Van Net Newspaper Group (which includes twelve regional newspapers), six community newspapers, four magazines, and eleven websites (including Canada.com). Among other corporations, Paul Godfrey is also on the board of directors of Astral Media Inc. - the largest radio broadcaster in Canada (including 83 radio stations across eight provinces), multiple television stations, and a provider of outdoor advertising (through billboards). It may thus be hypothesized that the discourses expressed through these channels have a far-reaching impact.

32 It is interesting to note that while the aforementioned search criteria led to a far greater amount of newspaper articles from Manitoba than Alberta, the narratives that emerged were (for the most part) equally present in both provinces.

provinces. These factors, however, are not unique to those two prairie provinces. A comparatively high number of indigenous peoples live in all western provinces, while the overrepresentation of indigenous children in care is a nation-wide concern (see Gough et al. 2005). Yet, these provinces were not chosen randomly. In comparison to the rest of Canada, Alberta has often been the province to introduce novel policies in relation to child welfare. Therefore, when a report was released in June 2010 urging the Albertan government to make changes to the child welfare system, I anticipated much debate in the media, including policy discussions. The report of concern was released by an external review panel (Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel 2010) that had conducted a year-long study of Alberta's child intervention system. It explicitly identified the need for changes to be made within the system to address the ever increasing number of indigenous children and youth in provincial care. Among other recommendations, it suggests that the province establish a branch dedicated to deal exclusively with indigenous families and their children (see Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel 2010). Manitoba was partially chosen because it is the province with the highest number of indigenous children in care (see Gough et al. 2005). I thus anticipated that colonial discourses aimed at justifying and normalizing this overrepresentation may be particularly visible in this province. Moreover, in May 2010 a private report was leaked in which Manitoba's children's advocate describes the provincial child welfare system to be “in a state of chaos” (see Canadian Press 2010). This statement proved to be very controversial and generated much debate, even though the actual report was never made public. This particular quote was repeated again and again, leading to this controversy to be played out in the media. Its alleged content was defended or denied, and by extension,

the Manitoban child welfare system was either criticized or defended. This controversy polarized the discourses around child welfare in relation to indigenous peoples and was thus quite useful for my purposes.

Before turning to the next chapter, I should clarify that I assume Manitoba and Alberta to offer roughly comparable contexts within which to analyse normalizing discourses of settler colonialism. I further regard the findings revealed in the discourses of these two provinces as indicative of sentiments found in Canadian society at large. This means I assume that the discourses prevalent in these two provinces extend beyond the provincial boundaries. I see these provincial discourses as examples or potential case studies, of a larger, nation-wide discourse on the place of indigenous peoples in Canadian society.

My approach is biased in another sense, in that it focuses exclusively on the discourses of the dominant majority and how these discourses naturalize settler colonialism. By doing so I exclude counter-narratives and forms of resistance. This, however, does not mean I see power unilaterally imposed or indigenous peoples as 'helpless victims'. A more complete analysis of the power structures in Canada would certainly have to take these aspects into account.

Conclusion

The overall purpose of this chapter was to lay out my theoretical tools, elaborate on my methodological commitments, and provide a detailed account of the research methods utilized in this project. Having laid out that the elimination of the Native-as-Other is crucial in a colonial state (Smith 2005:9) that works according to a biopolitical

rationale (see Foucault 2003:255), I now turn to a discussion of some of the strategies that may be employed for such an end. The focus of Chapter Three is the large-scale removal of indigenous children by the Canadian settler society. I begin this chapter by examining the residential school system, which is followed by an examination of the “Sixties Scoop”. I then turn to an analysis of contemporary child welfare practices and conclude that, in relation to indigenous peoples, the child welfare system continues to operate in such a way that remains colonial in effect.

Chapter Three

Contextualizing Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Child 'Welfare'

According to Article 2 of the UN 1948 Convention on Genocide,

Genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group* (emphasis added).

Such a definition applies to a range of biopolitical strategies of colonial control. Indeed, it can make sense of a whole spectrum of tactics ranging from deadly violence and biological *warfare* to contemporary practices of child '*welfare*'. While there are many strategies that the Canadian settler state has employed and continues to employ to ensure colonial control,³³ the focus of this chapter centres on those that involve the removal of indigenous children from their communities. As Fournier and Crey (1998) point out, during each new era of indigenous-settler relations, the settler society fashioned a new reason and corresponding tactic to transfer indigenous children from their nations to the colonial body (17). Different than the colonial strategies that are eliminatory through deadly eradication (such as the femicide of indigenous women³⁴), this strategy functions to eradicate indigenous peoples by separating the children from their communities and absorbing them into the settler society (LaDuke 2003; Chrichlow 2003). The practice of child removal has at its core assimilatory aspirations for indigenous children (Blackstock,

³³ See Chapter Two for a brief discussion of these strategies.

³⁴ See, for example, NWAC/Sisters in Spirit (2010).

Brown and Bennett 2007; Chrichlow 2003). The underlying purpose is not only to sever the bond between indigenous children and their families, but also to transform the child into an element that reifies the colonial project. It is an ingenious tactic – it eliminates the internal Other while strengthening the health and well-being of the colonial population.

The strategies that will be discussed in this chapter include the removal of indigenous children through residential schooling, the “Sixties Scoop” and contemporary child welfare policies and practices.³⁵ Thus, the aim of this chapter is to situate contemporary child welfare practices contextually and historically and thus expose the colonial project.

*Eradication Through Assimilation*³⁶

Adopted during Canada's pre-Confederation period, an official commitment to eradication through assimilation was and continues to be foundational to the process of white nation-building.³⁷ In volume one of its 1996 report, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) recounts Canada's history as one of broken promises to the original inhabitants of this land. It speaks of an initial period of 'contact and co-

35 While it is not my intent to eclipse other colonial strategies, I recognize that trying to discuss all of them (if that even is a possibility) in the space allotted would likely result in a rather shallow overview. A focus on child removal allows me to discuss this particular strategy in more depth.

36 This section is not meant to provide an historical account of colonialism in Canada, but merely stresses the importance of assimilationist thinking within this process.

37 By “white-nation building” I refer to the historical foundation of Canadian society based on colonial conquest and its ongoing commitment to population management systems that operate through preferred immigration systems, police violence and state-sanctioned surveillance (Douglas 2010:127). The result is a white-supremacist nation that structurally and institutionally favours those from (Western-) European backgrounds and where the definition of who counts as a “national subject” is explicitly raced (Thobani 2007). Thus, with the term “white nation” I do not refer to a population that is primarily “white” in appearance (indeed millions of negatively racialized immigrants have been 'admitted' to Canada), but in terms of power relations. For an analysis of white-nation building and its manifestations in the present context, see, for example, Razack, Smith and Thobani (2010), Thobani (2007), Mackey (2002), Razack (2002).

operation', seemingly based on the recognition that native communities are distinct and sovereign nations (symbolized by the Two Row Wampum and laid out to some extent in the *Royal Proclamation of 1763*) (RCAP 1996:255; see also Maaka and Fleras 2005:182). Within the larger context (that is the historical unfolding of colonial violence) such an assessment may hold some truth yet must certainly be taken with a 'grain of salt'. This is for the reason that 'contact', in itself, was violent, deadly and indeed led to the extinction of entire nations (like the Beothuk) (Little forthcoming; see also Stevenson 1999). However, this still 'more amiable' period of indigenous-settler relations gave way to an official colonial policy committed to the 'displacement and assimilation' of the indigenous populations (RCAP 1996:255). After two centuries of fur trade and Christianization, demoralized by disease, alcoholism, and deliberate starvation through the destruction of the buffalo, many indigenous nations were forced to enter into treaties and settle on reserves (Lawrence 2004:31). At this time colonial leaders implemented a policy of forceful segregation³⁸ and "carefully controlled assimilation" (ibid). This commitment was first entrenched in the *Gradual Civilization Act* in 1857, then in the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* in 1869, and later in the various versions of the *Indian Act*, the first of which was passed in 1876 (see RCAP 1996:255-281). The policy of assimilation was fuelled by heteropatriarchal convictions of white superiority, serving as the basis for coercion and control. Indigenous peoples were imagined as somehow 'less

38 This was achieved through the reserve system which physically segregated indigenous peoples (Little forthcoming) and colonial statutes (such as the *Indian Act*) that set out to define 'Indianness'. The *Indian Act* established who was recognized as an Indian, what nation was recognized as an Indian band, who could obtain land under the treaties, and who was allowed to live on it (Lawrence 2004:31). The *Indian Act* had (and continues to have) profound impacts on indigenous peoples and most detrimentally on indigenous women (see, for example, Lawrence 2003; 2004; Silman 1987; Voyageur 2000)

developed' and in a state of 'pre-civilization' (Dickason 1984:59; RCAP 1996:338).³⁹ And thus, according to colonial reasoning at the time, with some 'proper' education indigenous peoples were believed to be capable of becoming fully human and eventually join the civilized settler society (RCAP 1996:338). The annual report of the Department of the Interior in 1876 expresses this ideology as follows:

Our Indian legislation generally rests on the principle, that the aborigines are to be kept in a condition of tutelage and treated as wards or children of the State. ...the true interests of the aborigines and of the State alike require that every effort should be made to aid the Red man in lifting himself out of his condition of tutelage and dependence, and that is clearly our wisdom and our duty, through education and every other means, to prepare him for a higher civilization by encouraging him to assume the privileges and responsibilities of full citizenship (quoted in RCAP 1996:277).

Another public figure most commonly associated with the policy of assimilation is Duncan Campbell Scott, who served as deputy superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs from 1913-1932. He expresses the state's commitment to assimilation in a (widely quoted) statement to a committee of the House of Commons. In his words,

The happiest future for the Indian race is absorption into the general population, and this is the object of the policy of our government. The great forces of intermarriage and education will finally overcome the lingering traces of native customs and tradition. ... I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department (quoted in Franks 2000:51).

Thus, as Fleras and Maaka (2005) put it, Canada's 'Indian policies' have “tended to

39 Such attitudes were already present in the travel accounts of Jacques Cartier, a French 'explorer' who visited Turtle Island three times between 1534 and 1541. He described the people he encountered as follows. “This people may well be called savage, for they are the sorriest folk there can be in the world” (quoted in Dickason 1984:64-65) They had no material possessions, he explains, no “knowledge of God” nor the “use of reason” (ibid).

evolve in a steady and uniform direction, with a paternalistic commitment to assimilation” (206). This is not to say that eradication through warfare has not taken place, nor that the process of colonization was undertaken without force. It was violent, oppressive and often met with resistance and revolt – particularly in the West (see Lawrence 2004:34). Furthermore, Lawrence (2004) points out, while the process of colonization in Canada did not involve the same amount of bloodshed as it did in the United States, it was just as oppressive and violent (31). She argues that colonial control was enabled and has been maintained through an extremely oppressive body of colonial law (the *Indian Act*) that was largely put in place by the *threat* of military force. She writes,

...the fact that Canada was able to pacify the Indigenous peoples of half a continent on a virtually nonexistent military budget cannot be understood without taking into account how British officials have *always* used the threat of warfare and its attendant starvation south of the border to control Native populations in Canada. In a sense Canada piggybacked off of American Manifest Destiny, using starvation and territorial limitation brought about by the destruction of the buffalo and the Indian wars to the south to force treaties on captured populations in the north, all the while maintaining a posture of innocence and denial about the fundamentally violent nature of the colonial process in Canada (2004:30; emphasis in original).

In sum, since the pre-Confederation era, assimilation was endorsed as a way to deal with the 'Indian problem' (RCAP 1996:333). The goal was to destroy 'the Indian' and absorb him or her into the colonial (i.e. civilized and 'healthy') body politic so as to normalize settlement and colonial domination. This not only provided the foundation for the *Indian Act*, but also for those policies that established the residential school system and later lead to the “Sixties Scoop” (Fournier and Crey 1996). These policies were designed – through ignorance, paternalism or ill intention – to undermine indigenous

institutions, cultural values, and ways of being (Warry 2007:16).⁴⁰

Residential Schooling – Colonial Regulation Through (Re)Education

...if I were to be honest, I must tell of things as they were; and really this is not my story but yours (residential school survivor quoted in Milloy 2003:xviii).

During the earlier phases of colonial encroachment, the settler society focused much of their efforts on 'civilizing' indigenous adults (Dickason 1984:59), with the hope that someday they may be 'fit' to assimilate into the colonial body (Furniss 2011:15; RCAP 1996:333). In the words of Sir John A. Macdonald, first prime minister of the Dominion of Canada, "The great aim of our civilization has been to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the change" (quoted in Fleras and Maaka 2005:183). Voluntary and compulsory enfranchisement (the removal of 'Indian Status' and the conversion into a citizen of the colonial state) (see Lawrence 2004:31) was one tactic aimed at assimilating adults.

Over time, however, this focus was largely abandoned. Due to the widespread failure of the different enfranchisement strategies, clergy and state officials concluded that indigenous adults were seemingly unable to escape their 'savage state' and could not be 'emancipated' (RCAP 1996:338; Dickason 1984). Indeed, they were imagined as "physically, mentally and morally... unfitted to bear such a complete metamorphosis" (quoted in RCAP 1996:338). In the words of Reverend E.F Wilson, founder of the

⁴⁰ It is *not* my intention to imply that these genocidal policies were successful. Indeed, such a narrative would not only be erroneous but assimilatory in itself (see Monture-Angus 2000:362).

Shingwauk residential school, adults were “the old unimprovable people” (quoted in RCAP 1996:338). The focus, therefore, shifted onto indigenous children. Colonial officials imagined that indigenous peoples could only be fully assimilated if 'civilizing' efforts started with their children. In the 1886 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, the department's inspector of schools explains, “it is to the young that we must look for a complete change of condition” (quoted in RCAP 1996:338).

Not only were adults seen as impossible to assimilate, they were also considered an impediment to the assimilation of their children (Furniss 2011:27; Milloy 2003; RCAP 1996:338). Therefore, if efforts to break the ties between indigenous children and their cultures were to be successful, they needed to be separated from their parents. In the name of the 'children's best interests', the colonizers professed that indigenous children needed to be shielded from their “evil surroundings” and “kept constantly within the circle of civilized conditions” (*Davin Report* quoted in RCAP 1996:338). They must be “caught young to be saved from what is on the whole the degenerating influence of their home environments” (Archbishop of St. Boniface quoted in RCAP 1996:338). Thus, constructions of indigenous culture as inherently depraved and indigenous parents as inherently unfit legitimated the removal of indigenous children.

(Re-)education was considered the most efficient tool for the eradication of indigenous cultures and the assimilation of indigenous children (Milloy 2003). Yet, not any model of education was considered equally promising in that regard. Since the bond between indigenous children and their communities needed to be severed, *residential* education – far from “the influences of the wigwam” (Davin quoted in RCAP 1996:334) – seemed the most promising solution to eradicate indigenous ways of being. For this

reason, in 1879, Sir John A. Macdonald assigned Nicholas Flood Davin to investigate the success of the industrial boarding schools in the United States and their applicability for the Canadian context (Milloy 2003:54). In his subsequent report, Davin called for the establishment of similar off-reserve schools in Canada (Milloy 2003:7; RCAP 1996:333). He recommended the forceful removal of indigenous children from their communities, their placement into state and church custody, and for their removal to be as long-term as possible. His recommendations received unqualified support from the churches and the state (RCAP 1996:333-4). Indeed, the churches – Anglican, Catholic, Methodist and Presbyterian – were so eager in their missionary roles that residential schools had already been opened in Ontario, the north-west and British Columbia before the official submission of the *Davin Report* (RCAP 1996:334). Likewise, in its enthusiasm, the Department of Indian Affairs suggested it “highly desirable, if it were practicable, to obtain entire possession of *all* Indian children after they attain to the age of seven or eight years, and keep them at schools...” (quoted in RCAP 1996:339; emphasis added).

The resulting residential school system was based on a church/government partnership that jointly managed the system until 1969 (RCAP 1996:335) after which the Department of Indian Affairs assumed sole control. The system was essentially church-run and government-funded. Established in 1878, the system initially consisted of a combination of boarding schools and industrial schools (the latter being built closer to reserve communities) (Furniss 2011:27). In 1922, the industrial school model was abandoned in favor of the boarding school model, thereafter called residential schools (RCAP 1996:343). The school system grew rapidly to 80 schools in 1931 (RCAP 1996:336) and expanded further during the 1950s as part of the state's post-war

expansion into Inuit territory (RCAP 1996: 335). Schools were built in every province – with the exception of New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland (ibid), and totaled about 130 (Jung 2009). The last two schools, the Gordon School in Saskatchewan and the St. Michaels Indian Residential School in British Columbia, closed in 1996 and 1998 respectively (Blackstock, Brown and Bennett 2007:61-62). By the end of the 1940's between two and three generations of indigenous peoples had spent their childhood in residential schools (Episkenew 2009:64). Overall, approximately 150,000 children were taken from their communities and forced to attend these schools (Jung 2009).

As can be expected, parents and communities objected to the Christianization of their children, the use of corporal punishment, the head-shavings and the utter disrespect for indigenous languages and customs (Furniss 2011; Little forthcoming). Because of indigenous resistance and non-compliance, the *Indian Act* was revised in 1894 to make school attendance mandatory (Lawrence 2004:35;106; Furniss 2011:28; see also Miller 2003:113). To coerce parents into compliance, they were threatened with imprisonment, the withholding of food rations, or the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) simply took the children by force (Churchill 2004:18; Fournier and Crey 1997). Thousands of children were forcefully removed from their homes, often by Indian Agents or priests, and placed in the 'care' of the colonizer. Infants as young as three (Little forthcoming) were snatched from their homes, often not able to see their parents for months sometimes even years. It was not until 1920, that the government approved a two-month summer break (Milloy 2003:31). On average, ten months per year were spent in schools, during which time parents were not allowed to visit and children were not allowed to return

home (Furniss 2011; Armitage 1995).

Through physical separation, it was hoped that indigenous children not only became estranged from their communities, but also from their cultures, spirituality, languages and traditions. The *raison d'être* of this system was the complete ontological and epistemological repositioning of these children (Milloy 2003:36). For this reason, children were exposed to Christian indoctrination (Furniss 2011; Milloy 2003:37; RCAP 1996:341). As expressed in the *Memorandum* of the Convention of Catholic Principals in 1924, it was believed that:

All true civilization must be based on moral law, which christian religion alone can give. Pagan superstition could not suffice ... to make the Indians practice the virtues of our civilization and avoid its attendant vices. Several people have desired us to countenance the dances of the Indians and to observe their festivals; but their habits, being the result of free and easy mode of life, cannot conform to the intense struggle for life which our social conditions require (quoted in Milloy 2003:36-37).

The children further had to learn English and to a lesser extent French, while being prohibited from and punished for speaking their own languages (Milloy 2003:39), which colonial authorities referred to as a sort of inferior “Indian dialect” (quoted in RCAP 1996:341). Christian indoctrination was accompanied by training in what was considered 'proper' (i.e. heteropatriarchal) gender, moral, and sexual behavior (Furniss 2011). Stoler (2006) calls this form of control a colonial “education of desire”, in which indigenous children are considered inferior elements marked for deadly regulation through (re)education (83). To learn the bourgeois values of the colonizer, the students were taught such subject matters as “practice of cleanliness, obedience, respect, order, neatness”, “Right and Wrong”, “Independence. Self-respect”, “Industry. Honesty. Thrift” and “Patriotism ... Self-maintenance. Charity” (1896 Indian Affairs Annual Report

quoted in RCAP 1996:340). In their last year, students were taught “Evils of Indian Isolation”, “Labour the Law of Life” and “Home and Public Duties” (ibid).

Until 1951, the schools operated under a half-day system whereby students spent half of the day in the classroom and performed manual labour, in the latter half, which was to teach them industrial skills (Furniss 2011:27; Milloy 2003:35; RCAP 1996:339). The boys were taught 'gender-appropriate' skills such as agriculture, blacksmithing, shoemaking, tinsmithing and printing, while the girls were trained in sewing, shirt making, knitting, cooking, laundry, dairying, ironing and general household duties (RCAP 1996:339). The half-day system ensured the perpetuation of the residential schools themselves, for they relied on the coerced labour of their pupils to maintain their facilities (RCAP 1996: 340; Milloy 2003:169; Churchill 2004:45).

The web of disciplinary-regulatory power (Foucault 2003:249) not only encompassed the classroom, church and work, but even structured 'play-time'. Children's play could not be the “boisterous and unorganized games” of “savage” youth (quoted in RCAP 1996:340). Instead, indigenous children were to take part in brass bands, baseball, football, cricket and most importantly hockey (ibid). For “the well regulated and ... strict rules that govern our modern games”, so the colonial authorities thought, would result in “obedience to discipline” (quoted in RCAP 1996:341).

The project of disciplinary education was furthered through (sometimes deadly) violence. Corporal punishment and physical abuse were the norm (Furniss 2011; RCAP 1996:365). Sexual abuse was rampant (Furniss 2011; Milloy 2003:xvii; Miller 2003:328)⁴¹. There are even witness accounts of forced sterilizations of indigenous girls

41 See, for example, Cote (2001) for a personal account of the horrific abuse that took place in these institutions.

and teens, as well as forced abortions (which permanently sterilized most who had to undergo them) performed on those who were impregnated by their abusers (see Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada 1994) While the abuse was known to the department and the churches, no one intervened (RCAP 1996: 367). Indeed, no one seemed to care. As one Indian Agent stated in a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs,

Indians are very much adverse to any kind of restraint, and to put it mildly, are not to be believed, as a general thing when they complain about Schools or similar Institutions, as they let their imaginations run riot, if they think that by so doing it will help them to gain what they happen to want at the moment (O'Daunt quoted in Furniss 2011:93).

Hundreds of children tried to escape their plight by running away, many died in their attempt, while others were driven to commit suicide (RCAP 1996:367; see also Furniss 2011:89; Miller 2003:113).

These conditions were exacerbated by a system that was chronically underfunded and mismanaged (Milloy 2003:xv), leading to the systemic neglect of many children. Schools were badly built, poorly maintained, insufficiently heated and overcrowded (RCAP 1996:356). The students were ill-fed (Lawrence 2004:106), ill-clothed (RCAP 1996:357), and over-worked (Churchill 2004:44). Combined with poor sanitary conditions (RCAP 1996:356), the health of children was poor and many sickened and died (RCAP 1996:357; Churchill 2004). Epidemics, such as tuberculosis, cost the lives of many children. For example, a report issued in 1907 informed the colonial authorities that in 15 schools approximately 24% of students had died from the disease, with one school's death toll being at 47% (cited in RCAP 1996:357). Dr. Peter Bryce, medical superintendent for the Department of Indian Affairs at the time, issued another report in

which he estimated that mortality rates at residential schools in western Canada ranged somewhere between 30% to 60% between the years 1894 and 1908 (Milloy 2003:75). He estimated that of the 3,755 institutionalized children at the time, 1,614 could be expected to be dead by the end of 1910 (Churchill 2004:37). Bryce further proclaimed that these high mortality rates were no accident, in that healthy pupils were being exposed to children with tuberculosis (ibid). While the substandard conditions and the neglect the students faced were known to the Department of Indian Affairs at all times (RCAP 1996:337; 356), nothing was done to address these problems (Churchill 2004:39). Instead, these conditions continued until after the Second World War (Lawrence 2004:106). Situating this in a Foucauldian framework, one might argue that colonial officials wilfully increased the risk of death (Foucault 2003:256) for these children. As Duncan Campbell Scott readily admitted, 50% of the children who entered the residential school system never made it out alive (Lawrence 2004:106).

While sometimes presented as a well-meaning but misguided tragedy (see, for example, CBC News 2010), the residential school system was certainly more than an outgrowth of self-less Christian duty. It was not a 'mistake' but a deliberate attempt of cultural genocide (see Churchill 2003; Chrisjohn and Young 2006). It was designed to break the strength of indigenous families and eradicate indigenous cultures (Miller 1989:98; Grant 1996:23-24) so as to enable the unhindered expansion of settler colonialism. This is further evident in other aspects of the school system that went beyond efforts to indoctrinate indigenous children with white-supremacist heteropatriarchal values. The schools also functioned to maintain *colonial order* and facilitate *capitalist expansion*.

Alarmed by the potential of political unrest the colonial powers utilized the residential school system to pacify indigenous populations (Milloy 2003; Miller 2003; Titley 1999; Fournier and Crey 1997). This facilitated westward expansion in particular and the settlement of indigenous lands in general. Milloy (2003) points out that on more than one occasion, armed battles between indigenous peoples and the American army in the plains spilled over into what was already considered 'Canadian territory', which alarmed the colonial authorities (31). At the same time, resistance was mounting to colonial settlements in the West, which was exacerbated by the decimation of the buffalo and smallpox epidemics (which enabled westward expansion in the first place) (Lawrence 2004:34; Milloy 2003:31). After encountering resistance in 1869 (which became known as the Red River or Riel 'Rebellion') the Dominion government was vigilant of potential uprisings (Milloy 2003:31; see also Miller 2003:97; Titley 1999:79). The *Davin Report* first established a link between the potential of residential schools to suppress future indigenous resistance, and after the second 'Riel Rebellion' or 'Northwest Rebellion' in 1885 this sentiment was held quite strongly (Milloy 2003:31). James McRae, superintendent of the Department of Indian Affairs at the time, expressed this as follows:

All people in the north with whom the matter of Indian education has been discussed agreed as to its importance not only as an economical measure to be demanded for the welfare of the country and the Indians themselves, but in order that crime may not spring up and peaceful conditions be disturbed, as that element which is the forerunner and companion of civilization penetrates the country and comes into close contact with the natives (quoted in Milloy 2003:32-33).

Even more explicitly, McRae argued elsewhere that "It is unlikely that any Tribe or tribes would give trouble of a serious nature to the Government whose members had children

completely under Government control” (quoted in Milloy 2003:32; Titley 1999:79). The Presbyterian church, lobbying for the establishment of a residential school north of Regina, expressed this strategy as follows: “the Indians would regard [their children] as hostages given to the whites and would hesitate to commit any hostile acts that might endanger their children's well-being” (quoted in Milloy 2003:32).

Another aim, thus, was the pacification of indigenous peoples who were considered a threat to the settler society. Adults were to be kept in line by holding their children hostage (Titley 1999:79) and the pacification of their children was to be achieved through disciplinary 'education'. Let us recall here that in a biopolitical state, the 'defense of society' is framed in terms of “an internal war” against internal Others (Foucault 2003:216), who are constructed as 'abnormal' and 'dangerous'. These internal enemies are said to threaten the 'health' and 'well-being' of the dominant majority and thus the Other's elimination becomes necessary for their very survival. In such a context it is the function of the state to act as the defender of the dominant (or 'normal') 'race' (Foucault 2003:66) and thus protect the population from the dangers that arise from within the social body (Foucault 2003:142). Such a tactic is highly visible in this context where colonial expansion was ensured through state institutions such as residential schools. Indeed, without residential schools, as Duncan Campbell Scott proclaimed, indigenous peoples “would produce an *undesirable* and often *dangerous element* in society” (quoted in RCAP 1996:334; emphasis added).

Schissel and Wotherspoon (2003) point out that the residential school system also facilitated capitalist expansion (42). While the half-day system maintained the school facilities themselves (RCAP 1996: 340; Milloy 2003:169; Churchill 2004:45), the

physical exploitation of indigenous children also assisted in the growth of an industrial-based labour market (Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003:42).⁴² The authors argue that the manual work the students were forced to undertake can be equated to indentured labour or involuntary servitude. By forcing the students to work, the schools provided free child and youth labour for adjacent farms, industries, and even households (Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003:44; see also Churchill 2004:44; Miller 2003). Boys, for example, often worked as seasonal labourers during times of harvest while girls were regularly taken out of school to work as domestic servants (Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003:44; Miller 2003:253). Isabelle Knockwood (1992) expresses a similar sentiment when sharing her memories of other Mi'kmaw children with whom she had attended a residential school in Nova Scotia:

The older boys who tended the furnace never went to classes except of course Sunday school. The other boys who were not working in the barn were taken out of school during the coal-shoveling season for weeks at a time until all the coal was put in the bins. Then they returned to classes only to be called out again to work in the fields spreading manure, picking rocks, harvesting vegetables, or slaughtering animals. Their classroom hours were very irregular and an afternoon session once or twice a week was the average. Full-time barn and furnace boys worked fifteen hours a day, seven days a week (quoted in Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003:50).

Miller (2003) argues that rural towns and local communities welcomed the influx of indigenous children as a free source of labour and on occasion actively lobbied for the establishment of residential schools within their area (116). The city of Brandon, for example, offered a piece of land free of charge to secure the establishment of a Methodist residential school in 1891 for such a reason (Schissel and Wotherspoon 2003:45).

While the colonial society failed miserably in eradicating indigenous nations, the

⁴² See also Satzewich and Wotherspoon (2000) and York (1992) for a similar argument.

residential school system had detrimental effects on generations of indigenous peoples and its legacy continues to be felt today. In her book *“Real” Indians and Others*, Bonita Lawrence (2004) shares the personal accounts of twenty-nine research participants of Native heritage who presently live in Toronto. Like most indigenous peoples, the families of the all participants in her study were affected in one way or another by residential schooling or the intrusion of child welfare services into family and community life (2004:105). Fifteen of the participants had parents or grandparents who went to residential schools (ibid). For half of the participants, urbanity began with residential schooling – with their parents and grandparents being taken from their communities never to return (Lawrence 2004:111). The residential schools inflicted a profound violence onto these families. Many survivors speak of lost customs and knowledge of their homelands, loss of language, intergenerational violence, substance-abuse, and a damaged sense of self (see Monture-Angus 1995:174; Lawrence 2004: 105-111; Chrisjohn and Young 2006; Da Silva 2010:61; Fontaine 2010).

Child 'Welfare' and the “Sixties Scoop”

...the Sixties Scoop was not coincidental; it was a consequence of fewer Indian children being sent to residential schools and of the child welfare system emerging as the new method of colonization (Johnston 1983:24 quoted in MacDonald and MacDonald 2007:38).

This section highlights that, in their function to remove indigenous children, the residential school system and the child welfare system did not operate as two independent entities. For some time, these two regimes existed side by side, with considerable overlap between them. And when the former was slowly phased out, the

latter grew exponentially. Over time the child welfare system replaced the residential school system as the settler society's primary mechanism of indigenous child removal. As the above quote implies, these two systems are part of the same colonial history, representing two forms of the same colonial strategy. Rather than two distinct 'eras' in indigenous-settler relations, these two mechanisms of state power, must be understood as a continuum that is the systemic and systematic institutionalization of indigenous children by the colonial settler society.⁴³

Informally, residential schools have always operated as a form of child 'welfare' service for indigenous children (Walmsley 2005:9; RCAP 1996:348). Following the Second World War, the state became increasingly concerned with child welfare and as such residential schools began to explicitly remove indigenous children under the banner of 'child protection' and 'child welfare' (Maaka and Fleras 2005:185). This practice was especially prominent in the Eastern provinces (Lawrence 2004:107). Local Indian Agents utilized their power to institutionalize children they deemed to be “neglected” (Fournier and Crey 1997:82), whereby those classified as “status Indians” were considered the most forsaken (Episknew 2009:64). However, while the Canadian provinces and territories were (and still are) responsible for child welfare services, service provisions for “status Indians” was a federal responsibility. This posed a challenge to the settler society, since this meant that provincial child welfare systems had no jurisdiction over – and hence no legal access to – these children (Walmsley 2005:13). Provincial child welfare services were legally prohibited from entering reserves and therefore case workers were unable to

43 The over-incarceration of indigenous peoples through the prison-industrial complex and the Canadian criminal justice system is similarly implicated in this process. See, for example, Monture-Angus (1995; 2000).

'save' the children. It was also at this time that social work developed as a profession (Episkenew 2009:64) and opposition to this jurisdictional conflict grew stronger. In 1947, the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) in unison with the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) sought to remedy this situation. These two organizations successfully petitioned the federal government to change its child welfare policies (Episkenew 2009: 65), by arguing that “Indian children who are neglected lack the protection afforded under social legislation available to white children in the community” (quoted in Fournier and Crey 1997:83; see also Armitage 1995). The federal government responded by amending Section 88 of the *Indian Act* which formally extended the applicability of provincial laws (including child welfare laws) to reserves (unless provincial laws conflict with federal law, then the latter overrules the former) (Lawrence 2004; Armitage 1995). Through this amendment and the subsequent funding agreements, the federal government delegated responsibilities for health, welfare and educational services to the provinces (the federal government however remains financially responsible for “status Indians”) (Bennett 2004). This enabled provincial and territorial child welfare workers to intervene 'on behalf of' “status Indian” children and apprehend them as they saw fit (Chrichlow 2003).⁴⁴ By the 1960s, child welfare agencies replaced residential schools as the primary system of 'care' for indigenous children (Armitage 1995).

Not surprisingly, after being granted legal access to indigenous children, their number in provincial 'care' grew exponentially. In 1959, only 1% of all children in care were indigenous, yet by the end of the 1960s approximately 30-40% of children in the

⁴⁴ It needs pointing out that “non-Status” and Métis children have always been the 'responsibility' of the provinces and thus had already been impacted by this form of colonial intrusion long before the “Sixties Scoop” (Lawrence 2004:114).

child welfare system (across Canada) were “status Indian” children (Fournier and Crey 1997:83). It is this large-scale removal of indigenous children that Patrick Johnston (1983) referred to as the “Sixties Scoop”.⁴⁵ The actual term came from someone who had worked in child welfare at the time and whom Johnston had interviewed for his research. This person “admitted that provincial social workers would, quite literally, scoop children from reserves on the slightest pretext” (Johnston 1983:23 quoted in Macdonald and Macdonald 2007:39). On occasion, entire busloads of children were taken at once (Fournier and Crey 1997:87). In the mid-60s it was common practice in British Columbia to remove almost all newly born children from reserves (Sinclair 2007:66). In some cases children were apprehended without the consent or knowledge from their families or communities (Little forthcoming; Timpson 1995; Johnston 1983).

This “scoop” was not confined to the 1960s. By the late 1970s every fourth “status Indian” child would be apprehended by child welfare services (Sinclair 2007:66; Fournier and Crey 1997). If “non-status” and Métis children were to be included in this number (statistics for these children were not maintained), estimates show that one in three, and in some provinces every other indigenous child would be placed in provincial 'care' (Fournier and Crey 1997:88; Sinclair 2007; Armitage 1995). Expressed differently, by the late 1960s and early 70s, 10% of all indigenous children in Canada were in some sort of care facility, compared to 1% of non-indigenous children (Blackstock, Brown and Bennett 2007:61). At this time, First Nations children made up between 40-50% of all

⁴⁵ The term “Sixties Scoop” is placed in quotation marks throughout this project because it is somewhat of a misnomer. It implies that this practice is confined to a specific era and thus differs from what came before or after. This, however, is untrue. This is not only for the reason, as Fournier and Crey (1997) rightfully point out, that the removal of children continued well into the 70s (88). But also, as will become evident later on, the number of indigenous children entering the Canadian child welfare system has risen steadily since then.

children in care of child welfare authorities (MacDonald and MacDonald 2007:38). The overrepresentation of indigenous children was most pronounced in the Western provinces. In British Columbia, 39% of the children in 'care' were indigenous, the numbers are 44% in Alberta, 51.5% in Saskatchewan and 60% in Manitoba (Sinclair 2007:66; Monture-Angus 1995:192). Overall, indigenous children were more likely to be apprehended than non-indigenous children, and once in care they were less likely to be returned (Monture-Angus 1995:192).⁴⁶ According to Fournier and Crey (1997), virtually every extended indigenous family across Canada lost someone to the 'welfare' system (86). Some communities (such as the Spallumcheen, a Shuswap community in the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia) even lost entire generations (Lawrence 2004:113; Fournier and Crey 1997:86; Comeau and Santin 1995:141).

It is also at this time, that the number of children institutionalized in residential schools dropped significantly. Initially, the number of residential schools dropped from 72 schools in 1948 (with 9,368 enrolled students) to 52 schools in 1969 (with 7,704 students) (RCAP 1996:351).⁴⁷ These numbers were further reduced to 12 schools in 1979, with 'only' 1,899 enrolled students (ibid). In contrast, data collected in 1977 indicates that at this time, about 15,500 indigenous children had entered the child welfare system (McKenzie and Hudson 1985; see also Monture-Angus 1995:192). A different set of statistics indicate that from the 1960s to the 1990s somewhere around 17,000 children were removed by child welfare authorities (see Lawrence 2004:113). In short, as residential schools closed, the number of indigenous children taken into provincial 'care'

⁴⁶ The same situation persists today (see MacLaurin et al. 2003).

⁴⁷ It is interesting to note that the ratio of schools to students did not decline proportionately. This indicates, while the number of schools dropped quite significantly, the decline in student enrolment happened at a lower rate.

increased drastically (MacDonald and MacDonald 2007:38; Walmsley 2005:13; Johnston 1983;).

Once removed, the children were separated from their cultural communities by being placed in white foster homes of provincial care facilities (Fournier and Crey 1997; Lawrence 2004:113), effectively transferring them to the settler society (Chrichlow 2003). Thousands of children were adopted by white, middle-class families (Sinclair 2007; MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; Fournier and Crey 1997). More than 11,132 “status Indian” children were adopted between 1960 and 1990 (Gough et al. 2005).⁴⁸ And 75% of those who were adopted between 1971 and 1981, ended up in white homes (Walmsley 2005:14; Fournier and Crey 1997; Timpson 1995). In combination, whether adopted or placed in foster care, between 70% to 90% of indigenous children grew up in settler households (Lawrence 2004:113).

According to Comeau and Santin (1995) “In no other area did federal bureaucrats and professional social workers wreak so much havoc in so little time as in the field of child welfare” (141). Fournier and Crey (1997) similarly argue, while residential schools institutionalized indigenous children for ten months of the year, these children at least knew their places of origin and that eventually they would be allowed to return (81; see also Chrichlow 2003). In the foster and adoptive 'care' system, indigenous children “typically vanished with scarcely a trace, the vast majority of them placed until they were adults in non-aboriginal homes where their cultural identity, their legal Indian status, their knowledge of their own First Nation and even their birth names were erased, often forever” (Fournier and Crey 1997:81). Often, adoptive families were encouraged to erase

⁴⁸ Numbers for all indigenous children (aside from those the settler society classified as “status Indians”) do not exist.

a child's birth name and tribe of origin so as to truly raise them as 'their own' (Fournier and Crey 1997:84). In the foster care system, where indigenous children were shuffled from home to home, their background information often got lost somewhere along the way (ibid). The personal account of an adoptee echos this sentiment.⁴⁹

My sister and I were taken away from my mom when I was two years old. My sister was only a year old, and my mom was not married. We were placed in a foster home, and when I was three, my sister was fostered by one family, and I was adopted out to another. I grew up with a Dutch family. ... The word "Indian" never came up in my home, although I always knew I was different, because I was dark. ...I connected with the Mi'kmaq Child and Family Services in Nova Scotia. ... That's when I found out that my mom had died. ... And I've just recently been reunited with my sister. ... She didn't even know she was Indian! ... There was no mention about either of my parents being Indian on the documents they gave to my foster mother, which provided a bit of background about the birth parents. They put my mother's racial origin as Irish and Scottish and my father's racial origin as French (quoted in Lawrence 2004:275-276).⁵⁰

While this large-scale transfer of indigenous children to the settler society is a genocidal practice in itself (see UN Convention 1948: Article 2(e)), many of the adopted children were sent some place far away which made family reunions virtually impossible (Sinclair 2007). It was common practice, until the 1980s, to facilitate the adoption of indigenous children outside the province that had initially removed them (MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; Johnston 1983). Indigenous children were transferred to households across Canada and even outside the country – in particular to the United States and to a smaller extent to Europe (Sinclair 2007; Walmsley 2005:14; Fournier and Crey 1997). Between the years of 1960 and 1980, Manitoba recorded the highest number of out-of-province adoption placements (Manitoba Department of Family Services in

⁴⁹ See also, Spears (2006) for another personal account.

⁵⁰ This person later found out that her mother was of Cree and Saulteaux origin and her father Métis (see Lawrence 2004:276).

Dubinsky 2010:156). During this time, 4,824 children were placed outside of Manitoba (only 274 of which were white); of this number, 3,649 were sent to various Canadian provinces, 1,149 went to the United States and 16 children were placed outside of North America (ibid).

American adoption agencies are said to have been particularly aggressive in procuring indigenous children for international adoption (Fournier and Crey 1997:88). This was the case especially after legislation was passed in the United States that prohibited the American settler-society to adopt indigenous children there (Fournier and Crey 1997).⁵¹ Some authors draw attention to a sort of 'adoption market' where indigenous children were 'marketed' for adoption (Sinclair 2007; MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; Johnston 1983). As Adams (2002) explains, “children were marketed in local newspapers and on television, but it was done in a way that did not draw attention to the government policy of assimilation” (quoted in Sinclair 2007:67). Canadian social workers would receive financial “incentives” if they found adoptable children (Sinclair 2007; Fournier and Crey 1997) and American adoption agencies could get as much as 4,000 dollars for every child placed (Steckley and Cummins 2001:194). On average somewhere between 5,000 to 10,000 dollars were exchanged for an adoption (Fournier and Crey 1997:88-89). Fournier and Crey (1996) quote Maggie Blacksmith (whose son was apprehended by the Manitoban government and later became a social worker herself) who recalls,

Big, shiny American cars would come onto the reserve, followed by the

⁵¹ No equivalent legislation has been passed in Canada. At one point, the government of Saskatchewan implemented a policy allowing only persons with indigenous ties to adopt indigenous children. This policy, however, was struck down in 2004 by Madam Justice Jacelyn Ann Ryan-Froslic of the Saskatchewan Court of Queen's Bench (see Episkew 2009:205).

social worker's car. ... When they left, there'd be a little Indian child sitting in the back of the American car, bawling their eyes out. The social worker always had a piece of paper saying it was legal. We know the social worker was paid... If parents tried to keep their kids, the social worker called the Mountie (quoted in Fournier and Crey 1996:89).

Especially children from communities whose traditional territory extended on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border were vulnerable to international adoption (MacDonald and MacDonald 2007:39; Fournier and Crey 1997). Lee Maracle, is quoted saying, “Thousands of aboriginal children were scooped up in the fifties and sixties from Vancouver alone. A lot were sold south of the border, in Chicago, New York, Detroit, the Midwest. Some were used as slaves” (quoted in Fournier and Crey 1997:89). Manitoba judge Edwin Kimelman (1985), who was asked to investigate adoption placements of indigenous children, concluded that “cultural genocide has been taking place in a systematic routine manner. One gets an image of children stacked in foster homes as used cars are stacked on corner lots, just waiting for the right 'buyer' to stroll by” (quoted in Fournier and Crey 1997:88). Other authors similarly describe the large-scale removal of indigenous children during this time as an act of cultural genocide, which was implemented upon the decline of the residential school system (Alston-O'Connor 2010; Sinclair 2007; Chrichlow 2003; McKenzie and Hudson 1985; Timpson 1995).

What sort of justifications were used to legitimize this colonial strategy? As Karen Dubinsky (2010) puts it, “It is a truism that child welfare systems normalize and promote a universal definition of parenthood and family life, in which the experiences and cultures of the Anglo middle class are privileged” (82). In this sense, indigenous practices such as community involvement in the raising of children (Young 1996), custom adoption (see Atkinson 2010:47), or simply parenting styles and family/kinship relations

that differed from the 'norm(al)', that is the settler society's ideal of the heteronormative and patriarchal nuclear family, were constructed as inadequate (Blackstock, Brown and Bennett 2007; MacDonald, Glode and Wien 2005; Fournier and Crey 1997; Armitage 1995; Kline 1992). In the colonial imagination, indigenous parents were considered unfit, neglectful and incapable to look after their children (Lawrence 2004:113; Kline 1992). Lawrence (2004) quotes a research participant who tells the story of her mother's experience with child welfare services. According to her, her mother had her second child apprehended immediately after giving birth by hospital nuns, for the reason that she was not married.

When she had my sister, the Catholic nuns at the hospital took her away from my mom the minute she was born. Because my mom was a Native woman, and she already had a child, and she wasn't married. They removed my sister from my mom, and said, 'We'll give you a year to get married and get settled down and get your life together, and if you can do that, then you can come back to us in a year and we'll give you your child. But if not, you'll never see her.' They let her know that it was a girl – that's all-then they took the baby away to Children's Aid and gave her to a farm family in Saskatchewan. So that's the reason why my mom decided to marry my dad (quoted in Lawrence 2004:116-117).

Moreover, social workers justified their intrusion by convincing themselves that they had to 'save' indigenous children from the poverty-stricken life that existed (and to a large extent still exists) in reserve communities (MacDonald, Glode and Wien 2005:359; Fournier and Crey 1997:85-86; McKenzie and Hudson 1985; Johnston 1983). In their opinion, “the apprehension of Indian children from reserves would save them from the crushing poverty, unsanitary health conditions, poor housing, and malnutrition which were the facts of life on many reserves” (Johnston 1983:23 quoted in Walmsley 2005:13). In other words, social workers felt the need to 'save' indigenous children from the very

conditions settler colonialism created in the first place. As will become evident in the next chapter, such discursive constructions are well alive in contemporary media discourses around child welfare and indigenous peoples in Manitoba and Alberta.

Child 'Welfare' Today – The Legacy Continues

Child welfare legislation and services continue to fall under the jurisdiction of the thirteen Canadian provinces and territories. While all child welfare systems have certain fundamental criteria in common (such as investigations of child maltreatment allegations, supervision and counselling referrals, supervision of children placed in out-of-home care⁵²), there are considerable differences in the provision and implementation of these criteria. Some provinces and territories implemented a government-run (that is, centralized) child welfare system, while others operate under a decentralized system in which service delivery is accorded to mandated agencies. The federal government provides funding (but no direct services) to the provinces, and the provinces oversee the service delivery through a series of child-welfare agencies (see PHAC 2010:9).

In Alberta, child welfare statutes are outlined in the Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act. Children and youth under eighteen years of age fall under the provision of this legislation. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services oversees all provincial child welfare programs and services. Under the ministry's supervision, ten Child and Family Services Authorities (nine regional authorities and one dedicated to Métis settlements) provide services across the province. In addition, 18 First Nation-run agencies provide certain services to indigenous peoples (see PHAC 2010:10).

⁵² “Out-of-home” care refers to placements in foster homes, group homes, accommodations with relatives or similar arrangements.

In Manitoba, child welfare statutes are outlined in the Child and Family Services Act, which applies to children and youth under eighteen years of age. Service delivery is overseen by the Ministry of Family Services and Consumer Affairs. Services are provided by four ministry offices, six privately operated agencies, fourteen First Nations-run agencies and one Métis-run agency. These agencies function under the umbrella of four governing authorities. This system was put in place in 2005, replacing a system that was previously centralized (see PHAC 2010:10; Gough 2006).

As can be inferred from the above paragraphs, there have been many positive changes to the child welfare system. In 1981, the first agreement was signed that authorized a First Nation-run agency to provide their own child welfare services (Lawrence 2004:115). Since then, many more First Nations and Métis-run agencies were delegated the same responsibility. A growing system of “Aboriginal child welfare organizations” is now overseeing indigenous children (PHAC 2010). There are currently around 125 First Nations Child and Family Service Agencies operating across Canada (Bennett 2004). This brought with it improvements in terms of service delivery, including protocols that are designed to ensure indigenous children are to be placed with extended family, or in indigenous foster homes before being placed with the settler society (Lawrence 2004:115). For example, the Alberta Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (2010) encourages a 'kinship care policy', which strives to preserve the connection between indigenous children and their communities. According to this policy, it is preferred that indigenous children are to be placed with relatives or members of their own community before being placed in a non-indigenous foster home.⁵³

⁵³ However, some question to what extent this policy is actually being put into practice (see, for example, Lightning 2010:A13). Indeed, the Act officially only commits to the following: If an indigenous child is

Much has changed since then, or so the story goes. And yet, the number of indigenous children in 'care' has *never been higher*. There are more indigenous children in 'care' today than ever before in Canadian history, including the residential school era (Gough et al. 2005) and following the “Sixties Scoop” (Little forthcoming). As Sinclair (2007) puts it, what is now considered the “Sixties Scoop” was only “the tip of the emerging iceberg of what is now the institution of Aboriginal child welfare” (68).

Indeed, indigenous children continue to be removed en masse and are vastly overrepresented in the Canadian child welfare system. It is estimated that there are currently somewhere between 22,500 and 28,000 indigenous children in the child welfare system across Canada – potentially almost three times as many as the highest enrolment figures during the residential school era (Blackstock 2003).⁵⁴ In contrast, at its height, the residential school system institutionalized less than 9,500 children per year (RCAP 1996:351). Statistics further suggest that between 2000-2002, close to 60,000 children were placed in out-of-home care across Canada (see Mulcahy and Trocmé 2010:Figure 1). Of these children, 30-40% were indigenous, while constituting less than 5% of the overall child population (Gough et al. 2005; Blackstock et al. 2005). A recent study suggested that one out of ten indigenous children are removed by child welfare

places with a non-indigenous foster parent, and “if the aboriginal child is an *Indian*” (emphasis added) the guardian is obliged to “take reasonable steps on behalf of the child necessary for the child to exercise any rights the child may have as an Indian” and furthermore to “inform the child of the child’s status as an Indian” (see Alberta Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act 2010: Section 57.1).

⁵⁴ Because child welfare mandates and intervention criteria differ according to jurisdiction, and the way child welfare statistics are kept varies greatly, it is nearly impossible to obtain an accurate nation-wide picture of the children and families that come under the scrutiny of child welfare services. Thus, there currently are no accurate Canada-wide statistics on the number of children and youth placed in provincial and territorial 'care'. Likewise, a nation-wide profile of indigenous children in 'care' is non-existent. Therefore, all the studies mentioned in this section that provide nation-wide statistics rely on estimates. Further, while some provinces provide data on the number of indigenous children that have entered the child welfare system, this number often only applies to children who belong to one of the First Nations and thus may grossly underestimate the number of *all* indigenous children in 'care'.

authorities (Blackstock et al. 2005).

Moreover, the number of indigenous children entering the child welfare system is rising dramatically (FNCFCFS 2005). Between 1995 and 2001, the number of First Nation children entering the child welfare system grew by 71.5% nationally (Gough et al. 2005; FNCFCFS 2005; McKenzie 2002). Indigenous children represent the fastest growing percentage of children entering the child welfare system (MacDonald and MacDonald 2007) and it is further projected that this number will continue to rise (Gough et al. 2005).

Furthermore, the rate of indigenous overrepresentation in the child welfare system continues to grow larger (CECW 2011:a). The most recent nation-wide estimates on child welfare statistics come from the Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-2008), published by the Public Health Agency of Canada (2010). This report tells us that the rate of child welfare investigations rose dramatically between 1998 and 2008 (PHAC 2010:1). In 1998, 135,261 child welfare investigations were conducted across Canada (a rate of 21.47 investigations per 1,000 children) (ibid). In 2003, this number had nearly doubled to 235,315 investigations (38.33 per 1,000 children) (PHAC 2010:2). The number of investigations remained at this ultimate high, even increasing slightly in 2008 to 235,842 investigations (39.16 per 1,000 children) (PHAC 2010:1-2).

While this breakdown merely indicates that the number of children who come under the scrutiny of the child welfare system has increased, another study (see Mulcahy and Trocmé 2010) suggests that such an increase also translates into a hike in children being removed from their homes. Mulcahy and Trocmé (2010) point out that between 1992 and 2007, the number of children being placed in out-of-home care increased from

42,000 (5.7 children in care per 1,000 children) to 67,000 (9.2 children in care per 1,000 children) respectively. Such trends impact indigenous children in particular (McLaurin et al. 2003). This is for the reason that indigenous children consistently enter the system at disproportionately higher rates than their non-indigenous peers (MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; McLaurin et al. 2003).

Indeed, the CIS-2008 report provides a similar picture. It shows that of the 235,842 child maltreatment⁵⁵ investigations conducted in 2008, 36% were found to be substantiated (which translates into 85,440 investigations or 14.19 investigations per 1,000 children) (PHAC 2010:1). Within those substantiated cases, 22% (or 18,510 investigation) involved indigenous children (PHAC 2010:39). The rate of substantiated child maltreatment investigations was four times higher for indigenous than non-indigenous children (49.69 per 1,000 indigenous children versus 11.85 per 1,000 non-indigenous children) (ibid). These findings correspond with an earlier study, which suggested that indigenous children are more likely to be removed from their homes than non-indigenous children (29% compared to 11% respectfully) (MacLaurin et al. 2003). And once removed, they are more likely to be placed in permanent rather than temporary care (ibid) and thus removed indefinitely.

In Alberta and Manitoba, these nation-wide trends are even more pronounced. As of 2007, there were 8,891 children in Alberta's 'care' (10.6 children per 1,000 children) (CECW 2011:b). Almost 64% of these children are indigenous, even though they make up 5% of the province's child population (Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel 2010:6). A review panel of the province's child welfare program suggests if nothing was

⁵⁵ In this study, "maltreatment" includes the following: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence (see PHAC 2010:3).

done to reverse this trend, the number of indigenous children in care might rise to 70% within five years (ibid). Likewise, the Alberta Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (AIS-2003) suggests that 29% (5,143 cases) of substantiated child maltreatment cases involved indigenous peoples (MacLaurin et al. 2005:81). Overall, indigenous children are overrepresented at every stage of contact with child welfare authorities in this province (ibid). They experience higher rates of continuing service, child welfare court intervention and out-of-home placement (MacLaurin et al. 2005:82;118).

In Manitoba, these numbers are even more staggering. Manitoba has the highest number of children in 'care' per capita than any other province or territory (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000) and this number is increasing at an alarming rate (Gough et al. 2005). In 1999 the number of children in the child welfare system was 5,358, which increased to 7,241 in 2007 (CECW 2011:c). Since then this number has drastically increased yet again. According to a 2010 report by the Manitoba Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA) to the legislative assembly,⁵⁶ there were 8,629 children in provincial 'care' in 2009 (Goodhand 2010:A17; Winnipeg Free Press 2010c:A12). While in 1997, at least 70% of children in 'care' were indigenous (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000), they made up almost 80% in the year 2000 (Gough et al. 2005). The OCA report suggests that this number now amounts to 86% (in Rabson 2010:A3). The same report further suggests that the number of indigenous children entering the child 'welfare' system in Manitoba increased by 13% while the number of non-indigenous children had actually declined (in Rabson 2010:A3). In 2000, the government of

⁵⁶ I rely on newspaper articles for the content of this report, because while it was leaked to the press it was never made available to the public.

Manitoba recognized that apprehension by child welfare authorities was the most common reason for “status Indian” children not living with their parents (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000). It is interesting to note that during the decade following the “Sixties Scoop”, the number of indigenous children in care tripled in the city of Winnipeg, while the number of non-indigenous children declined. (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000).

The notion that indigenous children are more readily removed from their homes than non-indigenous children (MacLaurin et al. 2003) corresponds with observations from Dr. Janet Smylie, a researcher at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto, who speaks of indigenous women disproportionately approached by or referred to child welfare workers (see Bailey 2009). Smylie is quoted saying, "Young aboriginal moms who had perfectly good networks of family support — sometimes they were being referred to have the social worker see them even though their family was strong" and "I remember [another] ... patient who had called into the hospital in a little bit of a panic. She had some anxiety and a strong accent. The triage nurse called me and said: 'There's something wrong with your patient. I think she's retarded'" (quoted in Bailey 2009). Similarly, the Yellowknife Women's Centre and the Centre for Northern Families report the same phenomenon (see Little forthcoming). According to them, indigenous babies are readily apprehended by social workers, frequently immediately after birth (in Little forthcoming). As one worker at the women's centre recalls:

An Aboriginal woman said child protection workers tried to talk to her at the hospital while she was in labour, but a nurse intervened. The same night the woman called the Yellowknife Women's Centre for help because she was afraid the child protect workers would come back to take her baby ... The moment the baby was born the doctor asked the nurse if she was going to

phone. The nurse left the labour room to contact child welfare services. The new mom was not allowed to hold or see her baby. Nor did the medical staff talk to her about the health of the newborn infant until the next day after child protection workers talked to hospital staff (quoted in Little forthcoming).

A similar incident happened just one month later.

Once again, child protection workers attended the hospital while the woman was in labour to inform her that her baby was being apprehended. ... The mother had one meeting with child protection workers prior to the birth of her baby in which they offered help in the form of diapers, formula and respite care once the baby was born. The woman was not informed of the possibility that her baby would be apprehended. The support never materialized and the baby was placed in a foster home with 12-14 other children for the first few months of its life (quoted in Little forthcoming).

Recent research data indicates that indigenous children are removed at disproportionate rates because of “neglect” (Blackstock, Trocmé and Bennett 2004). Indeed “Neglect” is cited as the primary reason for child 'welfare' interventions into indigenous families by child welfare workers (MacLaurin et al. 2008). Yet, when “neglect” is unpacked it is evident that it is equated to poverty-related issues (Trocmé, Knoke and Blackstock 2004). For child welfare purposes, “neglect” applies “to situations in which a child's caregiver fails to provide adequate clothing, food or shelter, deliberately or otherwise. The term 'neglect' can also apply to the abandonment of a child or the omission of basic care such as medical or dental care” (CECW 2011a). Over half (56%) of indigenous children who were removed after 'substantiated' child investigations, were taken out of their homes based on such charges (compared to 25% of non-indigenous children) (MacLaurin et al. 2008). Such trends are particularly troubling in Manitoba since more than forty per cent of all reserves in Canada that still have no running water or adequate sewage systems are located in this province (Fallding

2010a:A6, 2010b:H3). On these reserves housing conditions are truly inadequate and the next medical professional is often hundreds of miles away (Fallding 2010a:A6). Based on the criteria set out above, virtually every child living on such a reserve can be classified as “neglected”. The federal government exacerbates this situation by consistently underfunding⁵⁷ services for families and children living on reserves, while allocating funding towards models of apprehension rather than prevention (FNCFCFCS 2011a). Funding for child welfare is predominantly dedicated to foster placements rather than providing support for families in need (Little, forthcoming). For example, a foster parent in Alberta receives on average 1,380 dollars per month per child (Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). Additional money is provided for things such as babysitting and leisure activities (ibid). In contrast, a single low-income parent may receive a quarter of that amount (Canada Revenue Agency 2011).

This suggests that poverty, just as it was considered a reason to remove indigenous children during the “Sixties Scoop” (Fournier and Crey 1997:85-86; McKenzie and Hudson 1985), is still considered a form of neglect (Little forthcoming; Trocmé, Knoke and Blackstock 2004). This also means that the removal of indigenous children can be justified by pointing at the very conditions settler colonialism created in the first place (Chrichlow 2003).

Yet the removal of indigenous children certainly goes beyond issues of class and poverty. Colonial attitudes, or “white orthodoxy” (Turner 2006:15), underlie virtually

⁵⁷ Currently, the federal government spends about 78 cents for every dollar the provinces spend on child welfare programs. This lack of funding results in fewer services available to families and even more children being removed from their homes. It is only after indigenous children from reserves are taken into 'care' that the federal government pays dollar for dollar what the provinces pay. For this reason, the Assembly of First Nations and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society filed a complain to Canadian Human Rights Tribunal, which is still under consideration (see FNCFCFCS 2011a).

every relationship between indigenous peoples and the various arms of the state (be it social workers, police, judges, doctors, or nurses) (Beads and Kuollanen 2007; Lawrence and Dua 2005; Barker 2003; Green 1995). It is also in this sense that the contemporary child welfare system is charged with continuing to be assimilatory and colonial in effect (Chrichlow 2003; MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; Sinclair 2007). As Warry (2007) suggests, although the word 'assimilation' is now considered politically incorrect (and thus often avoided in public discourse), “assimilationist thinking remains pervasive” in Canadian society today (4). Chrichlow (2003) argues that the child welfare system today continues to function as a tool of assimilation (see also MacDonald and MacDonald 2007). As Chrichlow (2003) puts it, “The child welfare system is a very good example, in which Canada continues to fail Aboriginal people.” The system continues to reflect “white dominant mainstream ideas and ideals” (Chrichlow 2003), like it did in the past (Chrichlow 2003; Fournier and Crey 1997; Armitage 1995; Kline 1992; McKenzie and Hudson 1985). Sinclair (2007) charges that the child welfare system today is “no less prolific” than in the past (67). He refers to Lauri Gilchrist of Lakehead University who remarked that “given current child welfare statistics, the 'Sixties Scoop' has merely evolved into the 'Millennium Scoop’” (in Sinclair 2007:67).

It is evident from the above discussion thus far that the wholesale removal of indigenous children is far from being over. Rather, this colonial strategy seems to have intensified decade after decade. This also suggests that even though indigenous peoples have been delegated certain roles within the child welfare system and some nations are now overseeing service delivery to their own children, not much has changed.⁵⁸ Arguably

⁵⁸ At least in terms of the numbers of children being removed.

the changes that were made are not substantial enough or they were not put into practice (see, for example, Blackstock, Brown and Bennett 2007). For example, Chief Arlen Duman of Mathias Colomb Cree Nation at Pukatawagan claims that the process of 'devolution' in Manitoba has been effectively halted, while children are still being “clandestinely smuggled out of our communities” (in Kusch 2010d:B2). Likewise, in Alberta “aboriginal agencies” only provide limited services to people living on reserves (Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel 2010:5). Within their jurisdiction, these agencies have very limited influence over the ways service delivery is actually planned and carried out (Alberta Child Intervention Review Panel 2010:2).

This latter statement I believe goes to the heart of the matter. While indigenous peoples were 'delegated' some responsibilities and an impressive number of “aboriginal agencies” were created, it is far from true that they actually control or have autonomy over child welfare matters (see Bennett 2004). Indigenous peoples have been 'granted' more say *within* the provincial and federal frameworks of child welfare and thus can only function under their umbrella. This means, when child welfare services are provided by “aboriginal agencies”, they nonetheless must conform to provincial legislations and standards (see CECW 2011:a).⁵⁹ While I do not wish to discredit such developments, they are surely positive and their strategic importance should not be underestimated, they are nonetheless *reforms* to a system and power relationship that is inherently colonial. Such changes – even if improvements and welcome reforms – do not transform the system as such. They do not establish an alternative but rather carve out some space

⁵⁹ Bennett (2004) points out that many First Nation governments and child welfare agencies have only reluctantly accepted to work under this framework with the hope that this only constitutes an interim arrangement until self-determination is achieved (6-7).

within a system that continues to work in favor of the settler society. In this sense, these changes may better be understood as concessions that ultimately do not de-naturalize colonial control.

Warry (2007) calls such a trend the “indigenization of government services” which ultimately furthers the colonial project (3). In his opinion, the Canadian settler society and its government, seem incapable of conceiving of a relationship in which indigenous values and practices are placed on the same footing as their Euro-Canadian equivalents (Warry 2007:3). For this reason, “Throughout the 1980s and 1990s and into the present, Aboriginal people have been encouraged to assume roles in parallel programs, which have created a separate space for them while duplicating European social and political practices, thus protecting and ensuring the continuance of mainstream institutions” (Warry 2007:3).

In the case of Manitoba, this trend may have had adverse effects for indigenous peoples. The OCA report suggest that since the creation of “aboriginal-run” agencies in 2005, the number of children in provincial 'care' has risen by almost a third (in Winnipeg Free Press 2010c:A12). There might only be a correlation rather than causation here, yet the OCA report further contends that because of the new, regional system agencies effectively intensified their reach into communities (in Winnipeg Free Press 2010c:A12). These new agencies are not allowed to function autonomously. Rather, they have to work under the umbrella of the provincial child welfare statutes, and are obliged to strictly follow the protocols that outline every stage of contact between child welfare workers and families, including conforming to criteria that classify who is 'at risk', 'neglected' or 'when to remove' a child (see Gough 2006). As a result, more children who fit the

classification of “children in need” or “at risk” were 'detected' and subsequently had to be institutionalized (OCA in Winnipeg Free Press 2010c:A12). As Gilchrist suggests, many indigenous social workers who were recruited into child welfare services operating under the umbrella of Indian Child and Family Services, are now the ones forced to do the 'scooping' (in Sinclair 2007:67).

This is not to discredit the work that has been done by indigenous agencies – there truly has been transformative change (see, for example, Carrière 2010). There are many organizations that work tirelessly to change the system, both at the grassroots and institutional level (for example the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society). Further, Warry (2007) also speaks of the unsuspected transformation that can take place when indigenous peoples participate in western institutions and programs, oftentimes transforming their very nature (3). Rather, this is a critique of the settler society's idea to be 'inclusive', 'accommodating' and 'more sensitive' towards indigenous cultural practices. Or worse, to function under the delusion of having established truly “culturally appropriate” institutions (see Winnipeg Free Press 2010c: A12). Contemporary child welfare practices are not only a continuation of the colonial strategy (that is the removal of indigenous children), such discourses normalize settler colonialism because they fail to question the legitimacy of the child welfare system in the first place. They fail to question the settler society's intrusion into indigenous communities and do not problematize the fact that the Canadian state assumes disciplinary and regulatory power over indigenous peoples. Instead, reforms are made to an inherently colonial system while the Canadian state refuses to acknowledge indigenous self-governance or self-determination in any meaningful way. As such, it

continues to grant itself the power to decide the fate of children who essentially belong to different nations.

I am not charging that contemporary child welfare systems are intentionally founded on the premise to “eradicate” or “assimilate” indigenous peoples. Yet, the system is designed in such a way that it effectively funnels indigenous children out of their communities. Similar to Dorothy Robert's (2002) assessment in *Shattered Bonds*, I am also not arguing that child welfare workers are removing indigenous children because they deliberately try to implement colonialism or because they dislike indigenous peoples as such. And yet, potent stereotypes may still affect their evaluation of child 'maltreatment' or 'neglect', while the resulting removal of indigenous children is colonial in effect (see Chrichlow 2003). The next chapter will elaborate on the creation and perpetuation of such attitudes through media discourses. In Chapter Four I argue that media discourses in Alberta and Manitoba disseminate racist stereotypes that depict indigenous parents as inherently inadequate, neglectful and unfit. Such stereotypes function as a frame of reference for child welfare services and child interventions. As such they underlie, inform and justify the continued removal of indigenous children.

Conclusion

Seeing the residential school system, the “Sixties Scoop”, and the contemporary overrepresentation of indigenous children in 'care' from a biopolitical perspective, we can discern the continuation of a colonial strategy that works according to the colonial logic of elimination (Wolfe 2006). The removal of indigenous children, including their absorption into the colonial body, functions as a mechanism to eradicate indigenous

peoples and thus constitutes an instrument of colonization (LaDuke 2003:10). Over time, this strategy took different forms. Children previously placed in residential schools would later be removed by child welfare services. In this sense, the term “Sixties Scoop” truly is a misnomer. We can only discern such a 'scoop' if the history of child welfare practices is considered in isolation. Yet when placed alongside the residential school system, we can discern a *shift* in the institutionalization of indigenous children. The number of indigenous children being removed from their homes has increased since the inception of the residential school system. Rather than confined to the 1960's, the “scoop” started in 1878 and continues to this day.

Chapter Four

Analysis: Colonial Discourse in Alberta's and Manitoba's News Media

In this chapter I will present the findings that emerged from a discourse analysis of 198 newspaper articles, taken from the *Edmonton Journal*, *Calgary Herald*, *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun*. I began this analysis with the intention to focus on the discursive constructions of indigenous women (in particular mothers) and indigenous children. While an analysis of the research data certainly illuminated these aforementioned constructs, it further revealed some patterns that were not anticipated. A qualitative, open-ended and at times iterative approach also revealed some distinct controlling images of indigenous men (and to a smaller extent – fathers) and of what was constructed as 'aboriginal culture'.

In what follows, I discuss some of my findings⁶⁰ and provide an analysis of the significance and potential implications of the narratives that emerged. I will do so by providing summaries of the identified narratives, accompanied by illustrative examples in form of quotations. Overall, it was difficult to pull apart the discursive constructions of indigenous mothers, from those of their children, indigenous fathers, or 'aboriginal culture' as such, because they were interwoven in the coverage, with the construction of one giving meaning to the construction of the others. Moreover, there was considerable overlap between the media discourses in Alberta and Manitoba, with all four newspapers sharing most of the core narratives.⁶¹ Nonetheless, for analytical purposes, I have

⁶⁰ The findings presented here are those that emerged from the most prevalent patterns. Many narratives emerged that I was not able to pursue in the scope of this project, and some were not included because they were deemed only 'partially complete'.

⁶¹ This is not surprising given that *The Brandon Sun* and *Winnipeg Free Press* are owned by the same corporation (FP Canadian Newspapers Inc.), and the former readily prints articles originally published by the latter. The *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald* are similarly owned by the same media

separated out the main discursive themes used to represent each of those constructs. This chapter is thus thematically structured, starting with a discussion of the narratives that emerged of 'aboriginal culture'. Subsequently I will turn towards the colonial construction of 'aboriginal women', followed by a discussion of 'aboriginal men' and ending with the colonial discourse concerning 'aboriginal children'.

'Aboriginal Culture' – Spectacle of Debauchery

A common narrative threads through the vast majority of news stories that connects indigenous peoples with the child welfare system. This narrative, which is prevalent in both provinces and all four newspapers creates the image of a homogenous 'aboriginal culture' and subsequently imbues its creation with negative connotations. Newspaper articles represent indigenous peoples as “spectacles of debauchery” (Cannon 2011) – usually inebriated, lazy, neglectful and irresponsible. Moreover, First Nation reserves are depicted as sites of modern-day chaos that constitute potentially dangerous environments for indigenous children.

News stories consistently portray substance-abuse as a prominent feature of 'aboriginal culture'. Indigenous peoples are described as “drunks” and/or “drug addicts” in at least ten newspaper articles,⁶² while First Nation reserves are portrayed as sites of rampant substance abuse. For example, the *Brandon Sun* describes the Waywayseecappo reserve in Manitoba as full of “drugs and alcohol” (Hitchen 2010a) and an article in the

conglomerate (Postmedia Network Inc.) (see Chapter Two). Furthermore, some authors publish in both newspapers of their province. While there is no cross-publishing of articles across the two provinces, there is considerable overlap in the underlying narratives and colonial constructions disseminated in each province.

⁶² See, for example, Simons (2010a:B1); Seskus and Derworiz (2010:A6); Winnipeg Free Press (2010a:A3); Welch (2010a:A8); Hitchen (2010a, 2010b, 2010e); Brandon Sun (2010i); Cosgrove (2010).

Winnipeg Free Press describes Shamattawa, a Chippewa settlement in the same province, as follows:

Suicides, solvent abuse and violence have dominated headlines about the remote northern reserve. ... Shamattawa is supposed to be a dry reserve, but alcohol and solvent abuse are common. Solvents like gas, paint thinner, glue and other products that produce a high when inhaled are frequently abused on the reserve (Winnipeg Free Press 2010a:A3).

The notion that indigenous peoples are generally lazy is also a common theme within news stories.⁶³ For example, an indigenous teenager is quoted saying that her relatives “are at the rez, doing nothing” (in Simons 2010a:B1). Related to this idea is the notion that indigenous peoples are 'too lazy to work' and thus represent a 'drain on the system',⁶⁴ costing the Canadian taxpayer. Individuals, for example, are described as “living off welfare” (McIntyre 2010c), and as an article in the *Calgary Herald* informs its readers, “welfare rates on reserves are about 57 per cent in 2010” (Yaffe 2010:A10). Yaffe (2010) also remarks that “Kashechewan” (a Cree reserve located in northern Ontario) “has a jobless rate of 80 to 90 per cent” (ibid). It is little wonder that 'aboriginal issues' easily translate into “financial headaches” (Brandon Sun 2010q), as an article in the *Brandon Sun* proclaims. Joseph Quesnel (2010), author of an article published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, entitled “Some Reserves Just Aren't Viable”, explains that Canadian taxpayers are paying indigenous peoples on reserves “to do nothing” (Quesnel 2010:H11). “Instead of calling for more funding and infrastructure renewal (the usual prescription)” (ibid), which a different author calls “Pouring good tax dollars after bad” (Yaffe 2010:A10), Quesnel (2010) suggests relocating reserves that are not economically

63 See, for example, Simons (2010a:B1); Yaffe (2010:A10); Quesnel (2010:H11); Giroday and Welch (2010a:A3, 2010b:A5); Giroday (2010a:A6); Owen (2010a:A4); McIntyre (2010c); Borkowsky (2010).

64 See, for example, Yaffe (2010:A10); Quesnel (2010:H11); Gifford-Jones (2010b:A23); Simard (2010c:A1); McIntyre (2010c); Paul (2010b); Brandon Sun (2010q); Borkowsky (2010); Sanders (2010c).

viable to urban centres (H11). There, “Canadian aboriginals”, he believes, can “obtain jobs, housing and life-skills training” (Quesnel 2010:H11). It is interesting to note that Joseph Quesnel identifies himself as a “policy analyst”⁶⁵ and thus seemingly speaks with authority.

Specifically related to child welfare, Colleen Simard (2010c), author of a *Winnipeg Free Press* article states, “a single parent on welfare is given about 415 dollars a month to raise her child, but if that same child goes into care, a foster parent gets four times that amount from the province” (A1). Rather than questioning the logic of this reactive approach or remarking on the unequal distribution of financial support, the author asks, “Wouldn't it make sense to work hard to teach parents be good parents before they become a CFS case file?” (Simard 2010c:A1). This suggests that first, parents lose their children because of personal inadequacy, second the seemingly inadequate parents need to be educated in proper child-rearing and third, once removed, their children constitute a burden to the tax payer (see also Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23).

Besides being a 'drain on the system', indigenous peoples are further stereotyped as generally uncaring, irresponsible and neglectful.⁶⁶ This notion is exemplified by the news coverage around an accidental death that occurred in 2010 on the Shamattawa reserve, where an 11-year-old boy tragically died in a house fire. The boy, who was under the care of the Awasis Agency of Northern Manitoba (a First Nation-run child welfare agency), had stayed with his grandparents instead of his foster family over the weekend.

65 Quesnel is a policy analyst with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy, a neo-conservative think tank with offices in Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary.

66 See, for example, Giroday and Welch (2010a:A3, 2010b:A5); Simons (2010a:B1); Giroday (2010a:A6); Owen (2010a:A4); Quesnel (2010:H11); Sanders (2010a:A5); McIntyre (2010e:H1); Preprost (2010); Simard (2010d:A16); McIntyre (2010g); Stone (2010); Skerritt and Sanders (2010).

Coverage of his death paints a picture of neglectful relatives (because his grandparents, who are described as “speak[ing] only Cree” (Giroday and Welch 2010a:A3), were not aware that the boy was in the house), an “aboriginal-run” agency (Quesnel 2010:H11) failing to do its job, and “aboriginal” firefighters who did not seem to bother responding to the fire. For example, an article published in the *Edmonton Journal* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* by Giroday and Welch, entitled “Nobody Helped Rescue People Found Inside Shamattawa Blaze”, informs the reader that “It took RCMP 63 hours to learn a Shamattawa boy was missing and likely dead” and that “it's not clear why volunteer firefighters failed to respond to calls for help” or “why no one noticed an 11-year-old boy in foster care had vanished” (Giroday and Welch 2010a:A3, 2010b:A5). In a different article Giroday (2010a) similarly explains that “an 11-year-old boy was missing for two days in a northern community before people realized the child likely died in a house fire” (A6). Giroday and Welch further write that “[o]fficers tried to contact a local volunteer fire department, but no one came” (Giroday and Welch 2010a:A3, 2010:A5). Quesnel sums up that the “Canadian public was scandalized” that

...an 11-year-old boy with no supervision died in a house fire while under the ostensible care of the aboriginal-run Awasis Child and Family Services agency. It was 80 hours before this agency discovered the boy was dead. Meanwhile, the band's own fire department could not be reached during the emergency (Quesnel 2010:H11).

Other articles suggest that this incident is indicative of the larger social malaise found on the reserve. For example, an article entitled “First Nation Has History of Violent Deaths” informs its readers that the boy's death is no exception – “Bad news has been trickling out of Shamattawa over the last decade” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010a:A3). From substance abuse, to suicides, and violent homicides, this community is no stranger

to misery the article proclaims. For example, the article states, “A 16-year-old girl from Shamattawa was charged with second-degree murder in the death of a 15-year-old girl in January in 2007. The girls had been sniffing gasoline or solvents when they got into a dispute. The younger girl was hit on the head with a log” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010a:A3). Similarly, a different article published by the *Winnipeg Free Press* (2010b) proclaims that “More than 200 kids are in foster care. Substance abuse and suicide plague the community” (A4).

Some of these authors even make much stronger allegations in reference to this tragic event. Not only is the boy's death indicative of the turmoil in Shamattawa, the reserve itself is imagined as a symbol of the social chaos prevalent in First Nation communities at large. For example, Quesnel writes, “Shamattawa is only the tip of the iceberg. Dysfunction such as this is common on First Nations” (Quesnel 2010:H11). Indeed, according to an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* (2010b), “Shamattawa is a painful reminder of what has gone wrong with First Nations in Canada” (A4).⁶⁷ Thus, it is only a short stretch to extrapolate from the racist image of the 'inebriated, lazy, violent and neglectful aboriginal' to a stereotype about 'aboriginal culture' in general. Indigenous peoples are portrayed as the uncivilized Other, whose cultural inferiority is displayed in the “social chaos” (Simons 2010a:B1) that seemingly exists amongst them.

The image of 'reserve life' as uncivilized and chaotic is conveyed through descriptions of First Nation reserves as dirty, sub-standard in terms of living conditions

⁶⁷ These articles do not mention that the grandparents' house was made up of a simple wood-frame, which was set on fire by their stove (the only source of heat), nor that no one was home because they had run out of heating fuel and were forced to stay with someone else. Only one article mentions that the local 'fire department' consists of three volunteers who have no 911 emergency phone service, no pagers, or two-way radios. When a fire breaks out, someone has to run to the firefighters' homes and inform them in person (Giroday and Welch 2010a:A3).

(e.g. falling-apart houses, stray dogs, no running water, inadequate sewage systems) and ridden with social problems (e.g. physical and sexual violence, suicides, unemployment, disease epidemics, family breakdowns).⁶⁸ Graphic imagery, such as “overflowing outhouses and latrine buckets” (Fallding 2010c) abounds. There seems to be a consensus amongst newspaper articles on what one can find on reserves, namely “stubbornly high poverty rates, broken families, substance abuse and unemployment” (Owen 2010c:A6). Yaffe (2010), in an article published in the *Calgary Herald*, sums it up as follows, “aboriginals often live in poverty and many of the settlements, beleaguered by isolation, are beset by teen suicide, alcoholism, sexual abuse and child neglect” (A10). These claims are sometimes substantiated through personal accounts. For example, an indigenous woman is quoted saying “It's tough living on a res. ... I'm just trying to live day by day” (Stone 2010; see also Simons 2010a:B1). This resonates with a statement by Gord Mackintosh, Manitoba's Family Services Minister, who notes, “aboriginal leaders have used the words 'crisis' or 'chaos' to describe whole communities in northern Manitoba” (quoted in Brandon Sun 2010d).

It is interesting to note that justifications for the colonial constructions of First Nation reserves as sites of modern-day chaos are not necessarily drawn from recent events, nor do they necessarily refer to incidents that occurred in Alberta or Manitoba alone. The instrumental value of this narrative becomes transparent when we see that 'evidence' for this claim is drawn from all over the country and from various decades. Yaffe (2010) further reminds us that:

68 See, for example, Simons (2010a:B1); Yaffe (2010:A10); Winnipeg Free Press (2010a:A3, 2010b:A4); Quesnel (2010:H11); Owen (2010c:A6); Santin (2010); Brandon Sun (2010c); Fallding (2010c); Stone (2010).

In 2008 two toddlers were found frozen to death in a snowbank, left there by their inebriated father, on the Yellow Quill First Nation in Saskatchewan. Wild dog packs have been killing children on reserves. Six such cases have been documented since 1998. And who can forget news reports back in 1993 about gas-sniffing teens in Davis Inlet, Labrador (A10)?

Furthermore, not only are First Nation reserves negatively constructed, so are urban neighbourhoods that are home to a large number of indigenous peoples. For example, a description of such a neighbourhood in Kenora can be found in two articles in the *Brandon Sun*: “‘The neighbourhood where the shooting occurred is described as violent and filled nightly with drunks and drug addicts who are often fighting with each other’, said Pastor Frank Kowal” (Santin 2010; Brandon Sun 2010c). An *Edmonton Journal* article refers to such a neighbourhood in Edmonton as a “war zone” (Gelinias and Ibrahim 2010:B1). Quoting an informed citizen, Gelinias and Ibrahim (2010) inform their readers that “It’s survival of the fittest down there” (quoted in *ibid*).⁶⁹

Having established that “social chaos” (Simons 2010a:B1) is inherent to ‘aboriginal culture’, news articles further imply (and sometimes openly state) that such a background may constitute a harmful environment to indigenous children.⁷⁰ For example, five articles warn that living with ‘aboriginal relatives’ may put the child at “risk” (see Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a; Reynolds 2010:A3; Brandon Sun 2010d; Auriat 2010). Quite forcefully, the author of an article that was published in both, the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald*, pleads, “how many more aboriginal toddlers have to be killed ... before we confront the horrific, drug-and-alcohol-fuelled social breakdown in [the] native community” (Simons 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12)? Giroday and Welch (2010a) use the death

⁶⁹ See McIntyre (2010e:H1) for a similar description of a Winnipeg neighbourhood.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Simons (2010a:B1, 2010b:B1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12); Yaffe (2010:A10); Kusch (2010b:A4, 2010a), Reynolds (2010:A3), Brandon Sun (2010d), Auriat (2010).

of the boy who died in Shamattawa as evidence of this 'truth claim'. They write, “The problems that plague northern communities – poor housing, spotty firefighting and fractured families – fused into a tragedy early Saturday morning and apparently led to the death of an 11-year old boy...” (Giroday and Welch 2010a:A3). What these articles insinuate is that anyone with 'common sense' would realize that a “war zone” (Gelinas and Ibrahim 2010:B1) is not a suitable place to raise a child.

Furthermore, many articles imply that indigenous relatives, family and friends constitute a bad influence on their children and may thus hamper their chances in life. Simply being raised in an indigenous household is constructed as a reason to fear the degeneracy of the child. Some authors, as the following example from the *Edmonton Journal* demonstrates, are even more extreme in their claims. Moreover, because this article exemplifies most of the controlling images that I have discussed thus far, I quote it at length. Simons, the author of this article, describes the experience of four young indigenous women who are all “veterans of Alberta's foster care system” (2010a:B1). The article describes the harmful environments these women had to grow up in, explains that their relatives were nothing but a bad influence, and implies that they were saved by the settler society. Thus, the title: “College Girls' Overcome Foster Care, Choose 'White Way' Out” (Simons 2010a:B1; emphasis added). The premise of the article is that these four women are trying to make something of themselves by going back to school which was enabled through their permanent removal from their families by child welfare authorities. “While they had their ups and downs in the foster system,” Simons writes, “they say it was better than the alternative” (2010a:B1), that is, growing up at home. One of the teens is quoted saying, “For me, it's a good thing I grew up in care. ... If I'd lived

with my family, I wouldn't be at NorQuest. To be honest, I'd be drunk. Now, many more doors are open for me” (in Simons 2010a:B1). Her friend agrees and is quoted saying, “When you're in care, you're not around all the bad influences. ... You've got more supports [sic]. If you're in a bad environment, where there's alcohol and drug abuse, and violence, you need to get away from those environments, so you don't have a drunk or drug addict as a role model” (in Simons 2010a:B1). These women received no love, nor protection, Simons explains (ibid). “The only time they ever say they love you [is] when they're drunk” as one of them recalls (in Simons 2010a:B1). Instead, all they encountered was neglect: “Carla says she and her siblings sometimes drank because they were hungry and there was no food in the fridge – only liquor” (Simons 2010a:B1). Simons further informs the reader that “They all started drugging or drinking when they were kids, as young as nine or 10. They used because it reduced stress. Because it was the way to fit in” (ibid). Growing up in such an environment, the girls did not see the 'immorality' of their behaviour. As one explains, “You're raised around it, so you think that it's OK” (in Simons 2010a:B1) While being placed in provincial care allowed them to gain some perspective, the women still struggle to withstand their relatives' bad influence. As Simons (2010a) explains to the reader, “When they go home for visits, it's hard not to slip back into old patterns. When she's at the reserve, Teryl says she spends a lot of time drinking with her family. It's a way ... to connect” (B1).

This article serves various purposes. For one, it tells a story of indigenous relatives as 'uncivilized, neglectful drunks' whose bad influences almost irrevocably corrupted these children. Yet, fortunately they decided to choose the “white way” out. It further is presented as a witness account, allowing the settler-as-spectator to catch a

glimpse of the chaotic spectacle that is 'aboriginal culture'. This allows the outsider to see just how entrenched substance-abuse in aboriginal culture really is. Indeed, we learn that it is a way to “connect” and “fit it”. This story further normalizes the removal of indigenous children by the settler society. The reader is made to believe that indigenous children would be safer, and had better chances in life, if they were removed from these potentially volatile situations. Removing them is a way to save indigenous children from their backgrounds. This not only justifies but also creates a need for their continued removal.

What is implicitly understood and often explicitly stated, is the notion that the wholesale removal of indigenous children is the fault of indigenous peoples themselves.⁷¹ Rather than a result of colonialism, the reasons for their apprehension are presented as residing in the supposed 'cultural inferiority' of indigenous peoples or the personal shortcomings of their biological parents. Ahistorical newspaper accounts speak of a “corrosive social chaos that drives so many native kinds into care” (Simons 2010b:B1). In Manitoba specifically, “family breakdown” or “parenting breakdown” (Lambert and Preprost 2010) are given as the most common reasons for the disproportionately high number of indigenous children in care. For example, articles in both the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun* that write about Family Services Minister Mackintosh's concern about the high number of children in provincial care (in particular that 85% of them are indigenous) insinuated that their overrepresentation lies with the 'aboriginal community'. “We have some very serious family breakdown in this province that is

⁷¹ See, for example, Simons (2010a:B1, 2010b:B1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12); Yaffe (2010:A10); Quesnel (2010:H11); Kusch (2010b:A4, 2010a); Simard (2010c:A1); Simard (2010d:A16); Brandon Sun (2010d); Lambert and Preprost (2010); Brandon Sun (2010e).

causing some enormous pressure” both newspapers proclaim (Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a; Brandon Sun 2010d). Indigenous families are thus described as “dysfunctional” (McIntyre 2010g; Simard 2010a:A18) or presented as such.

The word 'dysfunction' is not only used to describe individual families, but entire communities. As Quesnel puts it, “Dysfunction ... is common on First Nations. ... Consider the high proportion of First Nation children under foster care” (2010:H11). An article in the *Brandon Sun* quotes Aboriginal and Northern Affairs Minister Eric Robinson expressing a similar sentiment, in that indigenous peoples “are marred by all forms of dysfunction”, having “the highest proportion of the province's population in conflict with the justice system, the highest proportion in prisons, and tragically high numbers of children in the child-welfare system” (in Brandon Sun 2010e; see also Simard 2010d:A16).

We can see thus far, that a picture is emerging of 'aboriginal culture' as chaotic and uncivilized and hence culturally inferior to the settler society. Indigenous peoples are imagined as inherently lazy, neglectful, irresponsible and prone to substance-abuse. In a sense, this is nothing new. Colonial discourses have always presented indigenous peoples as culturally inferior to justify colonial rule and the usurpation of indigenous land (see, for example, Smith 2005; Said 1978). Indeed, colonial control is inseparable from the inferiorization and dehumanization of the indigenous population. As Aimé Césaire (1994) puts it, “colonization = 'thingification'” (177). To use Foucault's terminology, such a framework constitutes a discursive 'regime of truth', within which we find a reduction of diverse subject peoples to a monolithic form (Said 1978), a perception of certain practices as indicative of innate or inherent traits, and a relegation of indigenous peoples

to particular relations of inferiority, which are subsequently naturalized (Jiwani 2005:3).

Such constructions not only naturalize colonial control, but also normalize the removal of indigenous children by the settler society. This narrative makes the argument that an 'aboriginal environment' constitutes a harmful space in which to raise a child, while suggesting that the 'social chaos' in indigenous communities is to blame for the disproportionate number of indigenous children in provincial care. Indeed, the “dysfunctional aboriginal family” (McIntyre 2010g) seems to emerge as an emblem of child neglect. As will become evident, this narrative serves as the backdrop and point of reference for other controlling images that are understood in relation to it.

The 'Aboriginal Woman' – Archetype of an Unfit Mother

Newspaper articles disseminate especially negative representations of indigenous women and mothers. The controlling images evoked can be grouped into four categories, namely 'substance-abuser/pregnant drunk', 'prostitute/sexual deviant', 'baby-machine' and above all the 'unfit mother'. While different narratives emphasize distinct controlling images, all of these constructs intersect and reinforce each other. The 'substance abuser/pregnant drunk' is portrayed as a selfish woman concerned only with the fulfillment of her own desires, regardless of the consequences for her child. This intersects with the 'prostitute/sexual deviant', portrayed as a woman of low morals who will sell her body for drugs and alcohol. This in turn is tied to narratives around increased fertility, which reinforces the image of the 'baby machine' - a woman or teenage girl, who carelessly 'breeds' too often and too soon, yet is incapable and often unwilling to care for her offspring. Thence, the image of the 'unfit mother' – the stereotype that underlies and

intersects with all others – portrays the indigenous woman in violation of every quality of a 'good' mother. Indigenous mothers are *always* portrayed as neglectful, usually incompetent and sometimes outright abusive.⁷²

Since substance abuse is perceived as inherent to 'aboriginal culture', it is not surprising that indigenous mothers are seen through a similar lens. Fifteen articles,⁷³ from all four newspapers, bring these women in connection with drug and alcohol abuse. Labels such as “drunk” or “drug addict” (Simons 2010a:B1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12), “alcoholic mother” (Gelinas and Ibrahim 2010:B1), “the drunken woman” (Santin 2010; Brandon Sun 2010c) are commonly used to describe indigenous women. One article quotes a young indigenous woman who tells one of “too many painful memories” (Simons 2010a:B1) in relation to her mother. She speaks “of days when her mother would go out to party and not come back for a week” (ibid). When describing the plight of an indigenous child before he was placed in provincial care, Gelinas and Ibrahim explain that “he was taken from his alcoholic mother, who neglected him and often left him without food” (2010:B1). The authors go on to describe that the child “suffered from severe neglect, and emotional and physical abuse starting at an early age. He also suffered from fetal alcohol syndrome, depression, often threw tantrums...” (Gelinas and Ibrahim 2010:B1). Referring to a different boy in similar circumstances, Simons explains in an article, published both in the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald*, that “the little

⁷² This applies to all newspaper articles that make a reference to indigenous mothers. In all of the newspaper articles, there was but *one*, published in the *Brandon Sun*, which included a quote from the mother of a missing indigenous woman who referred to her daughter as someone who “enjoyed being a mom” (see Greene 2010.). This was the only positive representation of an indigenous mother – and it came from a relative, which may be interpreted as 'biased'.

⁷³ See, for example, Simons (2010a:B1, 2010b:B1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12); Gelinas and Ibrahim (2010:B1); Welch (2010a:A8, 2010b:A6); Gifford-Jones (2010b:A23); Rabson (2010a:A7); McIntyre (2010l:A4); Giroday and Welch (2010:c); Santin (2010); Brandon Sun (2010c); Brandon Sun (2010l); Hitchen (2010e).

boy's life was troubled from the outset. His mother was a drug addict” (2010d:A3, 2010e:A12). Similarly, articles in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun*, describe an indigenous mother as “extremely 'low-functioning’” and explains that she “battled alcohol abuse which often took her out of the home for long periods” (McIntyre 2010a:A12; Hughes 2010). Even when an indigenous mother is described as having “a history of mental health problems” it is connected to alcohol consumption (see Simons 2010b:B1). Similarly, a murdered indigenous woman is described as someone who “struggled with addiction from a young age and was the mother of an infant son” (Giroday and Welch 2010:c).

This 'type' of woman is portrayed as selfish, irresponsible, and someone who puts her own desire for alcohol and drugs above any considerations for her child. As can already be inferred from some of the above quotations, the mother as 'substance-abuser' is also said to continue drinking during pregnancy and thus believed to inflict a form of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)⁷⁴ on her child. While it is estimated that the number of infants born with fetal alcohol syndrome in Canada may be as low as 1 out of 1,000 (AADAC 2007), media discourses in both provinces depict FASD as constituting an ubiquitous problem. Numerous articles,⁷⁵ in all four newspapers, connect the 'aboriginal mother' to “FASD-babies”. While there are no statistics that hint at whether FASD actually occurs more often in indigenous than non-indigenous children (AADAC 2007), it is nonetheless assumed.

74 The term FASD is used to describe a range of mental or physical disabilities that, it is believed, may be caused by maternal alcohol consumption during pregnancy. Fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) may be one of those conditions.

75 See, for example, Simons (2010b:B1, 2010c:A1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12); Gelinat and Ibrahim (2010:B1); Welch (2010b:A6); Gifford-Jones (2010b:A23); Kusch (2010b:A4, 2010a).

The story of the drunk 'aboriginal mother' who gives birth to the “FASD-baby” is reminiscent of the moral panic around “crack babies” (during the mid-80s to late 90s) in the United States. As elaborated by Markens (2007) there was an emergence of a 'fetal rights' discourse during the peak of the war on drugs in the US, “merging racial anxieties with gendered and reproductive concerns” (Markens 2007:53). While typical cocaine and crack users at that time were young white men, media discourses consistently portrayed crack as a drug used by African Americans (Ortiz and Briggs 2003:46). Because prenatal cocaine exposure was said to result in “crack babies”, pregnant black mothers were at the centre of public scrutiny. As Cynthia Daniels (1997) points out, drug-addicted women are “magnets for social anxieties” (583). For those concerned about women's “drift from 'selfless motherhood'”, pregnant addicts represent women who refuse to “postpone their momentary 'pleasure' (addiction) for the interests of the fetus” (Daniels 1997:583). Thus, one of the most marginalized and most vulnerable groups in the United States – black, impoverished, drug-addicted, pregnant mothers – became a “symbol of everything that was wrong with the country” (Ortiz and Briggs 2003:45). Several US states considered broadening the definition of 'child neglect' to include prenatal drug or alcohol consumption. This led to the criminalization of “crack mothers” and resulted in the prosecution of hundreds of women for “fetal abuse” (Markens:54-55). Moreover, tens of thousands of women lost their children to child welfare services (Ortiz and Briggs 2003:44).⁷⁶

Similarly, the mother of the “FASD-baby” is rendered immoral, pathological and downright abusive. The notion that prenatal drug or alcohol exposure constitutes a form

⁷⁶ The irony is that this moral panic was grounded in falsehoods. Crack, in fact, has very little if any effect on the fetus (see Ortiz and Briggs 2003).

of 'fetal abuse' seems to be held by many professionals in Manitoba. The Office of the Children's Advocate (OCA), for example, appears to perceive FASD through such a lens. Two newspaper articles from the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Brandon Sun* quote the OCA's 2010 budget submission which describes many foster children as having “very significant special needs due to FASD or trauma as a result of abuse and neglect” (in Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a). This narrative functions to shift attention from the structural violence of colonial control to a victim-blaming understanding of the women's situations. Substance-abuse is not seen as symptomatic of cultural, political, social and economic marginalization, but rather a character weakness – an expression of the debauchery innate to 'aboriginal culture'.

Some of the drastic solutions offered to this apparent FASD-'problem' are expressed in a column published by the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The author of this column is a well-respected physician whose 'professional advice' is published across Canada. In this article, Gifford-Jones⁷⁷ shares the feedback he received on a previously published column. In this earlier column he considered a question which also constituted the title of his piece, namely: “Should Women Who Deliver Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) Children Be Sterilized?” Gifford-Jones answers this question in the affirmative – according to him, these mothers should indeed be sterilized (see Gifford-Jones 2010a). In his professional opinion, “good sense dictates” to stop this “maternal madness” (Gifford-Jones 2010a). In his follow-up column (Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23) he quotes and

⁷⁷ Dr. Gifford-Jones MD is the pen name of Dr. Ken Walker, graduate of the University of Toronto and Harvard Medical School. He has a regular medical column which is published in 70 Canadian newspapers, several U.S. newspapers and the Epoch Times which is published in a number of European countries. It can thus be inferred that his controversial opinion on this matter may be quite influential. Not simply because his profession allows him to speak from a position of power and thus make 'truth claims', but simply also because of its reach.

paraphrases some of the responses he received from several informed citizens – some who disagree with his position, but most who share his enthusiasm. Since indigenous women and mothers are the ones consistently associated with alcohol abuse, drug use and FASD, the target group of this proposed sterilization campaign is easily inferred. His readers indeed draw the same connection. Gifford-Jones (2010b) writes that he received a particularly “overwhelming response from Winnipeg” and quotes the response of one of them: “We have a large native population and as a social worker I've been aware of this tragedy for years. I know a family with five FAS children. They are always in jail, show no remorse, and they will never change. Please keep writing about controversial issues” (quoted in Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23).

Besides advocating for the forced sterilization of indigenous women, such a description renders indigenous peoples – and in particular indigenous mothers and their children – inherently pathological and utterly irredeemable. Another reader, also seemingly aware of the racial implications, submitted the following response: “I hope you receive many positive responses, but I'm sure you will be accused of cultural genocide and racism” (quoted in Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23). Similar feedback comes from another reader, whose eugenicist undertones reveal anxieties over the 'health' of the 'human race' and thus stresses the need for reproductive control of the 'undesired'. She writes, “Boy, have you opened a can of worms! I have first-hand experience with this problem and I agree with sterilizing these women. But the do-gooders will scream bloody murder about rights. So this will only happen in 3010. By then the world will be so overpopulated that no one will give a damn” (quoted in Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23). Reminiscent of an earlier narrative which imagines indigenous peoples as a drain on the

system, Gifford-Jones (2010b) shares that a “major complaint was from readers who are tired of irresponsible women playing 'mommy' at taxpayer expense” (A23). Some readers, he writes, “suggested that women on crack cocaine and other drugs that harm children should also be sterilized” (ibid). Gifford-Jones ends his column with an expression of 'poor-bashing' (see Swanson 2001). He proclaims that the replies “also provided the occasional chuckle when one reader suggested adding birth-control pills to cheap liquor” (Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23).

Another controlling image emerged from an analysis of the newspapers. This image represents indigenous women as prostitutes and sexual deviants. They are either explicitly brought in connection with the sex-trade⁷⁸ or it is implicitly evoked that they have 'too many' sexual partners. This 'type' of woman is portrayed as someone who is willing to exchange sexual favours to feed her drug and alcohol addiction. In this narrative, she is not only selfish and uncaring, but also promiscuous and 'loose'. For example, while referring to the troubled upbringing of an indigenous 'street kid' an article in the *Edmonton Journal* implicitly describes the mother as follows. The authors write, “the boy was subjected to sexual abuse by his mother's boyfriends, who provided her with alcohol and drugs” (Gelinias and Ibrahim 2010:B1). Not only is the mother implicitly blamed for failing to protect her child from abuse (which in the article is presented as the reason for his failure to succeed in life). She is also portrayed as someone who trades sex for alcohol and drugs, and who is apparently involved with multiple partners.

We can find a similar representation in a news story (see McIntyre 2010c) that

⁷⁸ See, for example, Sanders (2010c:A6, 2010d); McIntyre (2010e:H1, 2010l:A4); Giroday and Welch (2010:c); Paul (2010a).

covers the repeated sexual assault of an indigenous woman. The victim was a female inmate who was assaulted by her jail councillor. The perpetrator, McIntyre writes, “persuade[d] a female inmate to have sex with him” (2010c). He further gave “the woman cigarettes in exchange for flashing” (ibid), the author explains. Moreover, he “offered the woman \$40 for oral sex and said he would 'put in a good word' to help get her out of jail early. She performed oral sex on at least three occasions, but was never paid...” (McIntyre 2010c). Even though this woman found herself in an extremely vulnerable situation, the article manages to minimize the assault by portraying her as 'loose', willing and prostituting herself. Indeed, it leaves the impression that the only wrongdoing was not to pay her for her 'services'.

An article that features a story about a US-based pornographer, who exploited young indigenous women – and girls – for his porn site, is written in a similar vein. The article starts out by supposedly drawing attention to the plight of these women: “A Florida-based pornography website that claims to feature aboriginal women from Winnipeg is exploiting vulnerable young people, the leader of an aboriginal women's group said” (Paul 2010a). Yet, Paul (2010a) quickly points out that “The women were *willing*, the site says” (emphasis added). He explains that the owner of the site “advertises videos of aboriginal girls performing sex acts, which ... were made when he took a trip to Winnipeg earlier this year” and that one of the “native city women” was “at least seven months pregnant” (Paul 2010a). Paul (2010a) passes along that the pornographer describes this as “his' unique ethnic niche of 'native American Indian girls’”. What thus started out as an attempt to draw attention to the exploitation of these women, ended with something that sounded more like a promotion of the website.

This particular stereotype seems to be a contemporary version of an image previously identified as the 'easy squaw' (see Anderson 2006:106; Acoose 1995:39). This woman is portrayed as “inherently dirty” and tainted by “sexual sin” (Smith, 2005:10). Lacking any rights to bodily integrity (ibid) she is imagined as nothing more than a “vessel” for “sexual release” (Maracle 1996:16; 24). Howard Adams (1989) expresses a similar sentiment in *Prison of Grass*. In this book he retells an encounter with officers of the Mounted Police in the 1970s in which he claims that police officers referred to Métis women as “halbreed babes [who] liked to have their fun lying down ... [who] liked it better from a whiteman ... redskin hotboxes who didn't wear any pants at all ... [and who went] to bed with anyone for a beer” (quoted in Acoose 1995:48). While contemporary news stories may not print similar sentiments in such explicit language, their implicit associations paint a very similar picture. Indigenous women are still perceived through such a lens. Indeed, one newspaper article (Sanders 2010b) quotes Elizabeth Comack, Head of the Sociology Department at the University of Manitoba, who articulates a common complaint by indigenous women. She says, “Women can't walk down the street without police thinking they're sex-trade workers” (Sanders 2010b). For example, Comack shares, “one teen said she stopped at a payphone ... to call her dad for a ride and police stopped her for prostitution” (quoted in Sanders 2010b). This stereotype, in which racism and sexism intersect, renders indigenous women “sexually violable” (Smith 2005:10) and, thus, condones sexual violence against them. Since sexual violence and femicide of indigenous women continue to be powerful strategies of colonial heteropatriarchy in present-day Canada (see, for example, NWAC/Sisters in Spirit 2010), it is not surprising that this stereotype remains strong today.

The image of the 'prostitute/sexual deviant' is further connected to racial anxieties over increased fertility. Because these women – and in particular young women – are imagined to be irresponsible and promiscuous, it is feared that they will continue to become pregnant. This then intersects with the image of the 'baby-machine'. This woman is imagined as having 'too many' children, getting pregnant usually 'too early' in their life, and bearing the children of multiple men. This woman does not plan to get pregnant – she *lets* herself get pregnant.

Even if completely irrelevant to a news story the authors of newspaper articles occasionally share the number of children a particular woman has, that her children were conceived from different men, that she already has “children from a previous relationship” (Skerritt and Sanders 2010), or that she had her child when she was only x years old. Some articles however, are more explicit. For example, Welch (2010b:A6), author of an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, quotes a midwife who practices in Norway House. She describes her patients as “very young, with several children already, living in unstable or substandard houses that might be seriously overcrowded, riddled with mould or spottily heated” (quoted in Welch 2010b:A6). A reader response to Gifford-Jones's (2010b:A23) article tells of “a situation in which a drug addict had 13 children, all brain-affected: 12 had been removed from her care yet she was fighting to keep the 13th child!”

This later quote hints at another settler-concern, that 'unfit mothers' continue to procreate, even though their previous children had already been taken from them. For example, referring to a foster child, Simons, in an article printed in the *Calgary Herald* and *Edmonton Journal* explains, “By the time he was born, his older brother and sister

had already been placed in foster care...” (2010d:A3, 2010e:A12).⁷⁹ Similarly, McIntyre, in an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, describes an indigenous mother as someone who “has a long history with social services, including having two older children seized and made permanent CFS wards” (2010l:A4.). Since it is assumed that this 'type' of woman will not properly take care of her next child, and thus the province will have to apprehend her next-born too, her irresponsible and seemingly unnecessary procreation is seen as costing the tax payer. For example, a reader response published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* states, “parenting is the hardest and most important job in the world. That is why I would ask you [i.e. the author she responds to] to encourage your readers to practice good birth control until they have acquired the education, employment and parenting skills, and the maturity to do the job” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010d:A13). As yet another informed citizen puts it, “*If you can't feed them, don't breed them*” (in Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23; emphasis added).

A graphic portrayal of an 'unfit mother' can be found in an article published by the *Winnipeg Free Press* and written by McIntyre (2010e:H1).⁸⁰ This article exemplifies all of the controlling images discussed thus far and I therefore wish to quote it at length. It brings together the image of the 'substance abuser/pregnant drunk', the 'prostitute/sexual deviant' and the 'baby-machine'. Combined, these images then create the myth of the 'unfit mother'. Not only is this woman depicted as selling her body for alcohol and drugs, she does so while pregnant and thus harms her child. It is further established that she

79 See also, McIntyre (2010e:H1); Seskus and Derworiz (2010:A6).

80 It has to be mentioned that the author of this article did not explicitly identify this woman as 'aboriginal'. Nonetheless, the area in which she was found was described as one with a disproportionately large indigenous population. Moreover, given that prostitution and substance-abuse (particularly during pregnancy) is commonly associated with indigenous women, the article – at the very least – leaves the impression that the woman is indigenous.

continues to get pregnant even though she could not take care of her first child – let alone herself. She is portrayed as uneducated, and given all the wrong 'choices' that she has made in the past, unlikely to ever make something of herself. The authors describe her as follows:

She is seven months pregnant, the bump in her belly against her otherwise slender frame an obvious indicator. Her nose constantly runs, her arms dotted with recent puncture marks. She can't seem to stand still, her eyes darting in all directions. 'Ashley' is out here tonight, standing on a West End street corner in skin-tight clothes, claiming she needs money to eat. But given her agitated state, it looks far more likely she will use the money she makes selling her body to strange men to feed her drug addiction. ... She is 21 and claims she has been working in the city's sex trade for about five years. Her first child, which she had at the age of 14, was seized by Child and Family Services. Ashley won't say how much money she makes but claims she does very well, even obviously pregnant. Apparently that doesn't deter johns from picking her up. For some, it may even be a bonus. 'I make more than all the other girls,' Ashley boasts. 'I'm beautifuller [sic].' Ashley is due to give birth at the end of October – she won't say who the father is – and claims she is determined to take a better path in life. ... But on this night, her only focus is finding her next customer. And getting her next fix (McIntyre 2010e:H1).

Since the image of the 'substance abuser/pregnant drunk' has established that indigenous mothers neglect their children in utero, it comes as no surprise that they are said to be abusive towards their infants as well. Whenever possible, newspaper articles provide graphic accounts of such abuse. One such example comes from an article published in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, entitled “Mom in Shelter Killer her Little Girl – Toddler Severely Abused, Manslaughter Hearing Told”, again written by McIntyre (2010l:A4). In this article the author explains how an indigenous mother “has admitted suffocating her severely abused two-year-old daughter while living inside a women's shelter under the supervision of Child and Family Services, which had returned the girl to her care only months earlier” (McIntyre 2010l:A4.). The child, he writes, “suffered more

than 30 separate injuries to her body in the days preceding her death. They include several bite marks to her legs and severe bruising on her vagina as a result of being kicked so hard it left a footprint impression behind” (2010l:A4). He continues the article by quoting the prosecuting attorney who claims, “There were also bruises covering virtually every portion of the child's body. ... The child had been crying as a result of the pain she was in from the injuries her mother had inflicted on her” (quoted in McIntyre 2010l:A4). Therefore, “The mother eventually killed her daughter by placing a hand over her mouth and holding it there for up to two minutes...” (ibid). “After her child went limp” the Crown attorney states, the mother simply “placed her in her crib, covered her with a blanket, turned off the lights and closed the door” (McIntyre 2010l:A4). Apparently the mother showed no signs of remorse or guilt. As McIntyre (2010l) states, she “then sat quietly in her suite at the Native Women's Transition Centre for several hours, making no attempt to call for help” (A4).

Such graphic accounts not only facilitate the construction of the 'abusive mother'. The instrumental value of these stories becomes evident when newspapers also point out that a child died after being *reunited* with their mother. Welch, in an article published both in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Brandon Sun* (2010h:A8, 2010i), conveys such a message. After describing the arrest of a mother who “faces charges of second-degree murder, aggravated assault and failing to provide the necessities of life”, this author points out that “The child was formerly in the care of an aboriginal child welfare agency” (Welch 2010h:A8, 2010i). This statement implies that the child would still be alive had they not been returned to their unfit mother.

Yet even if the mothers are not abusive themselves, failure to protect their

children from harm seems to be constructed as equally indicative of her incompetence. Thus, the 'unfit mother' is also someone who is either unable or unwilling to protect her children. Probably the product of child neglect themselves, these women never learned what it means to be a 'good mother'. For example, newspaper articles blame indigenous mothers for failing to protect their children from their abusive fathers or her sexual partners (see, for example, Gelinas and Ibrahim 2010:B1; McIntyre 2010a:A12; Hughes 2010). They are equally at fault if their children are harmed because of an accident (see, for example, Skeritt and Sanders 2010; Preprost 2010). Alternatively, the mothers are seen as setting their children up for a life of misery and/or to continue the 'cycle of abuse'. It thus becomes their fault if the child experiences harm later on in life (see, for example, Gelinas and Ibrahim 2010:B1; Simons 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12). Colleen Simard, who has a regular column in the *Winnipeg Free Press*, shares some of her early morning musings in one of her articles (2010c:A1). She writes the following: “During my walks in my neighbourhood I also see moms pushing babies in strollers and struggling to do right by their kids. They are poor, stressed-out and some of them clearly lack parenting skills to deal with the hardest job in the world. And some have already given up. ... this is where it starts” (Simard 2010c:A1). Add to that a “troubled history and it's no wonder so many aboriginal kids are in care” (Simard 2010c:A1).

'Mother-blame' of course is nothing new. From the birth of an unhealthy or disabled child – often brought in connection with maternal misconduct (Landsman 2009:15) – to a mother's alleged failure to protect her children from any kind of harm imaginable, women have always been held accountable (Strega et al. 2008; Gustafson 2005; Scourfield 2003; Ladd-Taylor and Umansky 1998). As elaborated by Strega et al.

(2008), even in cases of physical or sexual abuse by a father-figure, “what mother did not do is seen as more serious and more blameworthy than what father (or another male perpetrator) did” (706). In such situations, child protection workers will focus on the mother's 'failure to protect' rather than the actions of the perpetrator (Strega et al. 2008:706). Scourfield (2003) similarly points out that the discourse of child welfare workers is fundamentally gendered. Mothers are considered responsible not solely for the appropriate care of children, but also for protecting them from the potential threat of others (Scourfield 2003; Strega et al. 2008). If they fail to do so, the consequences may be severe (Scourfield 2003). Add racism to a discourse of mother-blame, and the 'aboriginal mother' emerges as the quintessential 'unfit mother'. She embodies the racialized and class-based stereotype of the irresponsible, substance-abusing, promiscuous 'bad mother' whose behaviour inflicts harm on her offspring. Her negligence concerning her children's upbringing extends from “neglect at one end of the spectrum” to “violent harshness at the other” (Ortiz and Briggs 2003:42).

As pointed out in Chapter Two, control over and regulation of indigenous reproduction is crucial to the functioning of a settler-colonial society. In general, the removal of indigenous children is a way to do just that and thus every stereotype discussed in this chapter is somehow implicated in the normalization of this tactic. The stereotypes of indigenous women are particularly useful in this process. Portraying indigenous mothers as innately immoral, irresponsible, and harmful to their children is a powerful way (especially in a patriarchal society) to legitimize the removal of their offspring. And since colonialism is a fundamentally gendered project (Smith 2005), the marginalization of indigenous women is a powerful way of controlling indigenous

peoples at large.

Moreover, the image of the 'prostitute/sexual deviant' and the 'baby-machine' construct indigenous women's sexuality and fertility as something excessive and immoral. Through these images then, the reproduction of indigenous women is constructed as problematic which warrants its regulation or outright prevention. As the overlap between the image of the 'prostitute/sexual deviant' and the 'baby-machine' indicates, control over reproduction is intimately connected to control over sexuality. As Foucault (2003) points out, controlling sexuality means not only controlling the growth of the social body as such, but also being able to influence the internal make-up of the population (251-252). A bourgeois discourse of sexuality – and sexual deviancy – also provides a cultural susceptibility for racism (Foucault 1990:118-119), in so far as the unregulated reproduction of racialized segments is perceived as a threat to the dominant majority. Regulating the sexual practices of the colonized (as well as those of the colonizer) is foundational to “the colonial order of things” (Stoler 2006:4). This is not surprising, since indigenous reproduction is in fact counterproductive to the colonial project (Smith 2006; Wolfe 2006:390). As Smith (2005) points out, “the ability of Native women to reproduce the next generations of Native people continues to stand in the way of government and corporate takeovers of Indian land” (107). This necessitates the construction of indigenous women as overly fertile, and their sexuality as excessive and *deviant*. The label of 'deviancy' is particularly useful for colonial control (Stoler 2006:31). Portraying particular groups as inherently deviant turns them into an abnormality. This not only constructs their perceived deviations from the norm as internal dangers to the social body but also as *inheritable legacies* that pose a future threat to the

well-being of the population (Foucault 1977:204 in Stoler 2006:31). Similarly, media discourses portray indigenous mothers as passing on their deviant lifestyle to their kids, creating generations of poor, drunk, welfare recipients. This is not only perceived as translating into a fiscal burden for the settler society, but also as a form of moral degeneration threatening the very core of bourgeois respectability. As Patricia Hill Collins (2000) puts it in her analysis of the stereotypical representations of poor, black mothers in the United States, the “fertility of women who are not White and middle class” is labeled as “unnecessary and dangerous to the *values* of the country” (79; emphasis added).

The perceived threat of indigenous women's fertility is also apparent in newspaper articles that urge indigenous women to “practice good birth control” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010d:A13) and especially in appeals that call for their forced sterilization (see Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23). Indeed, given Alberta's history of forcefully sterilizing indigenous women (see Grekul et al. 2004), such calls certainly go beyond innocent suggestions.⁸¹ The insidious nature of such opinions and their harmful effects on those marginalized needs no further elaboration (see, for example, Gutierrez 2008:35-54; Smith 2005:79-106).

The 'Aboriginal Male' – Violent Criminal and Abusive Father

Indigenous men are not commonly imagined in their role as fathers. Contrary to the portrayal of indigenous women, newspaper articles rarely mention men in connection with their children or child-rearing. This of course is not surprising in a heteropatriarchal

⁸¹ Gifford-Jones's (2010b:A23) article was not only published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* but also the *Edmonton Journal*.

society, such as Canada, which commonly associates child-bearing with the (heterosexual) female body and defines child-rearing primarily as women's work (Gatrell 2008; Morell 2003).⁸²

Nonetheless, my research revealed some interesting discursive constructions of the 'aboriginal male' that are worth sharing. It has to be pointed out that colonial constructions of indigenous men are remarkably absent from the media discourses in Alberta, which focus rather on the construction of indigenous women and their role as mothers. However, we find ample newspaper articles in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and particularly in the *Brandon Sun*, that further a narrative of the 'aboriginal male'. These two newspapers largely portray indigenous men, and in particular young males, as criminals. As such, they are portrayed as thieves, gang members, violent offenders, sexual deviants – and thus generally a 'threat to society'. When indigenous men are identified as 'fathers', all four newspapers, usually describe them as directing their violent behaviour towards their children and the mothers of their children. Thence emerges the image of the 'abusive father'.

In the *Brandon Sun*, indigenous men are usually portrayed as thieves, commonly involved with petty crimes such as 'car-jacking' (Brandon Sun 2010k; Hitchen 2010d) and 'robbery' (Hitchen 2010d; Brandon Sun 2010n, 2010o, 2010p), or otherwise in open contempt of the law (Redekop 2010a; Brandon Sun 2010b; Hitchen 2010:c). In these minor criminal pursuits, the 'aboriginal man' does not shy away from violence. For example, one indigenous man is said to have “hijacked a car in broad daylight, then beat

⁸² Indeed, in such a cultural context, women are primarily positioned and understood as mothers. Regardless of whether they actually become mothers, motherhood is central to the ways women come to be defined (e.g. as 'childless women' or 'potential mothers') (Morell 2000:313).

and robbed the driver” (Hitchen 2010d). A “Brandon woman”, Hitchen writes, “had stopped her car at a stop sign ... when a male climbed into her vehicle. He then assaulted the woman, went through her purse and stole an undisclosed amount of money” (2010d). Another article in the *Brandon Sun* (2010n) writes of two men who injured a woman in an attempted robbery. The victim “suffered minor upper-body injuries that required treatment in a hospital” (Brandon Sun 2010n). Only a couple of days later, two men attacked yet another woman. She was “assaulted” by being “shoved against her car by two suspects who tried to steal her purse. The victim was pushed against the car several times and had her hair pulled” (Brandon Sun 2010o). She too had to be “treated in hospital” (Brandon Sun 2010o). Only two days later, a man was robbed by an 'aboriginal male' who was “brandish[ing] a screwdriver as a weapon” (Brandon Sun 2010p).

Not surprisingly, the perceived violence of indigenous men is often brought in connection with substance-abuse. For example, newspaper articles speak of an indigenous man's “alcohol-fuelled attack” (Cosgrove 2010), or suspects who “appeared intoxicated” (Hitchen 2010:b; see also Brandon Sun 2010i). Moreover, they may also be portrayed as sexual predators (see, for example, Hitchen 2010a; McIntyre 2010c; Giroday 2010c). For example, a *Brandon Sun* article describes an attack on two unsuspecting females. The author writes, “a 31-year-old jogger was out ... when a young man rode up behind her and grabbed her” (Giroday 2010c). Only a “day later, a 41-year-old woman was walking around... when a young man cycled by and grabber her lower body” (Giroday 2010c; see also Zabjek 2010:A1).

The perceived violence of indigenous men is made especially visible in news

articles that associate (often young) males with gang violence.⁸³ As Owen (2010c) in an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* proclaims, “aboriginal youth gang crime” is a “subculture” that “breeds” violence (A6). An article in the *Brandon Sun* explains that young indigenous men are “getting into gangs, getting drunk and doing drugs” (Villeneuve 2010). McIntyre (2010g), in an article in the *Brandon Sun*, offers a graphic account of a violent attack by a young indigenous male who had previously been linked to a Winnipeg street gang. The author explains that he was convicted after “beating a stranger to death with an aluminum baseball bat following a chance encounter on the street” (McIntyre 2010g). His victim, “Paul Cherewick, 30, suffered a fractured skull and internal bleeding after the teen smashed him in the head from behind. ... He managed to stumble several blocks before collapsing, yet wasn't found by police until about 10 hours after the attack. He died nine days later in hospital” (McIntyre 2010g). McIntyre (2010g) goes on to say that “Cherewick didn't know his killer but became a target of his rage after calling him a 'bitch' while they passed each other”. His victim merely “spent the evening drinking with friends and was apparently in a feisty mood when he made the remark” (McIntyre 2010g). Yet, “the young killer” “was not prepared to let that insult, that isolated remark from a drunken stranger, go unpunished” (ibid). He “ran away, went to a friend's nearby home, grabbed the bat and returned for some payback” (ibid). This graphic account describes the indigenous teen as violent, emotional, and highly irrational. His actions were fuelled by anger and uncontrollable rage. Yet, in his rage, he was nevertheless calculating and brutal.

Thus, the inferiorization of indigenous men is achieved through their

83 See, for example, Simard (2010b:A19); Owen (2010c:A6); Brandon Sun 2010a; Villeneuve (2010); McIntyre (2010d, 2010e:H1, 2010f, 2010g); Hitchen (2010:b, 2010:c, 2010e); Giroday (2010f).

representations as emotional, irrational, and irresponsible. They are also rendered violent, easily angered, and unpredictable in their rage. This mix of attributes makes them particularly dangerous in the eyes of settler society. Indeed, newspaper accounts tell stories of violent aboriginal men 'preying' on 'unsuspecting' victims, which implies that their attacks are random, unprovoked and could thus happen to anyone. It is said that victims "didn't know [their] attacker" (Giroday 2010c; McIntyre 2010g). That they were attacked in "in broad daylight" (Hitchen 2010d), "as she left church" (Brandon Sun 2010n), while she "stopped her car at a stop sign" (Hitchen 2010d), while jogging or going for a walk (Giroday 2010c), while merely passing them on the street (McIntyre 2010g). It may thus be inferred that no one is safe. Similarly, newspaper accounts may further imply that these 'aboriginal men' are not fully human – that they are more like wild animals. Indeed, they are some-*thing* to be feared. Why else the phrasing that "Police are on the *hunt*" (Hitchen 2010d), that the public has to be aware of these "*predators*" (Giroday 2010c), or that, amongst them, "It's survival of the fittest" (Gelinias and Ibrahim 2010:B1)? As the mother of a victim observes, she does not see any signs of "sorrow, guilt, remorse or empathy" in the eyes of the "killer" (in McIntyre 2010g).

The instrumental value of such accounts becomes evident when women in particular are asked to look over their shoulders. Newspaper articles leave the impression that most victims were female. They are described as ordinary women who were simply out "enjoying their community" (Giroday 2010c) when they were blitz-attacked by 'aboriginal men'. As Winnipeg Police Services spokesman Const. Jason Michalyshen warns, the "warm weather can draw out predators" and therefore women should be aware of their surroundings and "more cognizant of their own personal safety" (in Giroday

2010c). One may hypothesize, given that the 'race' of the female victims is not mentioned (or they are described, for example, as a “Brandon woman”) that they were 'white'.⁸⁴

Andrea Smith (2005) points out the usefulness of such accounts. Through the portrayal of indigenous men as inherently violent and threatening to the safety of the settler society – in particular the purity and safety of white women – the colonizer is able to demonize indigenous men (Smith 2005:21). This instils the belief in white women that they are in need of protection by white men, while simultaneously misleading them into believing that 'the white men's' treatment of women is superior to the treatment of women by 'the savages' (Smith 2005: 22-23). Such a narrative not only justifies the marginalization and incarceration of indigenous men, but also normalizes white-heteropatriarchal control.

The apparently threatening nature of indigenous men is exacerbated by articles that tell stories of 'criminals on the run'. In one article, for example, McIntyre (2010d) informs the public of a shooting suspect who was accidentally released from jail. Another article in the *Brandon Sun* warns that a suspect is “on the loose” (Brandon Sun 2010p), and yet another cautions the public of a gang member who “is considered armed and dangerous” (Brandon Sun 2010a). The *Brandon Sun* in particular disseminates articles that inform “the public” of 'fugitives', urging them to come forward with information and to contact 'Crime Stoppers' or the RCMP. These articles almost always include descriptions, such as, the “victim” described her attacker “as an aboriginal” (Hitchen 2010d) or “The suspects ... appeared to be aboriginal” (Brandon Sun 2010n). Indeed, the phrase that a suspect is “aboriginal in appearance” is used in at least six articles published

⁸⁴ This may be also be inferred from accounts of attacks on indigenous women (who are interestingly not portrayed as random attacks but incidents of domestic abuse), whose 'race' is *always* mentioned. See, for example, Brandon Sun (2010i); Cosgrove (2010); Giroday (2010f).

in the *Brandon Sun* alone (see Brandon Sun 2010a, 2010k; Giroday 2010c; McIntyre 2010d; Brandon Sun 2010o, 2010p). Not surprisingly, the police are occasionally criticized for racial profiling, yet nonetheless react to these charges with statements like this: “A lot of innocent native kids are being harassed ... We know there is racial profiling, but at the same time, how do police do their job? The majority of the crimes are being committed by the gang-bangers” (quoted in Owen 2010c:A6). Giroday and Welch (2010c) quote Sgt. Line Karpish, spokeswoman for the RCMP D Division, saying the Mounties provide “bias-free policing”, “regardless of sex, ethnicity, background or lifestyle”.

In both provinces, (biological and social) indigenous fathers are usually described as one of the following – absent (either because they shy away from their responsibilities or because they are in jail), physical abusers, sexual abusers, or a combination of the former. Underlying all of these constructs is the notion that 'the aboriginal father' is usually violent, neglectful, drunk, and thus a threat to his children and their mother.

The first stereotype portrays the 'aboriginal father' as absent. Newspaper articles may announce that “Her biological father ... wasn't a part of her life” (Simons 2010b:B1), or he “no longer lives with [his family]” (Skerritt and Sanders 2010), usually implying that these men shy away from their responsibilities as fathers. However, these men may also be absent because they are in jail (see, for example, McIntyre 2010l:A4.; Owen 2010c:A6; Hitchen 2010:c), which it is understood, is not surprising given that they are largely thought to be criminals. Newspaper articles further describe indigenous fathers as physically abusive (Simard 2010a:A18; Giroday 2010b:A7; Cosgrove 2010), sexually abusive (Brandon Sun 2010j), or worse, both (Winnipeg Free Press 2010b:A4; McIntyre

2010a:A12, 2010b:B3; Hughes 2010). An article in the *Brandon Sun* (2010j) proclaimed to the public that “A Manitoba father convinced his 11-year-old daughter to have sex with him by claiming it was a necessary requirement for her aboriginal upbringing. ... The man also admitted to sexually abusing his 12-year-old” (Brandon Sun 2010j). The children, the article states, looked “terrified” (ibid).

The 'aboriginal father' may further be portrayed as irresponsible and neglectful, to the point that his behaviour causes the death of his children. For example, “two toddlers were found frozen to death in a snowbank, left there by their inebriated father” Yaffe (2010:A10) writes. Giroday (2010b) writes of “a little girl” who ended up “in hospital and later died” after spending the weekend with her father (A7). The father was charged with “criminal negligence causing death” (Giroday 2010b:A7).

The image of the 'physical abuser' is often connected to the stereotype of the 'violent-drunk'. Indigenous men are described as emotionally and physically abusive, particularly after the consumption of alcohol – and especially towards the mother of their children. For example, one such man is reported to have “stabbed his common-law wife to death” after “an all-night drinking party” (Brandon Sun 2010i). Cosgrove (2010) presents the account of a “man's jealous, alcohol-fuelled attack on his common-law partner” in a *Brandon Sun* article. The man, Cosgrove (2010) writes, “became jealous and started to swear and insult the victim when he saw her speaking to another man”. Cosgrove (2010) goes on to describe this incident in detail:

He pleaded guilty to choking ... and uttering threats towards... the mother of his two children. ... he choked her, threw her to the ground and punched her before choking her again, until her feet left the ground. She briefly passed out, and when she awoke, Favel told her he was going to break her neck and twisted her head two or three times. He also bent her finger, threatening to

snap it before the victim briefly passed out again and Favel forced her into the car and drove off.

This graphic account portrays the man as extremely violent and irrational. The author further points out that “The woman escaped the car briefly when it stopped, but she returned when Favel threatened to kill her three young children” (Cosgrove 2010). The man, thus, is portrayed as a threat to his partner and their children.

It is interesting to note that the *Brandon Sun* dedicated nine articles towards descriptions of how indigenous men harmed indigenous women⁸⁵ and how they may potentially harm them in the future (Hitchen 2010a; Brandon Sun 2010m; Owen 2010b).⁸⁶ In an ironic twist, some articles even suggest that indigenous men are *responsible* for the many murdered and missing indigenous women in Canada. One article in the *Brandon Sun*, for example, connects the violence against and murder of indigenous women to “domestic violence” and “spousal violence” (Brandon Sun 2010m). While an article in the *Winnipeg Free Press* laments the fact that “more than 500 aboriginal women have gone missing or were murdered”, Simard (2010a) explains that “women don't turn into victims overnights” (A18). In an article entitled “Teach Kids To Not Be Adult Abusers”, the author goes on to explain that a solution has to “start with kids”: “Little boys need to be taught to respect girls, so they don't become abusers themselves. That means having male role models in their lives that show them it's not right to hit a girl. Abusers are often little boys who grew up seeing their dads hit their

85 See, for example, Hitchen (2010a, 2010e); McIntyre (2010c, 2010f); Brandon Sun (2010i); Giroday (2010f); Cosgrove (2010).

86 This narrative is reminiscent of Gargi Bhattacharyya's (2008) analysis of the war on terror and the perceived victimization of Muslim women at the hands of Muslim men. While this emerging narrative is not the central focus of this particular project, it certainly invites future research. Moreover, this seems particularly pertinent today since quite a bit of news coverage has recently been dedicated to 'honour killings' as well as to the 'missing and murdered aboriginal women' alike.

moms” (Simard 2010a:A18). This notion is not only misleading given the fact that indigenous women are three times more likely to be killed by a complete stranger than non-indigenous women are (16.5% versus 6% respectively) (NWAC/Sisters in Spirit 2010). It further scapegoats the 'aboriginal man' while absolving white male settlers of any wrongdoing.

In juxtaposition to the previous image of the violent 'aboriginal man', the colonial construct of the 'aboriginal father' seems to suggest that when an 'aboriginal man' has a family, he turns his aggression 'inwards'. Rather than primarily constructed as a threat to “the public” he is seen as a threat to his family. The 'aboriginal father', it is implied, may hurt his children intentionally by physically and/or sexually abusing them, or even unintentionally through his negligence. This poses an especially volatile situation for the children, since the 'aboriginal mother', it is said, generally fails to protect them. Not surprisingly, such a narrative also justifies the 'need' to remove indigenous children for their protection.

In Manitoba, such a justification becomes especially apparent (or rather is made to appear common-sensical) through yet another colonial narrative that combines the image of the 'aboriginal mother' and 'father'. In unison, the 'abusive aboriginal father' and the 'unfit aboriginal mother' fuse into something horrific. Together, they are portrayed as truly monstrous and sadistic.

This construct takes shape through the news coverage of a five-year-old case in which an indigenous child – Phoenix Sinclair – died as a result of her parents' abuse. Even five years later, the story is still prevalent in the media that was sampled in this study – hinting at its instrumental value in the normalization of child welfare

interventions. This narrative is predominately furthered by one author, Mary Agnes Welch who regularly publishes in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun*. In one article, she writes, that the parents were convicted of first degree murder for “neglecting, confining and repeatedly beating her” (Welch 2010c:A4). In four more articles she explains that “The girl's stepbrothers testified she was often hit, choked, shot with a BB gun and forced to spend days and nights lying naked in the basement of the family's home on the Fisher River First Nation north of Winnipeg” (Welch 2010c:A4, 2010d:A7, 2010e:A9, 2010g:A4). She further informs the reader that, “There was also testimony she was forced to eat her own vomit” (Welch 2010c:A4). Indeed, in three articles she introduces this story as follows, “[The parents] neglected, confined and repeatedly beat Phoenix and forced her to eat her own vomit” (Welch 2010d:A7, 2010e:A9, 2010g:A4). Moreover, she states that “Experts told court the girl suffered repeated injuries over a long period of time and had broken bones all the way from her pelvis to her skull” (Welch 2010c:A4, 2010d:A7). Furthermore, “she was frequently beaten and forced to sleep on the floor naked” (Welch 2010c:A4). Another author describes that the girl endured “torture” at the “hands of her [parents]” (Kusch 2010a, 2010b:A4). Even after her death, the parents felt no remorse, Welch (2010c) implies: “Phoenix's body [was] discovered near the garbage dump” (A4).

Graphic and gruesome accounts of her abuse are repeatedly disseminated by Welsch and others. Besides fleshing out the construct of the monstrous parents, the moral of the story is that the child welfare system did not respond fast enough and thus failed to protect the child. As Welch (2010g) explains, “Phoenix had been in and out of care and her death highlighted failures in the province's fractured child-welfare system” (A4; see

also Welch 2010c:A4). Moreover, it is said that the girl died because social workers allowed the family to reunite. Lambert and Preprost (2010), publishing in the *Brandon Sun*, interpret this story as follows: “Phoenix Sinclair, a five-year-old girl who spent most of her life in foster care and was killed after being handed back to her mother, Samantha Kematch. The girl suffered months of horrific abuse before being beaten to death in the basement of her home on the Fisher River reserve north of Winnipeg”. Here the father is erased from this picture and the mother blamed entirely. This narrative further suggests that the girl was killed because child welfare services were too lenient – they allowed the monstrous mother to take back her child. Family reunification is thus seen as potentially harmful⁸⁷ and, in this case, even led to torture and the subsequent death of an 'innocent little girl'. Such a colonial construct may manifest in detrimental ways. As nation-wide statistics indicate, once removed from their homes, indigenous children are less likely to be returned to their parents than non-indigenous children, more likely to be placed in *permanent* rather than temporary care (MacLaurin et al. 2003) and thus removed for an indefinite amount of time.

The 'Aboriginal Child' – Innocent Victim or Future Threat to Society?

An analysis of the four newspapers revealed a multi-faceted image of the 'aboriginal child' with variations between the two provinces. In Alberta, the image of the 'aboriginal child' was largely uniform. Both, the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald* consistently portrayed 'aboriginal children' as “high-needs” children who constitute a burden to their foster families. In Manitoba, their representation was somewhat more

⁸⁷ See also, Welch (2010g:A4, 2010h:A8, 2010i); McIntyre (2010l:A4).

complex. The *Winnipeg Free Press* predominantly painted a picture of the 'innocent victim' who needed to be saved, while the *Brandon Sun* largely portrayed the 'aboriginal child' as already irreversibly damaged and thus a 'future threat to society'.

In the two Alberta papers, the media discourse focused on indigenous children who had already been removed from their parents and were currently in foster care. These children were largely constructed as “high-needs children”⁸⁸ (either they are said to have FASD or are otherwise 'troubled'), difficult to care for and generally a burden on their non-indigenous foster families. While at first glance it may be difficult to see how such a stereotype normalizes the removal of indigenous children, its instrumental value becomes apparent when considered in relation to one of the child welfare system's darker secrets. And that is the high rate of children who die of “traumatic injury” while in provincial care. 20 children died while in provincial care between the years of 2004-05 and 2008-09, and out of those children, 14 were indigenous (Simons 2010b:B1).⁸⁹ Most of them were killed, some died of accidents or they committed suicide (ibid). In 2009, every single child who died of an unnatural death while in care, was indigenous⁹⁰ (Simons 2010b:B1).

Given these numbers, and given that the vast majority of children were indigenous, a good justification seems pertinent. Thus, portraying indigenous children as unruly and difficult to care for provides a justification (or at least an explanation) as to why these children were harmed. Indeed, five out of seven articles that utilized this label,

88 See, for example, Simons (2010b:B1; 2010c:A1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12); Gelinias and Ibrahim (2010:B1); Calgary Herald (2010:B10); Seskus and Derworiz (2010:A6).

89 Expressed differently, 70% of the children who died were indigenous. Given that 65% of children in Alberta's care are indigenous, the number of children dying is even more disproportionate.

90 The number of children who died in 2009 or 2010 has not yet been released.

were written in relation to the death of an indigenous foster child (see Simons 2010b:B1, 2010c:A1, 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12; Calgary Herald 2010:B10). For example, an article in the *Edmonton Journal* summarizes three cases in which a foster child was killed by their government-appointed foster parent as follows. “In all three cases” the author writes, “the accused foster parent was given responsibility for ... high-needs children” (Simons 2010b:B1). In the first case, “it seems the foster father was overwhelmed” (Simons 2010b:B1). In the second case and third case, “the foster mother” was “overloaded”, having to care for too many “high-needs children” at a time (Simons 2010b:B1). In yet another article, Simons (2010c) provides a similar excuse. Reporting on the last four murders of foster children (all of them indigenous) in the Edmonton region, she asks, what is “the common denominator? In all three previous cases, the foster parents were under huge stress, caring for more high-needs children than they could handle” (Simons 2010c:A1).

In stark contrast to the portrayals of indigenous peoples, these foster parents are not portrayed as monsters or inherently incapable. There is not *one* graphic account describing the children's murders and/or the abuse they suffered. Instead, rather than being portrayed as sadistic, the perpetrators are described as being under “huge stress” (Simons 2010c:A1) or “overwhelmed” (Simons 2010b:B1). Moreover, they may not even be portrayed as actively killing the child. Their actions are passively represented. For example, Simons (2010c) writes, “we have a right to know why children in care keeping [sic] dying, why their foster parents keep getting arrested.” (A1). Because it is understood that the 'benevolent foster parent' would never intentionally hurt a child, there must be an explanation for their behaviour. Expressed differently, if an indigenous person

harms a child it is considered proof of their cultural inferiority, if a Euro-Canadian settler does the same it is considered out of character. For example, one foster parent who murdered an indigenous toddler is described as “an ordinary citizen who effectively volunteered to take on the difficult responsibility of caring for a high-needs child, for a minimal honorarium” (Simons 2010c:A1). Even though she killed one of the three children in her care, the white settler is still portrayed as benevolent. Simons (2010c) apologetically proclaims, “any parent could tell you that looking after three toddlers is no picnic” (A1).

The fault, thus, lies not with the foster families since they are portrayed as trying their best. As one foster mother puts it, “there are always those rough kids. ... You can't fix everybody, but you do the best you can” (quoted in Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). Rather, the narrative goes, these children were simply too much to handle. They drove the otherwise responsible and benevolent foster parent over the edge. A similar sentiment is expressed by a reader response to Gifford-Jones's (2010b:A23) article in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. He writes, “Many parents who replied had adopted an FAS child and related the family turmoil it had caused, how those who advocate that education is the answer have never lived with a perpetual drunk” (Gifford-Jones 2010b:A23).

Alternatively, the blame for the child's death is said to lie in his/her 'aboriginal upbringing'. For example, one of the previously mentioned cases is summed up as follows.

In truth, it was the child's 34-year-old foster mother ... who was charged Monday with second-degree murder, three months after the girl's death. Anyone who knows anything about child welfare can tell you that kids who come into care are often more challenging to care for than the norm, whether because of fetal alcohol syndrome, or because of the emotional

upheaval and turmoil they've already experienced (Simons 2010c:A1).

An article in the *Calgary Herald* paints a similar picture. The article supposedly addresses the suicide of an indigenous foster child. Yet, rather than focusing on this tragedy, the article is quick to point out that the reason for the suicide is not connected to the foster parents or the foster system, but rather lies in her past as an 'aboriginal child'. The article states, “A fatality inquiry report into the suicide death of a Tsuu T'ina teenager in foster care found no fault in the care she received, but highlighted the many challenges aboriginal youth face” (Calgary Herald 2010:B10).

The demonization of indigenous children as posing an overwhelming burden on well-intentioned Canadian foster families ironically also translates into a strong defence of the foster care system itself. Not surprisingly the deaths and murders of indigenous children in care sparked some criticism. In response to one such criticism, the *Calgary Herald* published an article (one that is over 3000 words and at least 4 times the length of the article it responds to) with the title “A System Under Scrutiny: Flawed or the Best in Canada” (Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6)? The article is presented as an objective inquiry into the state of Alberta's foster care system. It claims to include the voices of those critical of the system as well as those in favour of the system. However, the authors chose two respected professionals (who may be considered as speaking from a position of authority and thus in the position to make 'truth claim') as the ones defending the system. In contrast two teens were chosen as the ones critical of the system – both of them constructed as utterly unreliable and biased. The first one who calls the system “flawed” is a high-school student who already has a child in foster care (see Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). The other one is a homeless teen who ran away from her own foster

family. The authors write that she “cannot be identified by her real name because she's under 18” (Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). Yet they go on to explain that she was in the system herself because “both of her parents were addicts and she's been on and off the streets since she was 11. ... Amanda is now pregnant and will have her baby this fall” (Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). Her critique of the system is conveyed as follows: “I don't want them [i.e. social workers] in my life. They are going to be on my ass when the baby is born. If I make one mistake, then it's gone” (quoted in Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). Juxtaposed to this statement is the assessment of Yvonne Fritz, also known as “Alberta's sweet-tempered minister of children's services” (Simons 2010c:A1). She says, “I can tell you that the foster system is the best in Canada” (Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). Seskus and Derworiz (2010:A6) further convey the opinion of Norm Brownell, president of the Alberta Foster Parent Association. Brownell agrees with Fritz's assessment and says, “I've been in the system now for more than 40 years and I've seen the system grow. ... It's always moved upwards, always improved” (quoted in Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6). “Overall” he believes, “the foster system is a good system” (quoted in *ibid*). Considering the various viewpoints, Seskus and Derworiz (2010) conclude that “It's a system with the highest ideals, aiming to help children at a time when they're most vulnerable. Yet, it only gets public attention when something goes wrong. ... Despite these challenges [i.e. the abuse and/or murder of foster children], there are thousands of good stories no one hears about” (A6).

Rather than a detriment to the child welfare system, the stories of the murdered indigenous children are utilized to *strengthen* the system. Since the foster parents were stressed, and their homes overcrowded, numerous articles identify the need for ever more

foster homes to adequately absorb the influx of indigenous children.⁹¹ As expressed by an article printed both in the *Edmonton Journal* and *Calgary Herald*, there is a “chronic shortage of foster parents, which leads in turn to foster parents being overwhelmed” (Simons 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12). Moreover, while only *one* of the children who died, did so at the hands of an 'aboriginal foster parent', this incident is utilized to discredit the province's kinship care policy (a policy which makes it a priority to place indigenous foster children with relatives). Different than the assessment of the previous cases, this particular 'aboriginal foster father' is not described as merely stressed. Rather, this “placement was a disaster”, Simons (2010d:A3, 2010e:A12) proclaims. “The little boy ended up covered in bruises, with a fractured arm and a fractured shoulder” and later died of “a devastating brain injury” (Simons 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12). In this narrative, removing an 'aboriginal child' from his/her abusive and neglectful parents only to be returned to an 'aboriginal relative' seems problematic and potentially harmful to the child. The same articles calls the kinship care policy a “politically sensitive issue” because it places “aboriginal foster children with relatives, however distant, whether those relatives have the capacity to provide proper care or not” (Simons 2010d:A3, 2010e:A12). Different than a Euro-Canadian foster parent, whose default stereotype is always that of a 'good Samaritan' (see, for example, Simons 2010a:B1, Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6), the 'aboriginal relative/foster parent' may be perceived as a potential threat. As Brooymans (2010) in the *Edmonton Journal* explains, “the number of children placed in care with relatives has increased, but not all of the homes they are living in are properly assessed to ensure they're safe...” (B5). Therefore, “Criminal record checks” are

⁹¹ See, for example, Simons (2010b:B1; 2010c:A1), Kleiss (2010a:B2, 2010b:A9), Seskus and Derworiz (2010:A6).

necessary for “making sure grandma's not on parole for dealing coke” (Brooymans 2010:B5). In contrast to this statement, a Euro-Canadian foster family is described as follows:

Norm Brownell and his wife began taking care of foster kids more than four decades ago, not long after the couple moved to Calgary from Winnipeg. They were motivated to *help* by his wife's own experience, which saw her work as a teenager to support the family after her mother died. 'She has a real *passion for helping* people' Brownell says. 'And *so do I*' (Seskus and Derworiz 2010:A6; emphasis added).

Seskus and Derworiz (2010) go on to say that “Over the years, the couple has cared for more than 600 children” (A6).⁹² Thus, the 'politically sensitive issue' of kinship care may be put to rest through witness accounts such as the following, which comes from an indigenous teen who grew up in the foster care system herself. According to her, “the best foster parent I ever had was a white woman” (quoted in Simons 2010a:B1).

The portrayal of indigenous children in Manitoba differs according to the newspaper. While there is some overlap between the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun*, two distinct narratives emerge. An analysis of the *Winnipeg Free Press*'s portrayal of indigenous children reveals a stereotype that portrays them as deeply troubled – usually a result of parental neglect and/or abuse.⁹³ These children are further believed to be prone to suicide.⁹⁴ In this narrative indigenous children are seen as 'innocent victims' of their parents' neglect, who know no other way to escape their misery than taking their own lives. For example, referring to the plight of 'aboriginal children',

92 It has to be pointed out that there was not one positive article, nor one positive mentioning, regarding indigenous kinship care.

93 See, for example, Reynolds (2010:A3); Simard (2010a:A18); Giroday (2010b:A7); Welch (2010c:A4, 2010d:A7, 2010e:A9, 2010g:A4, 2010h:A8, 2010i); Kusch (2010b:A4, 2010a); Sanders (2010c:A6, 2010d); McIntyre (2010g, 2010i:B4, 2010l:A4); Simard (2010c:A1); Hitchen (2010e).

94 See, for example, Calgary Herald (2010:B10); Winnipeg Free Press (2010a:A3, 2010b:A4); Welch (2010a:A8); Giroday (2010d:B1, 2010e:A4); Rabson (2010c:A4); Stone (2010).

one author states,

I've lived in the inner city almost half my life and almost every day I see a kid in need. The same thing goes for a lot of kids that live on reserve. ... Whether living in crowded or poor housing, not having enough to eat, not getting attention and love in a dysfunctional family, witnessing abuse or being abused, every day children are repeatedly shown they don't matter (Simard 2010a:A18).

Several articles tell the story of an indigenous girl who “was involved with drugs and was sexually exploited” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010a:A3; Winnipeg Free Press 2010b:A4; Welch 2010a:A8). She eventually “hanged herself ... after spending her life in and out of foster homes” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010a:A3; Winnipeg Free Press 2010b:A4; Welch 2010a:A8). Another girl was said to have hanged herself “after months of trauma, including multiple Child and Family Services placements, solvent abuse, the sudden death of a sibling and clashes with the law” (Giroday 2010d:B1; Giroday 2010e:A4). One article tells the story of an eight-year-old indigenous boy “who committed suicide in 2005, three days *after being returned to his family from a foster-care placement*” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010b:A4; emphasis added). Yet another article explains that “So far this year, 11 Manitoba youths have committed suicide. At least five of those lived on First Nations communities such as Red Sucker Lake, St. Theresa Point and Shamattawa” (Welch 2010f:A5). Welch (2010f) goes on to say that other reserves such as “Pukatawagan, Berens River and Cross Lake” are also “coping with serious suicide problems” (A5). Indeed, suicide is an “epidemic on remote northern reserves” (Welch 2010f:A5). In case anyone was wondering, Welch (2010f) further informs the public that “Most youths from northern reserves kill themselves by hanging” (A5). Also referring to suicide, Welch (2010a) proclaims in a different article that “Kids are stuck and trapped in

a hell hole in a lot of cases and there is only one way out for them” (A8).

Heart-wrenching accounts of troubled children harmonize perfectly with the colonial understanding that 'aboriginal parents' are utterly unfit and that 'aboriginal culture' as such constitutes a dangerous environment. It comes to no surprise that a common-sensical response is to 'help' these children by removing them from their 'hell holes'. Euro-Canadians imagine themselves as benevolent and empathetic towards the plight of these seemingly forsaken 'aboriginal children'. Thus, reminiscent of discourses that identified a need to 'civilize' indigenous children decades earlier (Walmsley 2005:9), these stereotypical representations similarly underline the need for interventions by child welfare services. This narrative further conveys a sense of urgency and immediacy to save these children before it is too late. Numerous articles also identify the need for Child and Family Services to intervene faster (Welch 2010c:A4, 2010d:A7, 2010e:A9, 2010g:A4; Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a). And some articles speak of “Child and Family Services” as “*finally* interven[ing]” (McIntyre 2010a:A12; Hughes 2010; emphasis added) when they do.

Like Alberta, media discourses in both Manitoban newspapers depict Euro-Canadian foster parents as 'good Samaritans', while discrediting foster placements in indigenous homes. For example, Simard (2010c) warns about an alarming shortage of “*good* foster homes” or a “lack of *safe* homes” (A1; emphasis added). Such statements, though seemingly innocent, carry a lot of weight in this province. This is because recent changes to the foster care system now prioritize child placements with families that are “culturally appropriate” - if deemed '*safe*'. This policy continues to be challenged and similarly, media narratives imply that settler families are superior in their care for

indigenous children. In other words, indigenous foster placements are constructed as generally '*not safe*'. White foster homes are described as “stable”, “good”, “safe”, or as providing “*quality foster care*” (Welch 2010f:A5; emphasis added). Indigenous foster homes, on the other hand, are described as “potentially risky” or “unprepared” and thus portrayed as inadequate.

The death of two children – Phoenix Sinclair (who was killed by her 'aboriginal parents' in 2006 after being returned to them by an 'aboriginal child welfare agency') and Gage Guimond (who died under the care of an 'aboriginal relative/foster parent' in 2007) – are often considered evidence that the process of 'devolution' was a mistake and that 'aboriginal foster parents' are just as incapable as the children's birth-parents.⁹⁵ As Kusch neatly sums it up in an article that was published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and *Brandon Sun*:

Her torture, confinement and murder at the hands of her mother and stepfather shone a bright light on the process of devolution, which saw First Nations and Metis child welfare agencies take over the care of their children. ... So too, did the care of two-year-old Gage Guimond who was beaten to death after being removed from a stable foster home and placed with a relative who had a record for assault (Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a).

Similarly, Reynolds (2010) in an article entitled “Who Will be the Next Victim of Devolution? - Political Correctness Trumps Safety Issues” has the following to say: “The death of Phoenix was supposed to be a wake-up call for our child welfare system. It has been five years and the government keeps hitting the snooze button” (Reynolds 2010:A3). Recalling his and his co-author's earlier exposés on the detrimental nature of

⁹⁵ See, for example, Kusch (2010b:A4, 2010a, 2010c:A3); Reynolds (2010:A3); Gerrard (2010:A14); Welch (2010g:A4); Lambert and Preprost (2010); Owen and Kusch (2010a:A10, 2010b); Mitchelson (2010); Auriat (2010).

kinship care, he writes:

...we were greeted with brickbats from those who favoured the flawed notion of devolution, which recognizes a child's right to his or her own culture and the right of that culture to look after its own children. We were racist, they said. We didn't understand the cultural imperative to reunite children with their relatives, even those who didn't know or want them. We were just out to get the First Nations authorities and their underfunded and overloaded agencies (Reynolds 2010:A3).

Reynolds (2010) strongly believes that “The safety of children should be paramount. ... In other words, children who were removed from their families would no longer be automatically marked Return to Sender” (A3). Moreover, he complains, “There has been a whole lot of bumf about how outsiders can't understand the process of reunification” (ibid). In his opinion, Manitoba is “mired in a system too concerned with political correctness and too little prepared to save children” (ibid). He warns, “I hate to think of the face that will join Phoenix and Gage over my computer; children who are mute testimony to a failed experiment” (ibid). Agreeing with this basic sentiment, and in order to keep indigenous children 'safe', the Conservative Opposition calls for the immediate “halt to children being removed from longtime, stable foster homes” (Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a; Brandon Sun 2010d;); or as Kusch (2010c) in yet another article calls them “good, long-term homes” (A3). As quoted in four articles, Conservative Leader Hugh McFadyen, states “We continue to hear stories of children who are being taken from stable, long-term foster family situations and being placed in situations that may present a risk. They should put a freeze on it today” (Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a; Brandon Sun 2010d; see also Gerrard 2010:A14). As one informed citizen puts it “why is it that when a child like Gage Gauimond is with a *good* foster family, a social worker feels the need to traumatize the child by uprooting him just so that he can be placed with extended family?

I hope that practice is gone for good” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010d:A13; emphasis added). Lambert and Preprost (2010) agree, stating that a “child's *safety*” should be the “prime concern for foster care, not cultural or family ties” (emphasis added).

In an interesting twist, this colonial narrative not only discredits the capability of indigenous peoples to look after their own children, it is further stated that kinship placements harm well-intentioned foster families. Both newspapers describe *white* foster families having to endure emotional turmoil after losing *their* indigenous foster children, and that they are being discriminated against on the basis of race.⁹⁶ According to a number of articles, a report from the Office of the Children's Advocate claims that the foster care system finds itself in a “volatile” situation “where foster parents are dropping out for fear that 'uncaring' social workers will take children away in a bid to reunite them with their aboriginal families or communities” (Kusch 2010b:A4, 2010a; Brandon Sun 2010d). Indeed, some articles state that “foster parents are *terrified*” (Owen and Kusch 2010a:A10, 2010b; Brandon Sun 2010d; emphasis added) of such a scenario. Showing empathy for their emotional turmoil, Family Services Minister Gord Mackintosh is said to have “told reporters that giving up children they've raised for some time is an understandable emotional moment for foster parents” (Brandon Sun 2010d). Thus, there is a sense that the foster parents (not the biological parents) need to be protected from emotional trauma. As one author reasons, “In *principle*, this *seems* like a fine idea. In simple terms, raising children in their own culture *appears* to be a reasonable strategy.” (Auriat 2010; emphasis added). However, “There is a seldom-referenced commandment – the law of unintended consequences – that always rears its ugly head. In other words,

⁹⁶ See, for example, Kusch (2010b:A4, 2010a); Brandon Sun (2010d); Lambert and Preprost (2010); Owen and Kusch (2010a:A10, 2010b); Auriat (2010).

the road to hell is paved with good intentions” (Auriat 2010). Auriat (2010) charges,

Cultural sensitivity is an odd term. It suggests different things to different people. For me, in *practice*, cultural sensitivity implies *racial preference*, particularly in this specific case. Removing aboriginal children from white homes is a clear case of racial preference. Is racial preference the same as *racism*? I'm not sure, but *it feels that way* (emphasis added).

Naturally, as a concerned settler the author states, “My core belief is that safety and qualifications ought to rank ahead of colour and culture when it comes to child care. That is, we should worry less about the colour of the people providing child care and worry more about the *safety* and *security* of the at-risk children” (Auriat 2010 emphasis added). Given that colonial discourses usually construct indigenous peoples as irresponsible, neglectful and categorically inferior to the settler society, it can be inferred that they will never be seen as measuring up to this task.

Portraying the kinship care policy as a form of reverse-racism, as emotionally taxing for the foster parents, and something that will “uproot” and “traumatize” (Winnipeg Free Press 2010d:A13) indigenous children undoubtedly takes some rhetorical skill. This colonial narrative manages to replace indigenous parents with Euro-Canadian foster parents. There is no mentioning of indigenous parents in emotional upheaval over having their children apprehended,⁹⁷ it is not they who are discriminated against or who experience racism. It is the white settler. It is the *settler* family that experiences the loss of *indigenous* children!

Similarly, 'aboriginal child welfare agencies' in Manitoba are under severe scrutiny from the public. Because this trend is not the focus of this thesis, and a similar connection has already been identified by Robert Harding (2009), I will not discuss it

⁹⁷ Indeed, not a single article, in any of the newspaper in both of the province, writes on this subject.

here. However, it needs pointing out that an overwhelming amount of articles (28 in total) in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and the *Brandon Sun* (and even in the *Edmonton Journal*) depict their perceived incompetence. As Reynolds (2010) from the *Winnipeg Free Press* describes it, “It’s an unsupportable system, dependent upon cobbled-together authorities that sometimes hire unqualified staff, return children to families because they’re told they have to and, in some cases, whose CEOs have come under scrutiny for misuse of funds and nepotism” (A3).

In contrast to the *Winnipeg Free Press*'s image of the 'innocent victim' who needs to be saved, the *Brandon Sun* depicts the 'aboriginal child' as a potential or impending danger to the public.⁹⁸ Similar to the image of the 'unfit mother' and the 'abusive father', indigenous children are seen as lacking the ability to contribute anything positive to society. For example, news stories point out that children or infants who are said to suffer from FASD will have life-long problems and may never fully integrate into society. Like the “crack baby”, the FASD-baby is constructed as a burden “on adoptive parents, ... school teachers, and hospital staff, as well as on society in general” (Litt and McNeil 2003:255). Permanently damaged and forsaken these children are said to overwhelm the foster care system. News stories warn of the “booming numbers” (Kusch 2010a, 2010b:A4) of these children descending on foster placements, where “new foster parents are struggling to provide care and nurturing – often to several children and youth” already (ibid).

98 It has to be pointed out that there is no clear separation between these two discourses. The *Winnipeg Free Press* published some articles that espouse a similar narrative to that prevalent in the *Brandon Sun* (see, for example, Simard 2010a:A18; McIntyre 2010g, 2010i:B4; Owen 2010c:A6). However, the *Brandon Sun* does not depict the 'aboriginal child' as an 'innocent victim'. This separation is particularly curious given that both newspapers are owned by the same corporation.

The dormant deviancy of 'aboriginal children' is underscored by news stories that depict 'aboriginal teens' as already being involved with drugs and alcohol (Hitchen 2010:b, 2010:e, Winnipeg Free Press 2010b:A4, Giroday 2010e:A4), sexual misconduct (Giroday 2010c) or violent/criminal behaviour (Brandon Sun 2010h; Hitchen 2010:b; B110; McIntyre 2010g, 2010i:B4, 2010j, 2010k:B2). Indigenous boys in particular are consistently associated with gang violence. For example, McIntyre (2010f) tells the story of a “14-year-old” teen who was convicted for shooting “two innocent girls”. The author points out that his violent behaviour was not an anomaly; rather it built up to this moment. He writes, “The teen ... also admitted Wednesday to a pair of earlier incidents in which he shot a girl with a compressed-air pistol near a school” and he also “fired bear spray at two other youths” (McIntyre 2010f). The author further points out that he is not a violent exception but implies instead that this 'type' of child is rather common:

The youth was a friend of 16-year-old Kyle Earl, who was shot and killed... A 13-year-old boy was also wounded by gunfire. ... No arrests in the slaying have been made, although police suspect there was gang involvement. ... A 19-year-old friend of Earl, who was with him at the time, is accused of chasing after two unidentified gunmen and opening fire. He missed his intended targets but struck two vehicles (McIntyre 2010f).

Not surprisingly, “The 14-year-old boy pleaded guilty Wednesday to a total of seven charges, including aggravated assault, assault with a weapon and careless use of a firearm” (McIntyre 2010f). These sort of crimes, the story goes, are so common that one author even comes up with the label “aboriginal youth gang crime” (see Owen 2010c:A6). As a result the Manitoba Youth Centre is “bursting at the seams” and Agassiz Youth Centre near Portage La Prairie “has had to be expanded” (Owen 2010c:A6). Newspaper articles thus predict the inevitable – like their fathers, these children will end

up in jail (McIntyre 2010g, 2010i:B4; Owen 2010c:A6; Brandon Sun 2010g; Cosgrove 2010; Hitchen 2010e). Indeed, not only are youth centres “bursting at the seams”, “Provincial adult jails are also expanding as is the federal Stony Mountain Institution” (Owen 2010c:A6). We can see that the image of the indigenous boy or teen who is already involved with gang activities comes back full circle to the adult stereotype of the 'violent criminal'.

While the criminal in the making is usually imagined as male, some articles are concerned about the violent behaviour of indigenous girls. Possibly a precursor to the neglectful and abusive mother, these young girls are imagined as uncaring bullies. One article draws attention to the work of a now retired counsellor from Brandon University. Her concern, the author writes, lies with indigenous girls that are “bullies” (Brandon Sun 2010h). In a presentation entitled “Bullying by Girls in Tribal Communities”, the counsellor informs the public that “research now says that there are more girls bullying than boys, and with girls the bullying is a little more emotional and long term. Girls go for the jugular whereas boys just go after the victim and then are done with it. Girls drag it on and involve more people” (quoted in Brandon Sun 2010h).

Taken together, media discourses in Manitoba portray indigenous children as 'helpless' yet 'hopeless' victims whose lives are being destroyed by their neglectful parents. Doomed to live their life as 'damaged goods', the children are seen as perpetuating a life of deviancy. They will therefore inevitably represent a tremendous burden for Canadian taxpayers – as future criminals and/or welfare recipients and/or unfit parents whose children are under provincial care. Thus, what at first glance seems to be a somewhat contradictory conception of indigenous children, is actually quite compatible.

This is for the reason that these two portrayals normalize two different strategies of colonial control. The image of the 'innocent victim' justifies the continued apprehension of indigenous children, whereas the image of the 'threat to society' is used as an explanation and thus justification for their continued marginalization. In particular, it justifies the disproportionate incarceration of indigenous peoples as well as ongoing disciplinary control through social services. Brown and Bloom (2010) have already drawn attention to this dual form of state control. According to them, in neo-liberal states, “both penal systems and child welfare systems converge to create an ever-expanding carceral population made up of poor families” (Brown and Bloom 2010:152). These seemingly distinct narratives thus constitute 'two sides of the same coin'.⁹⁹

Conclusion

The process of Othering is one of the most powerful strategies of colonial control because “it implies a viewer with an elevated vantage point” (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1998:226). Through this process the dominant majority “defines the identity of the subject, objectifies it within the identifying system of power relations and confirms its subalterneity and powerlessness” (ibid). Though this is a powerful way to justify and reify one's dominant position, it is also inherently fragile and thus the illusory inferiority of the Other must continuously be evoked (Zureik 2010:7). Such is the function of the various colonial narratives identified in this chapter. They provide common-sensical accounts of what is 'wrong' with indigenous peoples. As a group, they are marked as

⁹⁹ Interestingly, an article in the *Brandon Sun*, inadvertently drew attention to this dual form of state control. The author writes, “This parenting breakdown has to concern us all and requires not just *taxpayer-funded police* and *child-welfare services*, but the attention of family, friends, and neighbours.” (Lambert and Preprost 2010; emphasis added)

deviant, intrinsically pathological and irredeemable. Indigenous peoples thus stand outside definitions of normality and bourgeois respectability. A life of deviancy and debauchery is said to be passed down from one generation to the next. Since indigenous children can never fully escape the deviant lifestyles of their parents, they are said to hold the terrifying potential to become what the colonial discourse accuses their parents of being. The continued marginalization of indigenous peoples thus is seen as an outcome of their uncivilized upbringing, and hence eclipses political, economic and institutional violence.

Euro-Canadian settlers on the other hand envision themselves as benevolent, morally superior and potential saviors of indigenous children. As Sherene Razack (1998) points out, the very notion of “pity” and “help” is suggestive of Euro-Canadian benevolence which constitutes the underside of Western racism. Rather than based in the lived experiences of institutionalized children, it is a “reassuringly heroic narrative of intervention” (Ortiz and Briggs 2003). Such a story reinforces one of the core narratives of Canada's “imagined community” (Anderson 2006). It is a tale of 'national goodness', allowing its members to perceive themselves as a nation of tolerance and generosity. As a newspaper article in the *Brandon Sun* proclaims, “what separates Canadians from the rest of the world is we like to look after one another” (Brandon Sun 2010f). Such a discourse “enables the telling of a story of white innocence” (Razack 2004:141), the effect of which is the disavowal of any accountability for racism, violence, and colonialism in Canada. In combination, these colonial narratives spin a discursive web that naturalizes colonial control, while denying its very existence. To borrow the wording of Razack, “it is the simplest of storylines, and a very old colonial one” (2000:209).

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Final Remarks

How smooth must be the language of the whites, when they can make right look like wrong, and wrong look like right (Black Hawk).

We [Canadians] also have no history of colonialism. (Prime Minister Stephen Harper)

The purpose of this thesis was to draw attention to the wholesale removal of indigenous children through the Canadian child welfare system and engage with narratives that normalize this colonial practice. It was further my intention to expose the colonial effect of contemporary child welfare practices and position them as operating according to a colonial logic of elimination (Wolfe 2006).

It is widely accepted that the residential school system and child welfare practices during the “Sixties Scoop” constituted an attempt of cultural genocide (see Churchill 2003; Chrisjohn and Young 2006). The policies underlying these institutionalized forms of state power were designed – through ignorance, paternalism or ill intention – to undermine indigenous institutions, cultural values, and ways of being (Warry 2007:16). Today, the relationship between child welfare authorities and indigenous peoples is no less problematic. While the current child welfare system may no longer be (intentionally) fuelled by the same ideological commitments, given current child welfare statistics (see Chapter Three) its colonial effects are no less prolific.

In Chapter Two I theorize the removal of indigenous children from a biopolitical perspective. Such a framework allows us to see the residential school era and the removal of children during the “Sixties Scoop” as a biopolitical strategy that sought to eliminate

or regulate the Native-as-Other so as to make life in general “healthier and purer” (Foucault 2003:255) for the dominant majority. I further point out that a Foucauldian framework is useful in understanding the colonial effects of contemporary child welfare practices. Foucault (2003) explains that the fundamental aim of biopower is not the disciplinary technology of individual *dressage*, but a *regularization* of its internal dangers, a “bioregulation by the state” (2003:250; see also Stoler 2006:82). The outcome is a normalizing society in which we find a new form of racism inscribed within its structures (Stoler 2006:33; Foucault 1990:149). In other words, the outcome is a society that is structured in such a way as to function in favour of the dominant majority, while systematically marginalizing those that are considered not to belong. Canadian society is similarly structured in that it ensures the continued marginalization of indigenous peoples (and their descendants) to the benefit of the colonial settler society. In this sense, white supremacy remains firmly entrenched in Canada (Deliofsky 2010:39). As Nandy puts it, a colonial state may move through different phases of colonization, from “rapacious bandit-kings” to “well-meaning middle class liberals” (Nandy quoted in Smith 2008:44). We continue in a system in which colonialism is embedded in institutional and structural form (Alfred 2009, 2010; Turner 2006).

Such a system is perpetuated by powerful stereotypes of the Other that must continuously be evoked (Zureik 2010:7; Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 1998). Through a critical discourse analysis I sought to tease out such colonial constructions in the Canadian context. It was my aim to understand what kind of stereotypes and narratives are being disseminated by the settler society so as to normalize the continued removal of indigenous children and naturalize colonial control. This analysis constitutes Chapter

Four of this thesis. In this chapter I point out that media discourses in Alberta and Manitoba provide common-sensical accounts of what is 'wrong' with indigenous peoples. The Native-as-Others is marked as deviant, intrinsically pathological and irredeemable. Indigenous peoples, as a group, are seen as standing outside definitions of normality and bourgeois respectability. Such constructions blame indigenous peoples for their social ills. The continued marginalization of indigenous peoples is seen as an outcome of their inherent inadequacy, which eclipses political, economic and institutional violence. Combined with stories of 'Canadian benevolence', these colonial narratives spin a discursive web that naturalizes colonial control, while denying its very existence.

Significance and Future Direction

With this thesis, I am adding to a body of scholarship that works towards deconstructing the normalizing narratives of a white settler society. I align myself with scholars and projects whose intention it is to foreground colonial heteropatriarchy as key logic that governs Canadian society and thus engage in an effort to denaturalize settlement. As already quoted in the introduction to this thesis, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (2008) reminds us that “in a decolonizing framework, deconstruction is part of a much larger intent” (3). Deconstructing the dominant narratives and revealing some of their underlying agendas is only part of the picture. To engage in a struggle for social justice also entails working towards more 'tangible' results. It is my hope that this thesis is not only understood as an academic contribution, but on a more 'practical' level, may be utilized for strategic purposes. This thesis can be read as a contribution to anti-oppressive and anti-colonial approaches to social work, a resource for activist organizations, and

similarly may hold significance for radical policy alternatives.

As my thesis shows even though there are a considerable number of 'aboriginal-run' child welfare agencies in place (PHAC 2010; Bennet 2004), and indigenous peoples were 'delegated' certain roles within the child welfare system, indigenous children are still being removed en masse. Some argue that the changes made to the system were not substantial enough or were not properly put into practice (see, for example, Blackstock, Brown and Bennett 2007). There are thus strategic ways to improve and alter the current child welfare system so as to make it less destructive towards indigenous peoples. The First Nations Child and Family Caring Society (FNCFCS) is an organizations that works on strategic reforms to the current child welfare system. The FNCFCS is involved in numerous grassroots projects and engaged in struggles at the institutional level. It has published numerous articles with recommendations for improvements (see FNCFCS 2011b), some of which are reproduced here:

- allocating funding to prevention rather than apprehension
- establishing indigenous-run child welfare authorities as autonomous, stand-alone organizations that work independently from provincial and federal statutes and legislation
- ensuring that services are in place that reflect the holistic, autonomous, and communal rights framework of the different communities they serve
- ensuring that child welfare practices in relation to indigenous peoples are grounded in indigenous ways of being, knowing, and child-rearing

Yet, it is also my conviction that any real change needs to start with a radical

transformation of the child welfare system itself and *cannot* end with reforms to a system that is inherently colonial. It needs to be understood that these reforms are *strategic* interim 'solutions'. This thesis will not be useful to policy makers who merely seek to make the child welfare system more 'culturally appropriate' or 'inclusive'. Instead, there needs to be an awareness of how colonial practices and dominant conceptual frameworks invade the very foundation of the child welfare system. As Patrick Wolfe (2006) points out, settler colonization is not an event but a *structure*. This thesis shows that the child welfare system is built upon (Chrichlow 2003; Fournier and Crey 1997; Armitage 1995; Kline 1992; McKenzie and Hudson 1985) and continues to espouse (Chrichlow 2003; Sinclair 2007) the ideas and ideals of the heteropatriarchal settler society. The system continues to be assimilatory (Chrichlow 2003; MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; Sinclair 2007) and thus works according to the colonial logic of elimination (Wolfe 2009). Reforms to such a system and power relationship do not establish an alternative but rather carve out a space within the very framework that continues to work in favor of the settler society. It is no surprise that carving out a space within the child welfare system does not fundamentally alter how the system operates. Such changes may better be understood as concessions that ultimately do not de-naturalize colonial control. On the contrary, reforms are band-aid solutions that fail to question the presumed legitimacy of the child welfare system. They fail to problematize the self-proclaimed sovereignty of the Canadian state to regulate and control indigenous peoples lives, to police indigenous communities and families, and assume authority over children that belong to different nations. Indigenous peoples are forced, or lured into, operating within a colonial framework that presupposes the legitimacy of state sovereignty over them (Alfred

2009:72). Fighting for space within or reforms to that framework – without questioning the framework as such – merely reinforces the state's claim to sovereignty and thus colonial control (ibid). In short, policy reforms that are not adopted for their *strategic* value, fail to address the legacy of settler colonialism and obfuscate the ongoing colonial project.

Therefore, at the heart of real transformative change lies indigenous self-determination and self-governance. It seems ludicrous to have to state that indigenous peoples have to have autonomy to raise and look after *their own children*. As Ernie Crey in the late 90s stated, “Mine is the first generation of aboriginal people to have the right before the law to parent our own children” (1997:10). But, as my thesis shows, it yet has to become a reality. This is only possible when indigenous peoples can live autonomously and independently from the disciplinary and regulatory power of the settler state. Self-governing autonomy for indigenous peoples cannot be established in any real or meaningful way within the colonial state structure and its institutions (Smith 2010, 2008; Alfred 2009, 2010; Coulthard 2007; Turner 2006). Such a transformation certainly goes beyond the realms of child welfare and social services and speaks to a larger project of decolonization. In the words of Thomas-Muller (2010), “Today, we are still confronting the violence of colonization. It has manifested in many forms that I don't care to list. One thing that is clear to me, however, is that there are still those that would enter our communities promising a quick fix to our socio-economic woes when the answer always has and continues to be sovereignty and self-determination over our land and life” (220).

It needs pointing out that this should not be read as a plea to the settler society to

'recognize' or 'acknowledge' indigenous self-determination, because as Coulthard (2007) points out, the 'politics of recognition' is in itself a domesticating practice. It rests on the problematic idea that the flourishing of indigenous peoples as autonomous and self-determining nations is dependent on the recognition and institutional accommodation by the colonial settler state and society (Coulthard 2007; see also Smith 2010:60; Alfred 2009; Day 2000). It is in this sense that 'recognition' functions as a colonial concept, because it reproduces the very power relations that are sought to be transcended. Self-governance and self-determination cannot be 'granted' or 'bestowed' by the settler state and society because it is something that is already possessed (Turner 2006; Maaka and Fleras 2005).

A struggle towards social, economic and political justice for indigenous nations is a struggle that concerns us all – indigenous peoples and settlers alike (Alfred 2010). There are ways to move forward creatively. In order to partake in such transformative possibilities, we as settlers, must recognize our complicity in an ongoing colonial project (Reagan 2011) and re-imagine ourselves in a different kind of society. A relationship between settlers and indigenous peoples does not have to be adversarial, reactionary and defensive. It is essential for non-indigenous peoples to position ourselves as allies (Yee 2011) and re-envision our place on this land “without the inherited privileges of conquest and empire” (Alfred 2010). At the risk of sounding utopian it is my conviction that we can transcend the current system of governance and fashion a more just society for all of us. In my opinion, indigenous feminist theorists are taking the lead in that regard. Rather than seeing indigenous sovereignty as “an add-on to the heteronormative and patriarchal nationstate” indigenous feminist theory “challenges the nationstate system itself” (Smith

2008). According to Taiaiake Alfred (2009), a nation-state form of governance is an “exclusionary concept rooted in an adversarial and coercive Western notion of power” (83; see also Day 2004; Foucault 1994). Thus, the goal is to destabilize normative notions of the nation-state and offer an alternative form of governance – one not solely for indigenous peoples but for the world in general (Smith 2008:312). Rather than based on coercion and domination, an alternative model may be communally organized and based on “interrelatedness and responsibility” to fellow human beings, the land, and the animals living on it (Smith 2008:312-313; see also Alfred 2009). Thus, to quote Andrea Smith (2008) once more, indigenous feminist theory and praxis is “part of, and integral to, a global politics of liberation” (248).

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Appendix A

Breakdown of Articles According to Province and Newspaper:

In Total: 198 Articles			
Alberta: 30 Articles		Manitoba: 168 Articles	
<i>Edmonton Journal</i> : 18 Articles	<i>Calgary Herald</i> : 12 Articles	<i>Winnipeg Free Press</i> : 86 Articles	<i>Brandon Sun</i> : 82 Articles
Database: Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies	Database: Canadian Newsstand Major Dailies	Database: Canadian Newsstand & Factivia	Database: Brandon Sun Website
Scope: Newspaper articles and editorials from top two major provincial newspapers, each from a different municipality, and all published within a one-year time frame (1.1. 2010-31.12. 2010)			
Search Criteria: a) any of the following: “aboriginal”, “native”, “indigenous”, “first nation” b) plus any of the following: “foster care”, “child welfare”, “child intervention”, “children and youth services” (Alberta) and “child and family services” (Manitoba) c) refined search for “mother”, “father”, “man or men”, and “woman or women”, “child”.			

List of All Identified Newspaper Articles According to Province (Duplicates Eliminated):

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3. D'Aliesio, Renata. 2010. “Greater Accountability Urged by Child Welfare Review; Panel Focuses on Improved Services for Aboriginal Children.” *Edmonton Journal*. Oct 16. B8.
4. Edmonton Journal. 2010. "Family & Community." Mar 26. W2.
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6. Gelinias, Ben, and Mariam Ibrahim. 2010. "Homicide Victim had Violent Past; Body of 25-Year-Old Man Found on Stairs in River Valley." *Edmonton Journal*. May 18. B1.
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8. Henton, Darcy. 2010. "'She was our Little Angel'; Priest Calls for Reform of Foster-Care System at Toddler's Funeral." *Edmonton Journal*. Mar 10. A1.
 9. Kleiss, Karen. 2010. "Crowded Foster Homes Under Investigation; Minister Says some Facilities Over Capacity to Keep Siblings Together." *Edmonton Journal*. Mar 20. B2.
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 11. Lee, Jeff. 2010. "Torch Arrives on Island; Aboriginal Community Feels Both Misgiving and Pride About Games." *Edmonton Journal*. Feb 4. A6.
 12. O'Donnell, Sarah. 2010. "Alberta Invests \$19M in Continued Mental Health Funding for Schools; Boost Part of Government's Five-Year Action Plan." *Edmonton Journal*. Dec 4. B3.
 13. Simons, Paula. 2010. "'College Girls' Overcome Foster Care, Choose 'White' Way Out." *Edmonton Journal*. Feb 13. B1.
 14. Simons, Paula. 2010. "Foster Care System Under Siege; Many Children are Left Vulnerable in Overburdened Program." *Edmonton Journal*. Mar 6. B1.
 15. Simons, Paula. 2010. "Foster Mom Charged in Murder; Government Secrecy Veils 21-Month-Old Child's Death." *Edmonton Journal*. Jun 1. A1.
 16. Simons, Paula. 2010d. "Let's Protect Kids, Rather Than Criminals' Privacy; Alberta's Dysfunctional Child-Welfare System Screams for an Overhaul." *Edmonton Journal*. Aug 12. A3.
 17. Stewart, Marianne. 2010. "Health Centre Already Vital Link." *Edmonton Journal*. Jun 7. A17.
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Calgary Herald:

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3. D'Aliesio, Renata. 2010. "Tories Vow to Boost Child Welfare Program." *Calgary Herald*. Oct 16. A1.
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5. Komarnicki, Jamie. 2010. "Struggling Parents Get \$1-Million Boost; Pilot Program to be Expanded Across Alberta." *Calgary Herald*. Feb 13. C9.
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7. McLean, Archie. 2010. "NDP Wants Answers on Death of Foster Child." *Calgary Herald*. Mar 9. A5.
8. Calgary Herald. 2010. "Putting Kids First; Provincial Agencies must Focus More

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3. Evans, Ron. 2010. "It Takes a Village, As Well As a Leader." *Winnipeg Free Press*. March 13. H11.
4. Fallding, Helen. 2010a. "High and Dry First Nations an Hour from Winnipeg Face Third World Conditions." *Winnipeg Free Press*. Oct 30. A6.
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