Child Welfare and the Imperial Management of Childhood in Settler Colonial Canada, 1880s-2000s

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Graduate Department of Social Justice Education
University of Toronto

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Abstract

The Canadian child welfare system perpetuates deeply colonial relations. Indigenous children are being removed en masse, die at exceptionally high rates in the system, and the child welfare personnel is primarily drawn from the white settler society. This dissertation seeks to find answers to the question of how this present-day reality came to be and how Indigenous child removal can continue so vigorously.

This dissertation is a genealogical inquiry into the beginnings and development of the Canadian child welfare system. Through extensive archival research, it traces how this institutional framework re-articulates relations of coloniality – relations through which Indigenous peoples are rendered subjects to be managed and white settlers are re-inscribed as dominant, superior, and – despite the enormous violence that underpins their subject positions – as ‘caring’.

This dissertation advances the argument that the management of childhood is of central concern to the colonial/racial state. Child welfare emerged as an imperial project, for the purpose of white settler colonial nation-building. Animated by a colonial concern that the white race be preserved, early child-rescue initiatives focused on ‘saving’/managing the damaged but
salvageable white settler child. These children were to be prevented from ‘sinking’ to the level of the Indian or racial Other, and molded into useful citizens for the white settler colony.

At the turn of twentieth century, Indigenous children were rendered extraneous to the emerging field of child welfare. State interest in the Indigenous child was an annihilative and carceral interest, animated by the idea that Indigenous children had to be removed and contained in institutions (i.e. Indian Residential Schools). While Indian Residential Schools were eventually phased out, the colonizers’ focus on Indigenous child removal remained. Indigenous child removal emerged as a central modality of colonial power, the intent of which was to effect Indigenous erasure and dispossession for the proliferation of the settler colony. This modality of power continues through the child welfare system today, sustaining the settler society’s annihilative and accumulative impulse, continuing to dispossess Indigenous peoples of their lands and sovereignty.
Acknowledgments

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Introduction
Managing Children/Managing Race

This dissertation is an historical inquiry into the emergence and development of the Canadian child welfare system. Yet, this dissertation is not a conventional history of child welfare in Canada. Nor does it depict emerging ideas of child protection as part of some enlightened human morality or evolved politics of social progress. Instead, this is a genealogical study in which history is drawn upon as a means to problematize and critically engage with the present.

The desire to understand the emergence and development of child welfare in Canada stems from the recognition that today’s child welfare system is not only implicated, but indeed constitutes an active site in the perpetuation of deeply colonial relations. The colonial dynamics in today’s child welfare system – on its most basic level, in who is being taken and who is ‘doing’ the taking – are readily apparent. We find ourselves in a situation in which Indigenous children are being apprehended on an enormous scale through child protection services, and die at disproportionately high rates once taken into the system (see Kleiss and Henton 2013). While it is Indigenous children who are the prime targets of this form of ‘care’, the child welfare personnel, in stark contrast, is primarily drawn from the white settler society. 94% of child welfare workers are white and speak English (97%) as their primary language (Fallon et al. 2011).

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In 2011, across Canada, despite constituting only 7% of the overall child population, almost half (48.1%) of the children under the age of 14 in foster care are Indigenous (StatCan 2013:5). In some provinces, Indigenous children constitute the vast majority of children in child welfare custody. In Ontario, Indigenous children are 168% more likely to be removed than white children (Palmater 2017:n.p.). Manitoba tops this list with 87% of children in the child welfare system being of Indigenous ancestry (Milne, Kozlowski, Sinha 2014). Recent reports in this province indicate a further increase of Indigenous children taken into custody, suggesting that this number has now reached 90% (Palmater 2017:n.p.). Indeed, it has been suggested for a decade now that of the many reasons why an Indigenous child in Manitoba may no longer be living with their parents, apprehension by child welfare services is the most common (Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs 2000:50).
While shocking, this dynamic is not news to us. The child welfare system has presented us with such a picture since it began to include and extend its services to Indigenous children.

While many scholars continue to draw our attention to the disproportionate removal and institutionalization rate of Indigenous and racialized children by child welfare authorities (see, for example, Pon, Gosine and Phillips 2011; Sinha et al. 2011; Finney et al. 2011; Clarke 2010; Sinclair, Hart and Bruyere 2009; MacDonald and MacDonald 2007; Blackstock et al. 2005; Gough et al. 2005; Walmsley 2005; Bennett 2004; Trocmé, Knoke and Blackstock 2004; Dumbrill 2003), few emphasize that child welfare workers are overwhelmingly white, and fewer still consider what might be the connection between these two facts.

I have been thinking about the relationship between the Canadian child welfare system and Indigenous peoples for several years now, beginning with my Master’s thesis (Landertinger 2011). Then, as now, I was struck by the exceptionally high number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system and alarmed by an assertion of Fournier and Crey (1998) that has remained with me to this day: namely that – from its very beginning – Canada’s ‘Indian policy’ focused on severing the bonds between Indigenous children and their communities (ibid:17). This permanency is significant, since it reveals that the removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities is a central plank in colonial governance. If, as Linda Tuhiiwai Smith (2008) explains drawing on the words of Nandy, a colonial state moves through different phases of colonization, from “rapacious bandit-kings” to “well-meaning middle class liberals” (44), it is remarkable that notwithstanding various periods and adjustments in colonial governance, the focus on Indigenous child removal has remained constant.

The permanency and entrenchment of the child welfare system’s institutionalized colonial dynamics and the settler colony’s sustained focus on Indigenous children should give us pause. It requires that we consider how the Indigenous child remains the lynchpin of settler
colonialism and how child welfare came to be enlisted as a modality of power that enacts and sustains this focus. For decades, Patricia Monture has urged us to conceptualize the child welfare system’s colonial function in relation to Indigenous children (1989; 1995). In taking this bid seriously, this thesis asks how child welfare was conceptualized, institutionalized, and how it continues to adapt so as to perpetuate relations of coloniality – relations through which Indigenous peoples are re-produced as subjects to be managed and white settlers are re-inscribed as dominant, superior, and – despite the enormous violence that underpins their subject positions – as ‘caring’, “not damned, but innocent” as Toni Morrison (1992:52) has put it in relation to white people and their implication in slavery. To this end, I examine the often-disavowed relations between child welfare, British imperialism, and Canadian settler colonialism.

Beginning at the time child protection services took hold in Canada, tracing how they developed and changed over time, and finally, how they manifest in the present, I analyze how child welfare reforms – or what I call the politics of care – are racially marked and how they perpetuate, institutionalize, and normalize colonial relations. I hold that an examination of child welfare is an examination of the shifting terrains of settler colonial governance. It is a tracing of key threads, and in some instances, main routes of empire and white nation-building.

Methodology and the Archival Terrain

It is in this spirit that I turn to write a “history of the present” (Foucault 1977).² Such a genealogical method avoids positing the child welfare system as a manifest reality, but instead as

² To those unfamiliar with this form of historical inquiry, this statement may erroneously evoke a charge of ‘presentism’ – an imprudent adherence to present-day concepts, attitudes, and values, and furthermore, the utilization of these concepts to interpret the past. Yet, while a Foucauldian genealogy may certainly have several shortcomings, ‘presentism’ is not one of them (For excellent explanations, see Garland 2014:367; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982:118-119; see also Foucault 2008:130; Roth 1981:43; Dean 1994).
a social construction whose form and function can only be ascertained from analyzing the power relations it maintains. Following Michel Foucault’s guidance (see, in particular, 2003 “Truth and Power”:306, 2003 “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”:351, 2003 “Questions of Method”:246), I attempt to refrain from searching for the ‘origins’ of child welfare, but rather turn toward the child welfare system’s “surface of emergence” (Foucault 2003 “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”:357). I do not want to leave the impression that there exists, out there, a great history of child welfare that has not yet been written or that has yet to be uncovered. No linear development or evolution, no origin, no ‘true’ history of child welfare is attempted here (for I do not believe this to be possible). Instead, I pay attention to the interplay of different forces that were present when ‘the child’ emerged as a category of concern, when ‘child neglect’ emerged as a social problem, when this social problem was thought to require a wide-spread public and institutionalized answer, and, as I will show, when this ‘answer’ meant different things – and hence led to different ‘solutions’ – depending on the racial background of the child in question.

In order to write a history that is at once situated and concrete, while also indicative of emerging trajectories and traceable arcs that extend into the present, I examine three different periods or moments in Canada’s child welfare history. Each period spans roughly twenty-five years: the period of emergence of child welfare/child-saving (mid 1880s – mid 1910s); the post-war period in which child welfare services were extended to Indigenous children resulting in the ‘Sixties Scoop’ (1940s-60s); the turn towards ‘cultural sensitivity’ and the creation of Aboriginal child welfare agencies that informs the colonial present (late 1970s-2000s). These periods were

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3 Foucault’s idea of a “surface of emergence” traces a web of historical conditions out of which particular practices take shape. The task entails a focus on the interplay of socio-political developments so as to trace the emergence and manifestation of different institutions, social problems, and to historicize particular ideas, methods, and practices that we may now regard as natural and normal.
chosen because they exemplify a major shift or departure in how Indigenous and settler children were being managed. As such, they constitute crucial moments in this genealogy and it is during such moments of change, transition, and uncertainty, as Stoler (2002) advises us, that one finds the accumulation and circulation of particularly rich stories and narratives.

Research for the third period concerns core policies that structure and inform the operation of Indigenous child welfare in the present. Research for the first two periods, the period of emergence and the post-war period, concerns historic material and thus took me to several archives. I spent two years immersed in institutional and state archives in two locales, the City Archives of Toronto and the National Archives in Ottawa (see Appendix for an overview). The archives that were chosen were those that I believed would provide me with crucial insights into how child welfare emerged and developed. My archival research was complimented by and is indebted to secondary sources on the history of childhood in Canada, histories of social work and the Children’s Aid Society, the emergence of the Canadian welfare state, colonial legislations and policies, and Indian Residential Schools. The chapters in this dissertation bring together and draw from differing strands of these literatures.

My archival journey ‘began at the beginning’, with the emergence of child welfare – or “child-saving” initiatives as they were then called – at the turn of the twentieth century. To this end, I turned to the first available historical records of the first child welfare/child-saving organization of its kind in Canada, the Toronto Children’s Aid Society (CAS) (founded in 1891), located at the City of Toronto Archives. In addition to research on the Toronto CAS, I turned to

4 The material I included in my analysis spanned from the Society’s earliest available records until approximately the year 1915. The material I primarily focused on here consisted of the Children’s Aid Society’s ‘complaint books’ – ledgers that served as the first case records (focusing on the years 1892-1911), the society’s annual reports (1886-1910), photographic records of children (ca. 1917), records from the Children’s Court (1900-1907), and others (see Appendix).
the annual reports (for the years 1894-1913) of the Ontario Department of Neglected and Dependent Children (founded in 1893), which are (conveniently) also held in the archives of the Toronto CAS, and the John Joseph Kelso fonds,\(^5\) which are located at the National Archives in Ottawa (Library and Archives Canada). This historic research was further complemented by selective records of the Toronto Infant’s Home and the Toronto Department of Health (held at the City of Toronto Archives). Across these archival records, I focused on the narratives of early “child-savers”. During this time, the term ‘child-saver’ was utilized to refer to those individuals who came to be concerned with the well-being of ‘dependent’ children (children whose parents were alive) and who sought to find ways to care/protect/save children whom they considered mistreated. Expressed differently, these individuals acted as the first child welfare or social workers before these fields or professions existed. I turned to their narratives to gain insights into how the field of child welfare was constructed, what ‘problems’ necessitated it, what knowledges led to its emergence, and what practices came to define it.\(^6\)

By the 1920s, the Toronto CAS was no longer at the core of child-saving efforts as similar initiatives had spread throughout the country. During this time, we witness the professionalization of child-saving-turned-child-protection work, and the creation of national bodies concerned with child welfare. For example, in 1914, the University of Toronto established the first training program for social workers and McGill followed suit shortly thereafter (1918).

\(^5\) J.J. Kelso founded the Toronto CAS and served as the first superintendent of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children. His archives contained newspaper clippings, conference programs, brochures, and promotional material pertaining to a variety of child welfare topics throughout Ontario.

\(^6\) Chapters two-five draw on these archives.
We also witness the founding of the Canadian Council of Child Welfare (1920), and the formation of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) (1926). By the 1940s, child welfare had emerged as a distinct field of practice and provincial networks of Children’s Aid Societies were present throughout Canada. It is also during this time that child-savers-turned-social workers began to turn their attention to Indigenous children. In 1951, the Indian Act was amended to allow for the inclusion of Indigenous children in provincial child welfare schemes.

To examine the national development of child welfare and the extension of child protection services towards Indigenous children post WWII, I turned to the archives of some the most influential organizations in these endeavours: the archive of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW), the archive of the Canadian Welfare Council/Canadian Council on Social Development, and to a lesser extent, the Charlotte Elizabeth Whitton fonds, all held at the National Archives in Ottawa. I limited my research to records produced during the 1940s-late 60s, examining material that referenced the Department of Indian Affairs, correspondences with other welfare or charitable organizations concerned with the welfare of ‘Indians’, particularly correspondences with Children’s Aid Societies, and inter-organizational material that was related to or directly addressed ‘issues’ around Indigenous peoples. In this context, I examined brochures, reports, memos, committee files, and so on, focusing on those narratives that

7 The Canadian Council of Child Welfare was founded in 1920 by Charlotte Whitton. Ten year later it was renamed as the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare. In 1935, this organization changed into the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC), and in 1971, the CWC changed once more to the current iteration – the Canadian Council on Social Development.

8 While I understand that this Department’s title went through a variety of cosmetic name changes, I mostly use the name “Indian Affairs” throughout this dissertation. This name, to me, seems more honest and descriptive as to the policies and laws it is based upon and the colonial relations it continues to produce.
colonizers drew upon to gain access to Indigenous children and the routes that were navigated to extend child welfare services onto reserves.\footnote{Chapter eight and parts of chapter nine draw from these archives.}

To better examine the management of Indigenous children during both time periods, I turned to historical records of the Department of Indian Affairs, held in the National Archives in Ottawa. I examined material around the turn of the century to allow for a comparative analysis of the management of Indigenous children with the emergence of child welfare. To this end, I examined memoranda, position papers, correspondences, Indian Residential School inspection reports, etc.\footnote{Chapters six and seven are informed by this research.} \footnote{I also examined material produced during the post-war period to gain insights into discussions that were in the Department of Indian Affairs prior to and during the Sixties Scoop. For this purpose, I obtained closed/restricted documents from Indian Affairs via the Access to Information Act pertaining to “the welfare of Indians” during the 1950s. Many of these files contain correspondences between Indian Affairs and various Children’s Aid Societies concerning cases of Indigenous children who were about to be or had already been removed. Yet, while certainly pertinent to this dissertation, I have made the decision to not share any of this information at this point. These correspondences are case-specific, draw on particular life stories that likely concern living individuals, and I thus felt that I could not treat this information with the diligence and care it deserves in the time and scope allowed for a doctoral dissertation. Instead, much of the analysis for the post-war period draws from the archives cited above, records produced by those who emerge as primary agents and proponents of ‘care’ for Indigenous children – social workers and welfare reformers. These archives draw on the same colonial narratives as the Department of Indian Affairs without utilizing particular life-stories for their backdrop.}

My archival research involved sifting through tens of thousands of pages of historical material, produced and amassed by various actors and organizational bodies, spanning different time periods. To examine this vast material, I employed different stages of analysis. First, observational and thematic notes were taken during the process of gathering archival material. During the collection process, documents were digitized (scanned or photographed) and electronically catalogued. For much of the subsequent analysis, I relied on the qualitative
research software atlas.ti to thematically order, cross-reference, and code the data. Material I chose to reference in this dissertation went through an additional round of coding (first electronically, then by hand).

My approach in reading these archives was informed by a poststructuralist understanding – that these historical records do not simply equate to historical facts, but rather constitute traces of, and hence provide us with insights into, forms of colonial knowledge production (and thus the production of colonial power). Stoler’s work (particularly, 2010, 2002) provided me with a direction on how to read these archives, instructing me to pay attention to “hauntingly similar quotes”, to be mindful of “archival densities” and their “absences”, and to actively pursue those “recurrent themes” that seemingly could not be put to rest (2002:7). I followed these threads through records and reports, and the many files, memos, and correspondences that appeared, circulated, and appeared within and among the various archives, connecting the different branches of colonial governance (strong linkages existed, for example, between the Department of Indian Affairs and the Canadian Welfare Council; the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers; the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children and the Toronto Children’s Aid Society). In following these connections, I paid attention to the sharing of colonial typologies, descriptions, and statistical categorizations (e.g. ‘slum reports’, pamphlets on child neglect, crime statistics), techniques of notation (e.g. case records) and planning (e.g. year-end reports), descriptive formulas for the organization of work (e.g. ‘how to do’ in-home visits, when to go, and how often), the routinization and standardization of activities (e.g. ‘how to run’ a CAS shelter, when to apply punitive measures) – those ‘technical instruments’ that Bruno Latour (1986) refers to as material inscriptions that render objects ‘visible’. These are the seemingly mundane tools that “render things into calculable and programmable form”, without which “the government of conduct cannot take place” (Inda
I further attended to an examination of political rationalities, “the changing discursive fields within which the exercise of power is conceptualized, the moral justifications for particular ways of exercising power by diverse authorities, notions of the appropriate forms, object and limits of politics, and conceptions of the proper distribution of tasks among secular, spiritual, military and familial sectors” (Rose and Miller 1992:175). Through this approach we will gain insight into the deliberations and debates that were had among social/moral reformers (of whom child-savers are a part), governmental bodies, citizenship organizations, and others, on how to govern, and how to govern better; we witness the sharing of problems and discussions about those who needed to be controlled, delineations of fields of practice and power application (e.g. the negotiation of provincial and federal apparatuses over service-provisions for ‘the Indian’), and the circulation of imagined pitfalls and dangers if unsuccessful. We observe seemingly endless reiterations of uncertainties, providing us with insights into the fears, hopes, and aspirations of colonial officials and bureaucrats, private citizens, reformers, those who explicitly sought to eliminate through violence and death, and those who colonize/d in the name of equality, justices, and child protection.

Archival Absences and the Racial Management of Childhood

I initially began my research in the archives of early child-savers (the Toronto CAS, the Ontario Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, and the records of J.J. Kelso) with the intent to focus my analysis on the ways in which early child-savers conceptualized Indigenous children. How early child-savers imagined the Indigenous child (and by extension their relations), and how these conceptions changed over time were questions I sought to answer. However, I did not find what I was looking for.
I could not find the Indigenous child in any of those historical records. There were no images, nor stories for me to deconstruct. These archives held no discussions (positive or negative) on the welfare and upbringing of Indigenous children, nor did it include discussions concerning the ‘prevalence’ of child neglect in Indigenous communities – discussions so central to how the system operates in the colonial present where ‘neglect’ is racially coded (Blackstock, Trocmé and Bennett 2004; MacLaurin et al. 2008; Landertinger 2016). Indeed, if one were to rely on the archival records of early child-savers, a history of child welfare could be written – and importantly has been written (see Aitken, McCullagh and Bellamy 2002; Jones and Rutman 1981; Chen 2005; Rooke and Schnell 1982; Houston 1982; Coulter 1995; Moscovitch and Albert (Eds.) 1987) – without reference to Indigenous peoples. It is as if these child-saving initiatives took place on empty – not stolen – land, land that was empty of Indigenous children. This absence is significant. It was only then that I understood what seems self-evident now, namely that the Indigenous child was rendered entirely extraneous to the emerging project of child protection. Indigenous children were not the concern of early child-savers. The child in these archives was white.

In this thesis, I put forth the argument that the Canadian child welfare system emerged as an imperial project, a racially demarcated field of power application focused on ‘saving’/reforming and disciplining the children of the more suspect members of the colony – poor or lesser-white settlers. It arose as a ‘solution’ to save the damaged but salvageable white settler child. The central concern of child rescue initiatives was to preserve the dominance of the white race and not let lesser-white settlers sink to the level of the Indian or racial Other. As Diane Roberts (1994) put it once in an examination of white female subject formation in the antebellum South, “Vigilance was required to keep white bodies from slipping toward blackness” (3-4). The white population that was slipping had to be shored up in a race specific
way. Child-savers and other social/moral reformers held that these suspect members of the empire had to be molded into contributing citizens of the Canadian settler colony, disciplined and improved to live ‘up’ to the potential their whiteness held.

While social/moral reformers mobilized to ‘save’/improve/manage poor white children at the end of the nineteenth century, the state interest in the Indigenous child was an annihilative and carceral interest, animated by the idea that Indigenous children had to be removed and contained in institutions. The management of Indigenous children at the time child welfare initiatives took shape was a more complete and deadly undertaking, effected through the Indian Residential Schools system. Child welfare workers would not come after Indigenous children for another 50 years.

This concurrent yet differential management of child populations led me to understand that the management of childhood is a central concern to the colonial/racial state. It is a concern that encompasses not just Indigenous children, but indeed all children. Although, very importantly, who that child in question is matters. The location of the child along racial, gendered, and class lines is of crucial importance. As such, like Fiona Paisley (2004), I insist that the “management of childhood” be understood “as a method of managing race” (241). It cannot be emphasized enough that the management of children is fundamentally about the management of the race/nation/empire. Focusing her analysis on the Australian settler colony, Paisley contends that the “dual interests” of “imperial and colonial race politics” focuses on “governing native races and improving the white race, both to be achieved through a focus on the rising generation” (ibid; see also Jacobs 2009; Carrington 2011; Stoler 2002; Swain 2009). In this context, Paisley argues, “taking children from their parents and communities quickly became a routine aspect of frontier life soon to be incorporated into government policy” (242). Unlike Paisley, however, who then conflates the management of Indigenous and settler children in her
analysis,\textsuperscript{12} I want to pay attention to the fact that the underlying mechanisms that inform the management of either child population differ. While the management of both child populations is geared towards the same end – the proliferation of the white settler nation and the dispossession and annihilation of Indigenous peoples – this was effected via different routes.

In reading through material produced by the Department of Indian Affairs, the archives of the CASW and the Canadian Welfare Council/Canadian Council on Social Development, it became evident that the Indigenous child does not enter the colonial imagination as a child. Put another way, the Indigenous child is never just a child. First and foremost, the Indigenous child emerges as an Indian. And as such, the Indigenous child is rendered a threatening potentiality in waiting. At the turn of the twentieth century, if the Indigenous child was considered anything, then they were rendered some ‘thing’ that needed to be eliminated – a tiny, vulnerable and easily preyed on Indian who needed to be contained and forcefully managed before growing into a full-fledged adult. The ‘Indian child’, by their very existence, was imagined to pose a threat to the colonial state, an incessant reminder that the project of Indigenous elimination and dispossession had not been completed (see Tuck and Yung 2012:9). The white child, on the other hand, was seen as holding the promise of a glorious future for the white settler colony – if raised ‘properly’. It was also the ‘neglected white child’ that symbolized racial anxieties over the degeneration of the white race and fears over imperial decline. Child welfare emerged because it was believed that without public intervention, the impoverished/neglected white settler child could grow into a ‘degenerative’ presence in the white body politic and hence pose a threat to the overall well-

\textsuperscript{12}Paisley largely analyzes the management of white and Indigenous children in terms of ‘degrees’. As such, the author sees white children as merely targeted “[s]omewhat less virulently” than Indigenous children (2004:244). For Paisley, this means that both child populations alike were managed for the same purpose, namely the creation of useful citizens for the emerging Australian nation. Such an analysis fails to recognize that Indigenous peoples are not automatically considered part of the colonial citizenry, but are first and foremost marked for eradication.
being of the colony. The Indigenous child was marked for eradication and incarceration/institutionalization, while the white child was to be ‘saved’ and molded into a contributing member of the white settler colony, a member that would participate in and further the settler colonial project. The differential management of these respective child populations provides us with insights into the logics of white settler colonialism – for their management differs according to the possibilities these children are seen to embody (for better or for worse) regarding the future of the white settler society and their intended roles in the ‘colonial order of things’ (Stoler 2006). Expressed differently, the child welfare system and the Indian Residential School system emerged as two ‘solutions’ for different ‘problems’ associated with these respective child populations.

I want to stress that while these forms of racial management differ, they are simultaneously highly connected and interrelated. I find it useful to think about these two institutional frameworks ‘contrapuntally’, as Edward Said (1994) invites us to do. The manner in which child populations were managed based on their racial classification, the ways in which necropolitical and disciplinary power were unevenly applied, remind us of the importance of racial boundary control – enforced demarcations between colonizer and colonized, demarcations on which the colonial state fundamentally depends (see Fanon 1963:38-9). These differing institutional routes are part of the same system of colonial governmentality, manifestations and enactments of colonial boundary control that are, at once, demarcated and discrete, and also highly complementary and interrelated. The ways in which child populations are managed mimic and reproduce colonial relations at large. Insofar as the building of a settler colony means the dispossession of those who hold title to the land, the improvement of some (the white child) simultaneously means the erasure of another (the Indian child).
When I entered the archives of the CASW and the CWC to examine material post WWII, I was struck by profound changes in colonial narratives to what had come before. Explicit imperial language begins to subside, formerly colonial desires for differentiation and separation become desires for Indian integration, and the differentiated frameworks for child management come to be assessed as segregationist – an assessment that now carries a negative connotation. And it is only then that the Indigenous child enters the colonial archives in the field of child welfare. Now discussions were being had by the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian Welfare Council/Canadian Council of Social Development, and other organizations, concerning the dire situation of Indigenous peoples (and by extension, their offspring). In the 50s, Children’s Aid Societies join the conversation. The need was expressed, first reluctantly, then more enthusiastically to afford Indian children with the same child protection services already available to white children. Importantly, when we witness a shift from explicit erasure and violence to liberal gestures of inclusion, gestures to include Indigenous peoples in the settler nation, and gestures to include Indigenous children in child welfare structures, dispossession and the bedrock of violence on which it rests continues apace. Liberal strategies of inclusion notwithstanding, what remains constant is the removal of Indigenous children from their communities.

Indigenous child removal constitutes a central modality of colonial power, the intent of which is to effect Indigenous erasure and dispossession for the proliferation of the white settler colony. This modality of power first took the shape of Indian Residential Schools and continues in the colonial present through the child welfare system. Child welfare operates as a colonial form of governmentality sustaining the settler colony’s commitment to Indigenous annihilation (Razack 2015:207), and continuing the colonial desire to dispossess “Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority” (Coulthard 2014:25). Settler colonialism constitutes a
racial project of annihilation (Razack 2015) and accumulation (Fanon 1963). Indigenous child welfare is produced and perpetuated as a colonial modality of power that sustains both. Its function is to erase, contain, and dispossess. This is about colonial control in the present and – by taking hold of the rising generation – the attempted management and control of Indigenous peoples in the future.

In making this argument I owe a great debt to scholars who alerted me to the destructiveness of the Canadian child welfare system. Marlee Kline and Patricia Monture have repeatedly reminded us that race and coloniality are inherent to the operation of child welfare. Colonialism, as they point out, gave rise to its laws, policies, and protocols and, as such, their applications extend and perpetuate relations of coloniality in the present. Raven Sinclair’s insights that child welfare functions as an extension and continuation of child removal policies previously effected through Indian Residential Schools, demanded that I think carefully about the enduring quality of Indigenous child removal. It is such insights that led me to theorize Indigenous child welfare as a form of colonial governmentality, as part of a system of governance in which colonial power is inherent in and sustained through its techniques and modalities.

Chapter Overview

In what is to follow I trace how the historical separation of child removal policies concerning Indigenous and settler children unfolds. I begin by writing a history of child welfare that places its emergence squarely within its colonial context, examining how it operated as a demarcated field of power application centered on the improvement of the white settler society. I then “slice laterally” across domains of practice” (Deleuze in Chambon 1999:64) comparing early child-saving initiatives to the incarceration of Indigenous children through Indian Residential Schools.
Subsequently, I examine how Indigenous children were included in child protection schemes and child welfare services emerged as the primary method for Indigenous child removal, a relationship that extends into the present.

A genealogy comes with its own theoretical assumptions. My line of inquiry presupposes an understanding of power as governmentality. Chapter one lays out some of these theoretical foundations to clarify my approach and provide a backdrop to this thesis. I decided to structure subsequent chapters according to the paths the colonial archives presented me with. I thus separate the emergence of child welfare/the management of settler children (Part One) from the management of Indigenous children (Part Two).

Part One focuses on the management of settler children at the turn of the twentieth century. Here I discuss the emergence of child-saving initiatives in English-Canada (1880s – approximately 1915). Each chapter in this section tells part of this history. I begin by analyzing the kinds of problems and imperial anxieties that surrounded the construct of the neglected white settler child (chapter two). Chapter three examines the ways in which child-savers imagined the ‘degenerative’ surroundings in which these children lived, much of which focused on Toronto’s slums.13 In this context, child-savers constructed powerful narratives that justified and necessitated their intervention. I continue by following the moves of child-savers as they begin to

13 While much of this analysis draws on the material of the Toronto CAS and/or is based in the city of Toronto, its scope and implications are broader. The Toronto CAS was not only the first of its kind in Canada, but it provided a blueprint for other Children’s Aid Societies that began to appear in Ontario shortly after the Toronto CAS was founded. With the beginning of the Toronto CAS we are also witnessing the creation of a network of Ontario Children’s Aid Societies who shared information, collaborated on initiatives, and kept each other informed on their respective activities (as evidence by the Toronto CAS’ annual reports, the annual reports of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, and conference brochures in the J.J. Kelso fonds). This Ontario model in turn largely provided the blueprint for the rest of Canada in how to organize and carry-out child welfare work. It is from these archives and this history that we witness a fanning out of modes of engagement, practice, and knowledges.
enter the homes of impoverished settlers, and examine the solutions they put forth in relation to impoverished/neglected children (chapter four). Here, I discuss the work of ‘home-restoration’ and the emergence of the foster home system. Chapter five concludes the focus on the settler child. I end through an analysis of stories and pictures child-savers reproduced of children that had been ‘successfully’ saved and transformed. Throughout these chapters, I provide an analysis of white colonial subject formation as it was to be accomplished through the figure of the white child.

This part, to which I dedicate half of this dissertation, serves several purposes. First, I aim to make a contribution to the history of child welfare in Canada in writing a history that does not rest on a disavowal, but seeks to foreground whiteness and settler colonialism as constitutive of this institutional framework. Hence, my purpose here is to point out the proverbial ‘elephant in the room’ – that child welfare did not merely arise as a project of child-saving, but that it was one of white child-saving; that the Children’s Aid Society’s ‘legacy of care’ (Aitken, McCullagh and Bellamy 2002) was not directed at everyone; that its purpose was not merely to build a “useful, strong, Christian citizenry” (Chen 2005:15), but that this imagined citizenry was racially coded; that while, at the turn of the twentieth century, neglect and cruelty came to be problems to be combatted (ibid), these were only considered problems in relation to settler children; and while institutions were to be dismantled (Rooke and Schnell 1983) to make way for foster homes, this was only a reality for settler children and that, in fact, we witness an expansion of Indian Residential Schools at the very same time.

Another purpose of Part One is to point to the colonial significance that was attributed to the figure of the white child. To British imperialists and Canadian colonizers, ‘the child’ symbolized a people’s future. The white child emerged as a symbol for the future of the white race, the proliferation of the empire, and the success of the settler colony. This importance drove
child-saving initiatives and enormous effort was directed at this endeavour. Organizations (Children’s Aid Societies) had to be established, effective ways for intervention and reformation had to be thought up, the children had to be located, and they had had to be transformed into imperial subjects. In stressing these insights, I mean to provide a perspective for reading Part Two, in which I turn to the settler colony’s removal of Indigenous children. For I believe we can only begin to grasp the scale of the colony’s annihilative impulse that lies beneath Indigenous child removal initiatives by knowing what their own children meant to them. To the settler society, their children signified their future and their survival. The Indian child symbolized the proliferation and future of the Indian. Taking the Indian child away from their families and communities constituted a calculated attempt to annihilate and foreclose a future for Indigenous peoples.

Part Two focuses on the colonial management of Indigenous children. Chapter six and seven take place at the turn of the twentieth century. These two chapters discuss themes of segregation, demarcation, and racial boundary control as they were mobilized and manifest during this time. Chapter six discusses the colonial imaginaries that constructed Indigenous peoples (and by extension, Indigenous children) as extraneous and radically different to the imagined civility of colonial society. To this end, I utilize a story as an entry point into this analysis. The story is that of Anatanwin, a Lakȟóta teenage girl, whom white settlers believed to be a white child stolen by ‘the Indians’. Upon ‘finding out’ that the teenager was instead a ‘half-breed’, the settlers changed their management accordingly. Here I draw on Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection to comment on how anxieties over boundary control shaped the affective, visceral and psychic dimensions of white colonial subjects, focusing on the intolerable dread that the figure of the Indian seemed to conjure. Chapter seven examines a spatial configuration of this thematic. Here I turn to a discussion of Indian Residential Schools, which I theorize as zones of
abjection and death-making. These carceral and necropolitical spaces were created to take hold of Indigenous children, spaces from which they were not supposed to escape, and, to paraphrase Mbembe (2003), in which settler colonial violence could be authorized, localized and targeted. Here, I compare the incarceration of Indigenous children in Indian Residential Schools to child-saving initiatives. I do so to highlight that the settler society authorized and applied this enormous violence to Indigenous children – *at precisely the same moment* – as ‘cruelty’ towards and ‘neglect’ of white settler children were to be combatted. Chapter eight transitions to the post-war period. We witness that after WWII, the settler colony’s management of Indigenous peoples began to change. No longer was it acceptable to openly and forthrightly eradicate Indigenous peoples, which meant that ‘Indian children’ needed to be managed differently. The colony’s annihilative impulse would now be furthered through liberal discourses of equality, human rights, racial pluralism, integration – increasing displays of ‘care and concern’ for the colonized. Here, relations of coloniality are extended through a discourse of welfare for the Natives, a period that paved the way for ‘cunning’ (Povinelli 2002) gestures of inclusion and integration. We witness a slow phasing-out of Indian Residential Schools and an inclusion of Indigenous children in child welfare schemes. What follows is the transition to child welfare services as the colony’s primary method for Indigenous child removal resulting in the ‘Sixties Scoop’. In its turn towards Indigenous children, child welfare comes to be enlisted as colonial form of governmentality that sustains the settler society’s annihilative impulsive. The discourses and attendant legislative changes during the post-war period paved the way for our current dynamics in child welfare (chapter nine). Here we witness further adjustments in colonial governance, effected through a turn towards seemingly even ‘more progressive’ discourses of cultural-sensitivity, and further inclusion via participatory politics and devolution of power to Aboriginal
child welfare agencies – adjustments through which Indigenous child removal continues unabated.

Throughout these chapters, I show how the arc of settler colonial violence extends and threads through each period under examination. Since race is conceptually pliable and elastic (Goldberg 2009:330), what race means and signifies changes. Our discourses change, our points of reference and signification change, our symbolisms change – but the ‘realities’ of race and colonial governance, their effects and manifestations – materially, bodily, spatially – remain strikingly similar over time. Throughout the various shifts and adjustments, relations of coloniality remain intact, the settler colony’s practice of Indigenous child removal remains unchanged. Indigenous children are still being taken, communities are still being separated, the children still die while in the ‘care’/custody of the settler state.

Garland (2014) reminds us that a “genealogical analysis traces how contemporary practices and institutions emerged out of specific struggles, conflicts, alliances, and exercises of power, many of which are nowadays forgotten” (372). In tracing and exploring such troublesome linkages I seek to problematize the institution of child welfare and its attendant practice of child removal – things we not only take for granted, but perhaps even value. The desire to understand and trace how the racial and colonial dynamics in today’s child welfare system came to be is a desire to denaturalize and, hopefully, alter the present situation. Inspired by the work and politics of scholars such as Sherene Razack, Patricia Monture, Glen Coulthard, and (many) others, I hope to contribute to scholarship that seeks to go beyond “the exhaustive cataloguing and endless enumeration of occurrences” (Ferreira da Silva 2001:423) of racial and colonial violence, and instead foreground these occurrences as materializations that the Canadian “settler colony-cum-liberal democracy” (Thobani 2007) requires and produces, not as aberrations or exceptions, but for its condition of possibility (Lowe 2015:3).
There are certain conclusions then I hope we can draw from this research. After demonstrating that child welfare in Canada emerged as an imperial undertaking, as a project of citizenship formation, white nation-building, and settler colonial governance, that the present system of child welfare is born of anxieties over the preservation of the white race, that this system was never meant to work for Indigenous children but rather sought their erasure, that including them in this system wreaked havoc and continues to wreak havoc, I hope that we can arrive at a point at the end of Part Two where we once more reflect on the current number of Indigenous children in the child system and decide that the child welfare system as it now stands can no longer be allowed to continue.  

Shortcomings

A variety of shortcomings arise through my delineation of boundaries, decisions on starting points and what threads to pursue. A major challenge, as Said (1994) once put it, was “cutting down a very fat archive to manageable dimensions” (16). It meant leaving many things unsaid. It also meant willfully ignoring entire areas for study or fields of power application – e.g. I say nothing about child-saving in French-Canada, nor do I do examine the development Catholic Children’s Aid Societies. I decided not to pursue connections between circulating child-saving debates that would have taken me beyond Great Britain to Germany, France, and other western European nations. Importantly, linkages would have also taken me to other white colonies, such as South Africa and Australia – routes that will have to be explored and demand a transnational analysis that focuses on the centrality of child removal to the making of colonial space. Another major elision is to have left out histories and studies on projects of eugenics – projects intimately

14 (“The system isn’t broken, it was built that way.”)
tied to notions of preserving and making the white race – and, hence, that I do not examine nor theorize the institutionalization of ‘abnormal’/‘feeble-minded’/‘idiotic’ children – those children who, regardless of whether they were white, did not make the cut – and like racialized children were not to be saved, but were also to be institutionalized.

Furthermore, there is a potentially misleading quality to my work. I do not want to leave the impression that settler colonialism is a binary construct that merely exists in the interplay of Indigenous peoples and white colonizers or settlers. The picture is obviously more complex than my (at times) polemical and flippant use of the Indigenous/settler dichotomy suggests. Despite my comparative analysis between Indigenous and white settler children, one should keep in mind that settler colonialism draws on different and interlocking logics of oppression (see, for example, Byrd 2011; Barker 2005; Lowe 2015; Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Corntassel 2014). As Sunera Thobani (2007) has shown, the rights to ‘full’ Canadian citizenship are based (not only on the dispossession of Indigenous peoples, which the category ‘citizen’ necessarily entails, but also) on the institution of white supremacy (2007:74). The governance of white settlers/nationals, Indigenous peoples, and racialized settlers/immigrants/arrivants “has been organized through state policies and popular practices, producing certain subjects as exalted (nationals), others as marked for physical and cultural extinction or utter marginalization (Indians), and yet others for perpetual estrangement or conditional inclusion as supplicants (immigrants, migrants, and refugees)” (Thobani 2007:6). Racialized Others, depending on nationality, gender, race, religion, and so on, are differently folded into the settler nation. Full access to citizenship and ‘Canadian-ness’ can only transpire for those unmarked bodies who are invited into whiteness, and who can indeed arrive there. In this context, the specificity of anti-blackness (Sexton 2010) as a foundational pillar of the Canadian nation-state (Walcott 2006) and settler colonialism (Tuck and
This leads me to the next major shortcoming. How and to what extent early child-saving initiatives managed racialized child populations, and particularly black children, needs to be examined. This is an area gravely neglected by academic inquiry. Indeed, to my knowledge, no history has been written on the child-savers’ management of racialized children at the turn of the twentieth century. Yet, we do know that the social and political context in British North-America at this time was profoundly and openly racist (Walker 2008). The “Great White North” referenced more than snow and ice; it conjured images of imperial grandeur, Canadian sovereignty and prosperity, and the hardy character of the white Northern race (Berger 1970:5; Coleman 2006:129; Baldwin, Cameron and Kobayashi 2011:2). In this context, racist tropes such as the “the yellow peril” and Anglo-Saxon Canadians being “overrun” and “corrupted” by more “fertile” and “inferior” races were rampant (see, for example, Mackey 2002; Perry 2001; Razack 2002; Stanley 2003; Strong-Boag et al. 1999; Thobani 2007; Walker 2008). And in 1911, under Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, the following took effect:

His excellency in Council, in virtue of the provisions of Sub-section (c) of Section 38 of the Immigration Act, is pleased to Order and it is hereby
Ordered as follows: For a period of one year from and after the date
hereof the landing in Canada shall be and the same is prohibited of any
immigrants belonging to the Negro race, which race is deemed unsuitable
to the climate and requirements of Canada. (in Walker 2012:45, FN78)

Given that racialized immigrants, and particularly black people, were to be excluded from the white nation in the making, I hypothesize that, in such a context, managing their offspring must have also been an important endeavour.
We also know that in the current child welfare system, the number of black children in the system mirrors the removal rate of Indigenous children. As noted in Pon, Gosine and Philipps (2011), “in an urban Ontario city, Black youth represent 65% of the children in care, despite the fact that the Black population in this urban centre totals only 8%” (386). This requires an examination that centres anti-blackness, slavery and black fungibility (Hartman 2003), imperialism and white supremacy. Unfortunately, my own study adds very little here.

In other words, what follows is only a partial story.
I first came to understand the permanency of the Canadian settler colony’s focus on Indigenous children through a Foucauldian framework of biopower (see Landertinger 2011:12-31). I theorized the removal of Indigenous children as a form of biopolitical control – a form of control that the liberal state requires for its proliferation – a form of power that centres on the biological processes of populations, seeking to manage life (and by extension death) itself (see Foucault 1990, 2003 “Society must be defended”, 2007). Foucault famously distinguished this power from the spectacular and punitive power “of the sword” (2003 “Society must be defended”:240; see also 2007:7), the power of the sovereign exemplified by his/her “right to take life or let live” (1990:136, 138). The liberal state, he contends, kills in less spectacular ways, most readily through “disallow[ing] life to the point of death.” (1990:138). He further emphasizes that biopower operates differently – or rather on a different level – then the disciplinary power he set out to describe in Discipline and Punish. Disciplinary power focuses on the disciplining, correcting, shaping, and regularizing of individual bodies (of self and others), an “individualizing” form of power (2003 “Society must be defended”:243) that permeates barracks, schools, prisons, hospitals.

Biopower, on the other hand, is “massifying” in its application (ibid), not merely focused on the human body and individual dressage, but the species body – the population, the nation, the race. There is no clear break between these forms of power; in different temporalities and spatialities some may be emphasized over others, but they co-exist. What we are left with in a liberal state is a form of governmental power that operates through a wide field of normalization and regularization, at once deadly and life-affirming, punitive/judiciary and productive,
disciplinary, and regulatory, focused on the governance of self and others, targeting individual bodies and the mass.

It is this form of power, Foucault (2007) further contends, that inscribed racism in the functioning of the modern/liberal state (254-263), introducing a “break between what must live and what must die” (2003 “Society must be defended”:254), a break expressed through a correlative relationship in which the elimination of the Other (“the inferior race”, “the abnormal”, etc.) is imagined to improve the life of the dominant majority (idid:255). In a settler colony, I understood this to mean that this form of power seeks the proliferation of the white settler society via the correlative elimination of Indigenous peoples.

Patrick Wolfe’s (2006) conceptual frame of the colonial “logic of elimination” (Wolfe 2006) emerged as an ‘obvious’ next step in this theoretical trajectory. I framed child removal policies as part of a form of biopower that works through the settler colonial ‘logic of elimination’ (Wolfe 2006). Elimination, Wolfe explains, refers to a range of techniques and practices. Not merely genocide or the “summary liquidation of Indigenous people” (390), although it contains that too, but elimination also refers to projects of assimilation, spatial removals and containments – those attempts that seek to free up land for the colonizer and eliminate the native (literally through death) or to eliminate “the native as native” (Kauanui 2016: n.p.).

Indigenous child removal, I argued, was one method (among others, such as sterilization programs, rape and murder of Indigenous women) in which the (literal and figurative) reproduction and proliferation of Indigenous peoples was sought to be curtailed and managed for the benefit and improvement of the settler colony. Severing the bonds between children and their communities also severs the children’s ties to their lands, while the elimination of Indigenous peoples is to be effected by siphoning off their offspring.
The permanency of the colonial tactic of Indigenous child removal could similarly be explained by Foucault’s conceptions of liberal power, in that domination is “inherent in its techniques” (1994:219) – as long as power is oriented towards producing life for the dominant majority/the normal/the superior race, the mechanism and techniques of power may shift and adjust (e.g. be it Indian Residential Schools or child welfare), but the effects of power (children removed) will remain strikingly similar. Once again, Patrick Wolfe (2006) ‘fit’, reminding me that settler colonization is “a structure not an event” (388).

Elisions and Departures

While I hold on to some of the above conceptual insights, from others I now seek a departure. Fundamentally, I hold on to the notion that the settler colony’s sustained efforts to remove Indigenous children is a colonial modality intent on severing the bonds between Indigenous children and their communities, histories, cultures, and most importantly, land. As Leanne Simpson (2011) put it, “children are the glue that holds our families together” (135), Nishnaabeg resurgence and flourishing, Simpson explains, live and reverberate through the relations and interactions with families, children and communities (145). Indigenous child removal interrupts this bond. Settler colonialism emerges as a racial project of annihilation (Razack’s wording) and accumulation (Fanon’s insight). Indigenous child removal functions as a modality of power that actively perpetuates this racial project. How I arrive at this analytic nonetheless needs adjustment.

To paraphrase Eve Tuck (2010), I have not (yet) broken up with Foucault. The most obvious give-away being that this dissertation is an attempt at a genealogy of child welfare – a methodology that presupposes a certain conception of power, i.e. power as ‘governmentality’. Much of how I understand a liberal settler colony to ‘work’ or how it ‘governs’ continues to be
informed by Foucauldian notions of power – an understanding that sees power as inherent in the techniques of government, and in which ‘government’ is understood in its broadest sense – not as a power reducible to the state, the parliament, or ‘the’ government (as if mere modern replacements of the sovereign), but a power that is applied through all actors (bureaucrats, teachers, the clergy, health professionals, social workers, philanthropists, etc.), institutions, organizations, and agencies (such as Children’s Aid) that “are concerned with exercising authority over the conduct of human beings” (Inda 2006:6). Hence, governmentality comes to be referred to through the often-cited shorthand – the ‘conduct of conduct’, or the production of “governing-effects on conduct” (Scott 2005:31) of self and others, or as Jonathan Inda puts it “the more or less considered and calculated ways of thinking and acting that propose to shape, regulate, or manage the conduct of individuals or groups towards specific goals or ends” (2005:6).

I take these goals or ends as directed towards the normalization of settlement/colonization which requires the continuing dispossession of Indigenous peoples, the “systematic transformation and redefinition of the colonial terrain” (Scott 2005:36) as belonging to the colonizer, and the rendering of Indigenous peoples as populations to be managed. Colonial governmentality is directed towards the proliferation of the settler colony, through acquisition and retention of “land and the attempted elimination of Indigenous peoples” (Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Corntassel 2014). In broadening my theoretical framework to governmentality, I depart from my previous focus on biopower to discuss the management of Indigenous peoples.

Revisiting Biopower

Since settler societies reproduce themselves through the attempted erasure of Native populations and the simultaneous emplacement of a new society on stolen land (Tuck and Yang 2012:6;
Jacobs 2009:4; Hall 2004:67; Razack 2002 “When Place Becomes Race”), the relationships between biopower, child removal/reproductive control (literally and figuratively), and colonialism can hardly be detangled. However, there are aspects to the concept of biopower that do not easily fit. The concept of biopower – or rather how race is introduced and mobilized in a biopolitical analysis – seems inadequate to explain the settler colony’s violent management of Indigenous peoples.

Foucault explains that if the normalizing/biopolitical/liberal state seeks to “exercise the old sovereign right to kill, it must become racist” (Foucault 2003:256). But the justifications for racial violence, genocide, elimination – in this specific biopolitical framing – are mobilized through the forging of ‘internal enemies’ against whom ‘society must defend itself’. Here, racial violence is framed as “an internal war” against internal Others (Foucault 2003:216), who are constructed as ‘abnormal’ and hence ‘dangerous’. These internal enemies are imagined to threaten the well-being of ‘the population’ and to protect the population from the dangers arising from within the social body (ibid:142) their elimination is thus deemed necessary.

As is the case with any theoretical concept, they work in some contexts but not in others. We can see this form of power at work in the regulation, disciplining and elimination of certain populations (the criminal, the mad, the sexual deviant, the disabled, the immigrant, and so on). In the context of how I have used it – to think about the colonial management of Indigenous peoples – it is less compelling.

My central contention is that with biopower’s focus on life, we cannot adequately theorize how violence holds the colonial system together. First, an issue arises when the ‘enemy’ is primarily known through racial difference. Or expressed differently, biopower is less compelling when ‘the abnormal’/ ‘the enemy’ is recognized as such via race. To comment on the elimination of the racial others, ‘biopower’ as Achille Mbembe (2003) has so famously shown, is
insufficient. Mbembe (2003) argues that a biopolitical framing inadequately accounts “for contemporary forms of subjugation of life to the power of death” (39-40), prompting the author to draw on notions of necropolitics (the power of death) and necropower (what he refers to as a ‘terror formation’) instead. “[I]n our contemporary world” he writes, “weapons are deployed in the interest of maximum destruction of persons and the creation of death-worlds, new and unique forms of social existence in which vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of living dead” (40; emphasis in original). Here, biopower – the power to foster life or disallow it to the point of death – is not merely suspended but turned on its head.\(^1\)

Expressed differently, new concepts had to emerge to capture and talk out this death-function.

Furthermore, biopower is even less compelling when that racial difference is mobilized and violently acted upon in a colonial context. Here, the second point of contention comes to the forefront. Biopower kills to eliminate internal enemies. The colonized are certainly enemies to be eliminated, but are they truly internal? Mbembe discusses the workings of the power of death through an examination of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. In this context, he draws on Eyal Weizman and Frantz Fanon to explain that colonialism depends on a “territorial fragmentation, the sealing off and expansion of settlements” (27-28). The purpose of this fragmentation is to contain the Native, “to render any movement impossible” (28) and on the other hand “to implement separation along the model of the apartheid state. The occupied territories are therefore divided into a web of intricate internal borders and various isolated cells” (ibid). Colonial occupation, then, “is not only akin to control, surveillance, and separation, it is also

\(^1\) Or perhaps as Rosi Braidotti (2007) has put it, “Biomacht und Nekro-Politik sind zwei Seiten derselben Medaille” (7) (“Biopower and necro-politics are two sides of the same coin.”).
tantamount to seclusion. It is a *splintering occupation*, “an attempt at maintaining the Fanonian ‘principle of reciprocal exclusivity’” (27; emphasis in original).

Fanon puts forth this principle in *The Wretched of the Earth*, explaining that colonialism fundamentally depends on a separation and demarcation of the colonized from the colonizer. “The colonial world is a world cut in two” (38), writes Fanon (1963). He reminds us of apartheid in South Africa and spatial segregations in Algeria, the existence of Native quarters and European quarters, schools for the children of the former demarcated from schools for the latter – examples that so readily bring to mind the reservation system and Indian Residential Schools in Canada. Fanon further reminds us of the following:

> The zone where the natives live is not complementary to the zone inhabited by the settlers. The two zones are opposed, but not in the service of a higher unity. Obedient to the rules of pure Aristotelian logic, they both follow the principle of reciprocal exclusivity. No conciliation is possible, for of the two terms, one is superfluous. (Fanon 1963:38-9)

If we think carefully about these zones of demarcations, or “this system of compartments” (ibid:37), how they were made and how they manifest in the present, we are “able to reveal the *lines of force*” that colonial domination depends upon (ibid:38; emphasis added). What is revealed is that violence is the glue that, both, enabled (“Their first encounter was marked by violence and their existence together – that is to say the exploitation of the native by the settler – was carried on by dint of a great array of bayonets and cannons” (Fanon 1963:36)) and continues to hold the system of colonial domination together. It is this separation/segregation that allows for the effective application of racial violence. It enables the creation of zones of violence, sites in which violence is authorized and localized, where “[k]illing becomes precisely targeted”
(Mbembe 2003:29). An insight that, once again, brings the Indian Residential School system to mind.

Mbembe and Fanon, thus, both remind us that colonial control is effected through a demarcation of Native from white settler and that an extraordinary amount of violence is required to uphold this separation. A lot of colonial effort is directed at manufacturing this separation, a separation which implies that the Indian emerges, not first and foremost as a threat within the body politic, but an external threat to the body politic who has to be cordoned off and managed. Thus, having previously framed Indigenous peoples as internal threats to the settler state misses this point. I continue to utilize notions of the disciplinary and biopolitical in Part One of this dissertation to examine the regulation and reformation of poor white settler children and their families. Poor white settlers were imaged as the more suspect members of the settler colony, and thus constructed as potential ‘dangers within’. Yet, lesser-white settlers and their neglected children were rendered dangers ‘within’, because they were indeed considered to be within the bounds of the nation/community. The point is, to be considered an ‘internal enemy’ one must be included first.

This leads us to another contention. Indigenous disappearance was and continues to be sought through a variety of tactics, absorption into the colonial state being one of them, for example through forced enfranchisement and assimilation, pluralistic integration, and multicultural inclusion. Importantly, even here, when the aim is assimilation, ‘the Indian’ never fully arrives in the body politic, never fully made a part but kept apart as internal boundaries are continuously redrawn. Yet, I wonder whether the continued theorization of Indigenous peoples as ‘internal threats’ to the body politic does the work of settler colonialism by theoretically incorporating Indigenous peoples into the colonial scaffolding.
I comment on this here in length for such a framing continues to inform scholarship in settler colonial and Indigenous studies. Most famously, Andrea Smith (and others drawing on her work) similarly conceptualize the elimination of Indigenous peoples through a biopolitical framing, constructing Indigenous peoples as ‘threats within’ (Smith does not cite Foucault, but relies instead on the work of Anne Stoler). Smith asserts that the elimination of Indigenous peoples if effected “through the metaphorical transformation of Native bodies into a pollution of which the colonial must constantly purify itself” (2005:9). Through such a framing, Indigenous peoples are rendered “inherently rapable, their lands inherently invadable, and their resources inherently extractable” (2008:312). Yet, the enormous violence that a colonial state directs at Indigenous peoples is justified not because they are considered unwanted internal threats/abnormalities (although, of course, at times Native bodies are rendered that too), but because the Native is first and foremost considered extraneous to the white body politic. And it is this extraneous quality that justifies colonial violence.

In a brilliant examination of the liberal colonial tradition of the United States, Kevin Bruyneel (2016) has shown just that. Through a discussion of key texts (notably *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955) and *The Founding of New Societies* (1964)) by political scientist Louis Hartz, Bruyneel examines and comments on the centrality of settler colonial violence to American liberalism. Bruyneel explains that in *The Liberal Tradition in America* (1955), Hartz extends Tocqueville’s argument that the founding of the United States, unlike the founding of European states, did not require the overthrow of a preceding order (i.e. feudalism). No bloody suppression of dissidents, no revolution, no violent overthrows were necessary in the making of the American nation, the argument goes. Hartz thus contends that US liberalism is exceptional in that “the point of departure of great revolutionary thought everywhere else in the world has been the effort to build a new society on the ruins of an old one, and this is an experience America has
never had. We are reminded again of Tocqueville’s statement: the Americans are ‘born equal.’” (Hartz in Bruyneel 2016:194). The fact of chattel slavery and Indigenous genocide, of course, render such assertions absurd. Yet, this assertion was not born of a lack of knowledge. It was not the case that Hartz was unaware that the nation was founded through the massacre of Indigenous peoples. On the contrary, Hartz, in fact, acknowledges that a ‘destruction’ of Indian tribes had occurred. Yet, this destruction – unlike the violence in Europe – was simply not that meaningful to Hartz. As Bruyneel puts it, Hartz rejects the idea “that the ‘destruction’ of Indian tribes has any significant constitutive influence on American political identity and ideology” (198). Bruyneel suggests that “the destruction of a people external to one’s group is not politically and ideologically meaningful, as it cannot even ‘compare to’ the destruction of a regime of one’s own people” (ibid:197). To Hartz, “only the ideological struggle within and among Euro-American groupings matters, whereas the destruction of external peoples does not matter due to the fact that they are deemed external” (ibid). This denial, that settler colonial violence is of any ‘real’ significance lies at the heart of the American liberal colonial tradition. Or as Jodi Byrd (2011) puts it, drawing on Aileen Moreton-Robinson, “[i]n the United States, the Indian is the original enemy combatant who cannot be grieved” (xviii).

Through this analysis, Bruyneel shows that racial colonial violence enabled and is constitutive of modernity and the liberal settler state. Or as Sherene Razack (2015) puts it, the beating heart of the settler colonial project is its annihilative impulse (28). This entails a settler colonial logic, as Razack (2015) further explains by drawing on Ferreira da Silva (2007) that “demands the obliteration of the Other as the condition enabling the self-determining subject’s emergence” (61). As much as colonial violence is constitutive of the settler colonial state, it is also constitutive of settler subjectivity: “Identified with nature, the Indian has always signified the frontier, the space on which American subjects would inscribe their ‘civilization’” (ibid). A
colonial settler society is constituted through the double need to *displace* and *emplace*. The simultaneous ‘emplacement’ (Blomley 2004:109) of white settlers as original and legitimate inhabitants is as important as the dispossession of Indigenous peoples. As Sherene Razack writes, “the settler's crisis of identity is an ongoing one, born of a psychic and material need to emplace himself. Where the land is stolen, when entitlement to it must be performed over and over again in anxious repression of those Indigenous to it, emplacement is the most urgent of tasks” (2011:266). Violence is foundational to colonial emplacement. “Everything within a settler society strains to destroy or assimilate the Native in order to disappear them from the land,” write Tuck and Yang (2012:9). Richard Slotkin (1973) powerfully shows that the American subject ‘regenerates through violence’, understanding their own emplacement as a process of eliminating and displacing the Indian. Jean-Paul Sartre (1963) makes a similar observation regarding white subject formation in his preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*:

  …North America? Chatter, chatter: liberty, equality, fraternity, love, honor, patriotism, and what have you. All this did not prevent us from making anti-racial speeches about dirty niggers, dirty Jews, and dirty Arabs. High-minded people, liberal or just soft-hearted, protest that they were shocked by such inconsistency; but they were either mistaken or dishonest, for with us *there is nothing more consistent than a racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters.*” (26; emphasis added)

Such relations of coloniality are not relegable to the past, but extend and structure Canada’s ‘colonial present’/liberal society. ‘Colonial Present’ is a term I borrow from Derek Gregory, with which he describes the present-day dimensions of violence, war, and occupation as mobilized by the United States, Britain, and Israel in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine. With his
analysis, Gregory (2004) challenges us to recognize that “the capacities that inhere within the colonial past are routinely reaffirmed and reactivated in the colonial present” (7), stressing the continuation of imperial and colonial undertakings – a challenge that has since influenced a range of studies on variously constituted colonial formations that endure and proliferate in the present (see, for example, Part II in the 2013 *Oxford Handbook of Postcolonial Studies*).

It also needs clarifying that I make no qualitative distinction between colonial and liberal modes of governance. The distinctions I make are to point out that colonialism is effected through a variety of techniques. When I refer to liberal modes of governance, I refer to colonial modes of governance that are drawn upon in the present liberal state. This does not mean that colonialism has ended, nor that what we live in currently is a post-colonial society or colonialism light so to speak. Of course, colonial techniques and modes of engagement shift and adjust. No longer is it widely accepted or officially mandated to hunt Indigenous peoples for profit and pleasure (see, for example, Lawrence 2002:34), but the colony’s annihilative impulse remains. And the colony’s control over land and people remains. Colonization is Canada’s foundational principle and as long as the settler society occupies and the settler state governs and controls the original people it has formed around, occupation and colonization are not of the past but the present. Until these foundational colonial qualities change, the settler state remains a settler state, whether it organizes itself through democratic, plutocratic or authoritarian rule. The burden of proof must not lie with those who point to its continuation, but those who claim that settler colonialism has indeed ended.

Coulthard (2014) describes Canada’s colonial present as a period of ‘recognition’, a contemporary moment (the emergence of which he traces to the late 1960s) in which the settler state advances colonialism through liberal promises of reconciliation, paternalistic apologies, and double-edged acknowledgements. What needs to be added here, and what will be discussed
throughout Part Two of this dissertation, is that this politics of recognition is accompanied by liberal gestures of inclusion, seeking to draw Indigenous peoples into colonial state structures, and child welfare being one such ‘inclusive’ domain. This liberal colonial move, as the title of one of Elizabeth Povinelli’s (2002) books irrevocably reminds us, is cunning. “We need to puzzle over a simple question”, Povinelli urges: “What is the nation recognizing, capital commodifying, and the court trying to save from the breach of history when difference is recognized” (17)? Through “the politics of recognition” (Coulthard 2014) and its cunning gestures of integration and inclusion, liberal ideology seeks to extend relations of coloniality “without subjecting itself to the throes of contestation and opposition” (Povinelli 2002:17). What we are witnessing is a form of colonial governmentality that “works through the medium of state recognition and accommodation”, “achieving the same power effect” it has always sought: “the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority” (Coulthard 2014:25). We find ourselves in a colonial present that condones, inscribes, and normalizes the continued quest for land and occupation of Turtle Island via the erasure of Indigenous peoples, oftentimes effected via gestures of recognition and inclusion.

Child Welfare and Colonial Governmentality

In pulling these threads together, by colonial governmentality then I refer to a racial project of annihilation and accumulation, that is sustained in the colonial present through liberal modes of governance in which the carceral, the disciplinary, the necropolitical (primarily focused on annihilation of the colonized), and the biopolitical (primarily focused on the proliferation of the colonizer) combine, to enact a colonial “force field” (Stoler 2016:9). To this force field, notions of “duress” and “durability” are crucial (Stoler’s terms): This is an invitation to think of the extension and continuation of colonial relations into the present as a durability of duress, a
recognition that colonialism is ongoing and enduring, and that this continuation is inherently violent.

Leslie Thielen-Wilson (2012), drawing on Foucault and Fanon, similarly theorizes Canada’s settler colonial present as a colonial force field, one that is constituted by and constitutive of white terror. Through her conceptualization of “white terror as colonial force field” the author reminds us that colonial violence, or “terror”, encapsulates and is effected through a range of modalities, entailing “not only explicit fist to face encounters between settlers and indigenous” but also “the violence of white value schemes, social institutions, and the everyday structural components to a colonial life world” (10).

In this force field, the colonial management of Indigenous peoples is effected through a variety of techniques and avenues. It shows up through mechanisms of annihilation such as murder, assimilation, pluralistic integration, legalistic mechanisms (e.g. the Indian Act’s “second generation cut-off”), exposure to death (to mind come the many poisoned water resources Indigenous peoples are made to depend upon), quasi-sanctioned zones of violence (e.g. ‘the stroll’, the Highway of Tears, but also any sidewalk that so easily turns into a hunting ground for Indigenous women and girls), spatial containments (such as Indian Residential Schools, prisons, child welfare institutions, reserves, white foster families). Further, as Scott (2005) puts it, colonial governmentality constitutes a political rationality “in which power comes to be directed at the destruction and reconstruction of colonial space” seeking to produce “governing-effects on colonial conduct” (35). We witness the production of ‘governable’ conduct, for example, through the introduction of band councils, forms of consultation via the Assembly of First Nations, and inclusive moves in child welfare that effectively coerce First Nation child welfare agencies to remove their own children.
Such modalities of colonial governance depend on an articulation of knowledges and a corresponding array of technologies and techniques through which power can be deployed, including the emergence of new domains of power application as its fields of operation. In this context, Scott refers to three broad domains – the government, the judiciary, and the economy: “They were … those domains that the political rationality of governmental power sought at once to construct and work through in order to induce its improving effects on colonial conduct” (ibid:38).

I hold that social welfare, including child welfare, emerges as another field of operation, a field that entails its “own level of rationality, its own laws of motion, and its own corresponding sciences” (ibid). I refer to the field of social welfare, and the application of power through this field, as the politics of care. In this field, power effects emanate through those enlisted in the politics of care – state officials and colonial bureaucrats, the nation’s social/moral reformers such as child-savers, social workers, prison reformers, welfare organizations (e.g. the Canadian Welfare Council/Canadian Council on Social Development, Children’s Aid) and ‘benevolent’ or charitable citizens’ organizations. Through such actors, truth claims circulate, formulations and formulas emerge for the ‘best’ modes of engagement (e.g. how to ‘do’ child protection in a ‘scientific’ and modern manner), forming and delineating their respective and mutually supportive fields of application whilst providing themselves and each other with reasons for their existence (e.g. exemplified by the concurrent emergence of child welfare and juvenile corrections) – a domain deeply embedded in racial knowledge production of self and Other and the construction of modalities of power application that such knowledges effect.

**Dispossession and Erasure**

What needs to be acknowledged here is that this intricate web of colonial governance is directed at the acquisition and retention of land, and hence the simultaneous dispossession of Indigenous
peoples from the land. Yet, what may fall to the wayside through a theory of governmentality is precisely the importance of land. Governmentality, as well as its biopolitical and necropolitical applications, primarily focus on ‘the population’. This focus is significant for it allows us to depart from a crude ‘top-down’ conception of power, seeing it instead as dispersed, extended, perpetuated, and exerted onto/by/through the population. This allows us to conceptualize Indigenous child removal as effected through a variety of techniques and a multiplicity of actors that make up the web of colonial control that polices and judges the ‘well-being’ of Indigenous children and the parenting conduct of adults (e.g. social workers, teachers, health professionals, the police). With this focus on the population, however, land arises as an afterthought.

In his lecture on “Governmentality” Foucault (1991) explains the shift from sovereign power to governmentality through an analysis of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, whose central premises he contrasts to 16th century writer Guillaume de La Perrière’s articulations of government. For Machiavelli, Foucault observed, “the target of power are two things”: one, “the territory” and second, “its inhabitants” (Foucault 1991:93). For sovereign power, “territory is the fundamental element”: “territories can be fertile or not, the population dense or sparse, the inhabitants rich or poor, active or lazy, but all these elements are mere variables by comparison with territory itself, which is the very foundation of principality and sovereignty” (ibid).

Governmentality, as exemplified by La Perrière’s text, is less concerned with governing, gaining and retaining territory. For La Perrière, “government is the right disposition of things, arranged so as to lead to a convenient end” (La Perrière in ibid). Here, “the definition of government in no way refers to territory”, Foucault explains, but, first and foremost, to the population that inhabits a space: “What government has to do with is not territory but rather a sort of complex composed of men [sic] and things” (ibid.) Foucault explains this through an analogy of a ship:
What does it mean to govern a ship? It means clearly to take charge of the sailors, but also of the boat and its cargo; to take care of a ship means to reckon with winds, rocks and storms; and it consists in that activity of establishing a relation between the sailors who are to be taken care of and the ship which is to be taken care of, and the cargo which is to be brought safely to port… this is what characterizes the government of a ship.

(ibid:93-94)

“It is this general form of management that is characteristic” of governmentality; “property and territory are merely one of its variables”, “the acquisition of sovereignty over a territory” merely a secondary matter (ibid:94).

To the colonizers who came on their ships to Turtle Island, land and territory was certainly not of secondary importance. In a settler colony, such as Canada, the acquisition/Indigenous dispossession and retention of the land is the primary objective and certainly no afterthought. On the contrary, land – the desire for land, the occupation of land, the use of land, and the emplacement of settlers as the authentic and rightful owners of the land (Razack 2002 “When Place Becomes Race”) via the dispossession of those who hold original title – is the central feature of and field of contestation in a settler colony. This holds true not merely of Canada’s colonial past, but also of the present. Dispossession, as Tracey Banivanua Mar and Penelope Edmonds (2010) remind us, “is a perpetual process – one that is as perpetual as the as the ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples” (4). Dispossession and colonial emplacement manifest in “the power of renaming places, or of imposing grids for streets, property boundaries, crop placements and so on”, through racial-spatial practices that enact “possession through the creation of new, settler-defined places” (5). As Banivanua Mar explains elsewhere, “Settler landscapes therefore ratify dispossession in spatial ways, constantly affirming
metanarratives of *terra nullius*, the fatal impact and extinguishment of Indigenous entitlement by tides of History” (25). In short, in a settler colony, land is key (Hurwitz and Bourque 2014:n.p.).

**P.S.: Revisiting Wolfe’s ‘Logic of Elimination’ & ‘Structure ≠ Event’**

Finally, as should be evident by now, I have departed from my previous reliance on Patrick Wolfe. My previous articulation in combining biopower with Wolfe’s ‘logic of elimination’ was an attempt to link two central features of settler colonialism – the settler colony’s desire for land and the elimination of the Native – to the management of Indigenous children. Did I need Patrick Wolfe to say that? No. And as such, I have written the above account on child welfare as colonial governmentality without drawing on his work. Wolfe certainly has not been the first to write on settler colonialism and its eliminatory function (see, for example, Slotkin 1973), he was not the first to distinguish settler colonialism from other (franchise or primarily extractive) colonial formations (see, for example, the edited collection by Stasiulis and Yuval-Davis 1995), was also not the first to point out that struggle over land is at the very core of this project (see, for example, Fanon 1963:44). And as Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Corntassel (2014) remind us, before the newly-minced field of settler colonial studies had taken shape and Wolfe has been associated with shaping the field and coining the ‘logic of elimination’, Indigenous scholars and activists had already consistently centered – “land and the attempted elimination of Indigenous peoples” – as constitutive features of settler colonialism (7). I make this point, not necessarily as a critique of Wolfe (the persona), but the racialized politics of citation. As Kēhaulani Kauanui (2016) has put it, “although Wolfe insisted on making it clear time and again that he did not create the field of settler colonial studies – that Native scholars did – within the field of American Studies (as just one example), he tends to be most frequently cited as if he had” (n.p.).
There are however also aspects to Wolfe’s analytic, particularly his notion of ‘structure versus event’, that are problematic. On the one hand, to explain settler colonization as ‘a structure, not an event’ is a profound insight. It reminds us that settler colonialism is not a thing of the past, but of the here and now, it centres the colonizing project’s enduring quality and demands that we reckon with its adapting and shifting formations, and that it, despite modifications, remains oriented towards the attempted dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples. It demands that we think carefully of the colonial present, and the complex histories and social formations that produced its current modalities of power.

And yet, there is something troubling about how ‘easy’ this theoretical concept seems to be able to circulate. The relative ease with which I could previously draw on these two concepts ‘the logic of elimination’ and colonialism being a ‘structure not an event’ because they ‘fit’, and the relative ease with which the many essays that have been published within the last few years that explore settler colonial formations can begin and/or end with either or both of these quotes should make us pause.

Kauanui relays remarks made by Alyosha Goldstein who “noted that shallow references to the theory too often treat it as a self-contained type that can travel, or that it is totally discrete, rather than intertwined with other social processes” (n.p.). While the concept of ‘structure versus event’ may invite thoughtful analyses, it also (and perhaps more readily) lends itself to the opposite. It invites occlusions. By “occlusion”, I refer to Stoler (2016) who explains that “[t]o occlude is an act that hides and conceals, creates blockages, and closes off” (10). It offers a ready-made frame for analysis that may foreclose and mask colonialisms’ complexities, where most things can be reduced to and explained by ‘the logic of elimination’ and colonialism’s continuation with a nod towards its ‘structure’.
Wolfe’s analytic ‘travels’ so easily because it comes with an air of self-evidence that warrants a critical examination. I am reminded here of Foucault’s warning (see, for example, in *The Archeology of Knowledge*, the *Politics of Truth*, “Truth and Power”) to not rest easy with truths, knowledge claims, and conceptual insights that seem “obvious”, “self-evident” or seem to easily provide us with conceptual clarity. Admittedly, this warning is perhaps attributable to Foucault’s partiality for the convoluted – but it is a warning Stoler evokes as well. Drawing on Foucault and Deleuze, Stoler cautions us to ‘ward off certainty’ (22), which partially means “prolonging how long one can admit to an unresolved space of one’s own doubt – and, not least, the doubts and insisted-on certitudes of those whose perceptions and practices we imagine to comprehend” (22). Imagining that we know “what a ‘colony’ is, or that we readily recognize what the ‘legacies’ and ‘vestiges’ of colonialism looks like renders each too ‘obvious’ to elicit scrutiny when they could be seized as analytic provocations, prompting moments of arrest” (Stoler 2016:18).

Stoler suggests we turn towards ‘concept-work, a methodological and theoretical commitment that demands “mobile thought” (Foucault’s term) – deliberately opening up “to what concepts implicitly and often quietly foreclose, as well as what they encourage and condone” (18-19). Concepts are “ready-made syntheses”, Foucault explains, what is required is “to free the problems they pose” (in Stoler 2016:19). This requires of us that we keep “the concepts with which we work provisional, active, and subject to change; it entails retaining them both as mobile and as located as they are in the world” (19). As Foucault puts it, “never cease to think about the same things differently” (Foucault in Stoler 2016:18).²

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² For those who enjoy tongue-in-cheek commentary, Foucault defined an “event” as “the breach of self-evidence” (in Stoler 2016:22), those moments in which “clarity gives way to doubt” (ibid). But this is neither here nor there.
There is another aspect that Wolfe’s ‘structural’ conception of settler colonialism ‘encourages and condones’. The concept of ‘structure’ invites an understanding of settler colonialism that may take its structural part as a rigid absolute. With this we get stories about settler colonial structures that are barely impenetrable and that will inevitably extend into the future. To mind comes the work of Lorenzo Veracini (2011) who theorizes settler colonialism as a structure whose existence extends into perpetuity. “As settlers come to stay” Veracini argues referencing Patrick Wolfe, “the narrative generally associated with settler colonial enterprises rather resembles an Aeneid, where the settler colonizer moves forward along a story line that can’t be turned back” (Veracini 2011:206; for the same argument, see also 2007; 2010:95-116; 2015; emphasis added).3

Such a deterministic framing we must reject. It may lead us to espouse a certain “colonial fatalism” (Macoun and Strakosch 2013:435) that “posits a structural inevitability to the settler colonial relationship” (ibid). Not only must we reject such a framing for practical reasons as it

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3 Veracini likens the proliferation and underlying narrative formations of a settler colony to the Aeneid (written by Virgil in which he describes the founding of Rome) which he contrasts to an Odyssey (Homer’s tale of a worthy hero’s long and arduous voyage home). Veracini seeks to make a “systematic distinction between colonial and settler colonial narrative forms” arguing that “the stories we tell regarding these two phenomena are structurally different, even antithetical” (205). He likens colonial narratives to an Odyssey, a circular outward movement to a strange place that involves encounters with exotic Others (an encounter that may result in capture, warfare, exploitation, and so on), and an eventual return (or the imagined possibility of a return) to the colonizers’ original space or homeland. While not acknowledged by Veracini, this analogy was previously provided by Fanon:

“The settler makes history; his life is an epoch, an Odyssey. He is the absolute beginning: ‘This land was created by us’; he is the unceasing cause: ‘If we leave, all is lost, and the country will go back to the Middle Ages.’ Over against him torpid creatures, wasted by fevers, obsessed by ancestral customs, form an almost inorganic background for the innovating dynamism of colonial mercantilism. The settler makes history and is conscious of making it. And because he constantly refers to the history of his mother country, he clearly indicates that he himself is the extension of that mother country. Thus the history which he writes is not the history of the country which he plunders but the history of his own nation in regard to all that she skims off, all that she violates and starves” (1963:51).

The settler colonial story is not an Odyssey. Veracini argues. It is not “circular”, but advances through a “linear form” (214): There is no original space nor homeland that the settler envisages as going back to, there is no endpoint to settler colonialism. it is an enterprise that extends into the future (Veracini 2011:206; for the same argument, see also 2007; 2010:95-116; 2015; emphasis added).
may lead us into defeatism, or towards a “theoretical and political impasse” (ibid), but also because it is historically inaccurate. First, I am reminded here of Murray Bookchin (1989) who so famously advised us that “[t]he assumption that what currently exists must necessarily exist is the acid that corrodes all visionary thinking” (n.p.). Settler states do not extend indefinitely. Nation states come and go. And empires rise and fall (including the Aeneid’s very own Roman Empire). Part of our work is to speed this process along.

Second, the existence and persistence of colonial disavowal and settler anxieties as defining characteristics of settler colonialism remind us that settlers do not live in an imagined self-assured impenetrable structure. In “Decolonization is not a Metaphor” Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang refer us to the work of several scholars (such as Fanon 1963; Vine Deloria 1988; Grande 2004; Bruyneel 2007) who “have observed that Indigeneity prompts multiple forms of settler anxiety, even if only because the presence of Indigenous peoples – who make a priori claims to land and ways of being – is a constant reminder that the settler colonial project is incomplete” (9; emphasis in original). Bergland (2000) similarly reminds us that settler colonizers do not rest easy, perpetually haunted by the knowledge of their own precarious status upon which their dominance rests.

It is this very precarity that presupposes and necessitates the enormous effort that goes into disavowing the colonial past and present. Razack (2002 “When Place Becomes Race”) explains that a “quintessential feature of white settler mythologies is … the disavowal of conquest, genocide, slavery, and the exploitation of the labour of peoples of colour. In North America, it is still the case that European conquest and colonization are often denied” (2). Disavowal does not equate to a lack of knowledge, rather disavowal “is a lack of acknowledgement” (Bruyneel 2016:198): “With disavowal, knowledge is present, but acknowledgement is absent” (ibid:199). Disavowal is the necessary act of forgetting, repressing,
or denying that colonialism has been or currently is a problem that needs to be reckoned with. Stoler (2016) refers to this as “imperial disposition of disregard”: “that which makes it possible – sometimes effortlessly and sometimes with strenuous if unremarked labor – to look away” (9).

As this dissertation unfolds, we will see that in moments in which the settler colony is reminded of its coloniality, reminded that what it did and what it continues to do is colonial in effect and design, as was the case, for example, during heightened anti-colonial Red Power activism during the late 1960s-1970s in which demands for self-determination became impossible to ignore, the Canadian state aimed to appease, pacify, reconcile, ignore or violently squash those counter-narratives. Yet, counter-narratives are not storylines that cannot be heard or that cannot be understood because the colony’s own storyline makes these un-thinkable, as if they were epistemologically out of reach so to speak. Like Stoler (2016), I hold that “forms of counter-violence and refusal were too politically thinkable, eminent potentialities in wait – not that they were not” (13).

The point is that a settler society that is certain of its linear progression, a progression that indefinitely extends into the future, living according to a storyline that cannot be turned back, need not feel anxious or deny its own coloniality. Relations of coloniality continue to be disavowed for the colony implicitly or explicitly knows of its precarious grounding. “Disavowal”, Bruyneel explains, “is critical to the iterative and mutually constitutive relationship between structure and event” (2016:198); the “liberal colonial tradition is built around this disavowal” (ibid:199). Disavowal is what makes the settler colonial present stick. Bruyneel (2016) who similarly draws on Wolfe but who refuses to split structure from event, suggests that we instead “understand the persistence of settler colonialism, its ‘continuity through time,’” by thinking of “events as productive and reproductive of contemporary structures and structural relations”, that is “the manner in which events of the past – or those constructed as part of the
past, including powerful myths – are reproduced in the present…” (198). In short, let us heed caution when drawing on the concept of ‘structure’ to comment on the durability or reconfigurations of colonial relation in the present. While colonialism endures, its ‘structure’ is neither rigid, absolute, nor impenetrable. Our current colonial moment being one of recognition and liberal gestures of inclusion reminds us that colonial governance adapts and mutates.
PART ONE
Chapter 2
Empire and the “Children of the Nation”: The ‘Problem’ of the Neglected Settler Child.

“We conquer by loving.” – J. J. Kelso (1913) ¹

Introduction

Many a history of child welfare in Canada begins with a particular story of J.J. Kelso, the man often heralded as the ‘founding father’ of child protection work in Canada. The story goes something like this. It was on a cold November night in 1887 on Toronto’s Yonge Street when two little children were seen begging for loose change from passers-by. To braze the wind and the cold, the two pitiful waifs huddled together in the shadows of a doorway. Yet, their ragged clothes could not keep them warm. A young reporter, J.J. Kelso, stumbled across these two children and stopped at their pitiful sight. The waifs told him that they were afraid to go home. Their father was a drunkard, they said, and he will beat them if they come home empty-handed. Moved by their plight, the sympathetic reporter took the children along in search of an orphan’s home. There, the Good Samaritan believed, the children would be able to spend the night in warmth and safety. Yet, much to his despair, the orphan’s home could not take the children. Indeed, there was no institution willing to shelter them. It is now well after midnight. Kelso is

exhausted and dismayed trying to find a refuge for the little ones. Seeing no other alternative, he rented them a room in a men’s lodging. The following day, Kelso went to work. He began to advocate for the establishment of a temporary children’s shelter so that other pitiful waifs, like the ones he had encountered, would have a safe place to go.

Kelso himself published this story\(^2\) and it has been reproduced by child welfare historians many times since. I, too, am retelling this story. Yet, not to credit the origins of the child welfare system to this historical figure, nor to suggest or leave the impression that the child-saving movement originated in the mind of a ‘great man’. This story interests me for other reasons.

Kelso presents us with two poor, dirty, cold, and frightened children who have no place to go, and no one to look after them. Why did Kelso present this story the way he did? Why tell us about these children? In other words, what does the figure of the child ‘do’ in this narrative? For many, and presumably this was its intent at the time, the figure of the child arouses feelings of empathy and a desire to help. We are moved by their plight. The story suggests that children need looking after. Children who are neglected or cruelly treated by their parents need someone to intervene on their behalf. In condemning the acts of the father and feeling pity for those children, it further suggests that these children are not inherently bad or worthless (as may have been suggested in the previous century). It is not their fault they are found on Yonge Street in the middle of the night; there is hope for them yet. These children need somewhere to go; a safe place needs to be made available for them. Likely, this story was to raise awareness and inspire sympathy, not only for those children, but also for Kelso’s own political work as a moral/social reformer, to which ‘child-saving’ was central.

Yet, let us go beyond these political motivations and ask, what it is about the socio-political climate that made his contemporaries, and us still, recognize these children as forsaken and in need of protection? *What do these children signify?* And why did Kelso’s contemporaries need to hear that story? I suggest we utilize this story as an opening to consider its broader colonial context. For this is not primarily a story about forsaken children. This is a story about the signification of childhood. And, as such, I suggest that this is a story about white-nation building, the future of the white race, and the conduits of empire. Race is not mentioned in this story. And neither is imperialism. And yet, I make the argument that we cannot understand the socio-political significance of this story without those reference points. Race, whiteness, and imperialism provide the threads for this story. It is the project of white settler colonial nation-building that makes it meaningful. And throughout this chapter, I will substantiate this claim.

In what is to follow I examine the beginnings of Canadian child protection work as it emerged in the 1880s in the city of Toronto. Through an examination of primary archival sources and secondary historical material (drawing inspiration in particular from Mariana Valverde’s work on the Canadian social/moral reform movement and Xiaobei Chen’s work on the history of the CAS), I consider why and how the figure of ‘the child’ became an object of concern. Examining the discourses around the construction of the ‘neglected and dependent child’ at the turn of the century, I ask, what ‘problems’ were associated with these children and consider what these ‘problems’ tell us about white subject formation and settler colonial governance.

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3 In writing this chapter I drew primarily from the Archives of the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto (particularly, the Annual Reports of the Children’s Aid Society Toronto for the years 1896-1910) and the annual Reports of the Superintendent, Department of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario (1894-1913).
At the first conference on child welfare in Canada (October 18-19, 1895), Rev. J. Edward Starr advised, “[t]ake care of the children and the nation will take care of itself.” This statement is at once a command for action, as well as an observation of a causal-type relationship between nation-building and the well-being of children. It is also perhaps one of the more concise statements that sums up the impetus and core sentiment of the child welfare (then ‘child-saving’) movement as it emerged at the turn of the twentieth century. Taking care of the children meant, by extension, taking care of the nation. Or expressed differently, in order to build and mold the nation, one had to turn toward its children. Such metonymic links between children and nation serve as inspiration for my historic inquiry. And it is also such linkages I seek to untangle in order to engage in a broader analysis of colonial governance in Canada. I show that it was the concern over white settler children – the “children of the nation” (Gorst 1907) – that drove the emergence of child-saving/welfare initiatives in Canada. In doing so, I place the emergence of child-saving squarely within the context of whiteness and settler colonial nation-building. I argue that child-saving work was imagined as imperial work. Indeed, it was the project of white nation-building that provided the impetus for the Canadian child welfare system. At the time Kelso told his story, the figure of the child signified much more than merely someone who needs looking after. Children were seen as racial regenerators who held the future of the nation in their hands. If left to their own devices, the neglected or mistreated settler child, it was believed, could grow into a dangerous or threatening presence in the body politic. There is a fine line, it was said, between a child victim and future criminal, with “[e]ven the most angelic of children”

harbouring “evil within” (Swain 2009:203; see also Chunn 2003:192; Donzelot 1980:82, 96; Fitz 1918). It was deemed necessary to ‘save’ these children from such a fate, not only for their own sake, but more importantly, for the sake of the white nation.

The Child as a Category of Concern

Child welfare is a project that centers on the well-being of children, a population group that is considered in need of protection, care, and guidance. Yet, our conception of children and what they come to signify changes over time. How we conceive of ‘the child’, what we understand of ‘childhood’, and who that referent child in question is, matter.

An extensive body of literature has been produced that substantiates the view that notions of ‘the child’ or ‘childhood’ are socio-historical constructions whose meanings and functions are worked out within a society’s particular conditions of possibilities (see, for example, Aries 1962; Donzelot 1980; Fitz 1981; Parr 1982; Rooke and Schnell 1983; Sutherland 2000; Chunn 2003; Chen 2005; Turmel 2008). While these writings certainly differ in their theoretical and methodological approaches, they agree on the assertion that who/what constitutes a ‘child’ is not a self-evident biological category, but instead a rather recent phenomenon with its own historicity.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, in the West, ‘childhood’ came to be conceptualized within the hegemonic idea(l) of the white bourgeois nuclear family model (see, for example, Aries 1962; Poster 1978; Donzelot 1980; Barrett and McIntosh 1982; Zaretsky 1982; Davidoff and Hall 1987; Cunningham 1991; Carter 2004; Emberley 2007). Within this framework, childhood came to be considered a state of dependency (Swain 2009:200; Chunn 2003:192), in which ‘the child’ required, both, physical and moral care – best provided within the biological (or at least surrogate) nuclear family (Chunn 2003:191; see also Fitz 1981; Donzelot 1980;
Rooke and Schnell 1983; Swain 2009). Concomitant to these notions emerged an understanding that children were no longer simply innately ‘good’ or ‘evil’, but came to be seen as the products of their environments; childhood came to be understood as the time in which children’s characters were being formed (Sutherland 2000:11; Finkel 2006:70; Stoler 2002). As Stoler puts it, “[c]olonial officials intuitively knew what cognitive psychology is convinced of today: children’s cognitions undergo complex reorganization as they acquire the social representations in which adults share” (2002:120). Childhood came to be recognized as the pivotal time when external influences most profoundly shaped a child and this shaping, it was believed, would largely determine the child’s future adult character. As J. J. Kelso explained in 1903,

A child may have hereditary tendencies in various directions, but its life work and ultimate destiny will be to a very considerable degree the outcome of its early environment and training. Like a stream that at its source may be readily controlled or directed, but as it proceeds gathers force and impetus that none can withstand – so the character of a child is formed by early teaching an association until in a few years it is irrevocably moulded for all time.5

The ‘Problem’ of the Neglected & Cruelly-Treated Child

Kelso and his child-saving contemporaries were deeply concerned about the well-being of children. For, at the time Kelso wrote his story, it was said that something evil was “festering in

of society” (in Swain 2009:204). Something that was rapidly spreading, lurking outside of view, yet detectable to the trained and caring eye. We can see it imprinted on the two ragged waifs in Kelso’s story. It was, what Chen (2005) calls, the “evil twins of cruelty and neglect” (31).

For early child-savers, the term ‘cruelty’ largely referred to the physical maltreatment of children through forms of excessive use of force or brutal acts (a vice particularly attributed to working-class men) – acts we now refer to as physical abuse. By ‘neglect’ social/moral reformers generally referred to forms of parental negligence, which usually meant a lack of moral training and discipline. It was widely believed that at the root of the problem of child neglect were ‘bad’ parents, especially bad and neglectful mothers (Chen 2005:3; Swain 2009:208). Evidence of neglect could be something the parent did, such as displaying signs of drunkenness, or something they did not do: a lack of supervision of children, for example, by leaving the children alone in the home, parents (and especially mothers) going out at night, or allowing the children to ‘run the streets’. This lack of supervision and discipline, it was believed, would lead the children down a path of disobedience, manifested by them staying out past the curfew laws, skipping school (i.e. playing “truants”), or worse, children committing petty crimes. Neglect could also manifest in a child’s environment. In the home, for example, neglect manifested through ‘improper’ living conditions, such as dirty and cramped quarters, a lack of ‘proper’ diet, dirty and ‘ragged’ clothes, ‘improper’ hygiene, for example, the children having lice. Outside of the home, a neglectful environment meant associations with ‘bad’ or ‘corrupt’ characters on part of the parents or the children. The purpose of the Children’s Aid Society
(CAS) was to address both of these concerns and rescue children from neglect and cruelty, or put differently, to save children who were considered in “moral or physical danger.”

Neglect was considered a more serious issue than cruelty or physical abuse. Cruelty was in itself considered an immoral act and hence to be condemned. Yet, a charge of cruelty was foremost a charge against the parents’ lack of civility or moral character and less about the harm inflicted on children. Neglect, on the other hand, was measured in its effects on the child, and by extension, on the nation. Neglect, it was believed, would contribute to the moral corruption of children. As such, neglect would have lasting consequences on the child, for the lack of moral training was believed to steer them toward a path of ‘bad’ citizenship, a path that could lead to a life of crime, immorality and further child neglect. The child-savers’ emphasis on neglect over cruelty is reflected in the cases the Children’s Aid Society considered worthy of investigation, where issues related to neglect/immorality far outweigh any others. Throughout the years (1892-1911) for which I examined Children’s Aid Society’s case records (then entitled, “Complaint Books”), the most common nature of investigations involved cases of neglect, rather than allegations of cruelty or abuse (excluding the cases brought to the CAS from the Children’s Court, which were the result of children’s misconduct). It is also reflected in the name of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, which makes no reference to ‘cruelty’ or physical abuse.


7 This emphasis on neglect has stayed with us until today, for we still refer to ‘child neglect’ as an umbrella term that encapsulated a range of forms of abuse or ill-treatment of children. And ‘neglect’, more so than physical abuse, also remains are more common reason for why a child may be remove from their parents.
Yet, why did the (alleged and/or real) mistreatment of children cause wide-spread anxiety and uproar? Why was their treatment a social or public issue, and one important enough to make the newspapers? Or perhaps, to put it more bluntly, why was it not acceptable to leave these children to their own devices? Perhaps we would like to answer this question by quickly asserting that it would be wrong to do so, that helping those who suffer is the morally right or the socially and politically just thing to do. Indeed, as Massie proclaimed:

…there is nothing in our lives that so appeals to our sympathy and evokes from us the tenderest feelings, as childhood enveloped in misery, weighed down with the sins of wicked parentage, affrighted, trembling at the sight of father and mother. Childhood with the springs of life dried up prematurely, holding out its hand pleading for help and to be rescued from its terrible surroundings – hard indeed would be the heart that could not be touched by such an appeal.  

We recognize Massie’s statement. It is the same message that Kelso conveyed through his story. It is an appeal to help and rescue those children who, through no fault of their own, live a life enveloped in misery. Yes, hard indeed would be the heart that does not care.

And yet, I suggest that this desire to help and rescue was also more strategic and calculated as this appeal suggests. For one, ‘cruelty’ and ‘neglect’ were, of course, not new phenomena. Children’s experiences with violence, brutality and negligence have always existed. For example, prior to the rise of the social/moral reform movement, to which the child-saving

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movement belongs, corporeal punishment was encouraged as part of discipline in schools, at home, or in shops of trade masters. And even the very same child-savers who decried the use of physical force by parents against their children as a form of cruelty, were still in favour of corporeal punishment for juvenile offenders, preferring a good public “whipping” in some cases over incarceration. Similarly, children were exploited (according to contemporary sensibilities) on a rather large scale in Canada without raising much public concern. For example, young children had been working in Canada's coal mines for decades (McIntosh 2000; 2003). Similarly, between 1880 and 1925, somewhere between 80,000 (Finkel 2006:71) to 100,000 (Duane 2001:82) girls and boys were sent to Canada from Britain (mostly under the age of fourteen) to be indentured to Canadian settlers as agricultural labourers or domestic servants, many of whom were also severely abused (Finkel 2006:71; see also Eff 1996; Rutman 1987:74). Leaving aside Indigenous children or children of racialized immigrants who were not a concern, nor even a topic of discussion for early child-savers, even the children of poor British origins did not pull on the social/moral reformer’s heart strings the same way as the mistreatment of ‘Canadian’ children did. As D. J. O’Donoghue, representative from the Trades and Labour Council, put it matter-of-factly in 1895: “charity begins at home.” Moreover, while an ‘excessive’ use of force towards children had always been discouraged or condemned, such violent acts were generally

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not considered a public or social problem (Chen 2005:20; see also Gordon 1985). On the contrary, in early modern times in Europe, negligence – and particularly indulgence – on the part of parents in dealing with their children were considered much more serious problems (Chen 2005:21). And while these ‘problems’ existed, they were not a concern to the public, the State, nor the monarch. They were considered private matters.

And yet, at the end of the nineteenth century, excessive force against the nation’s children became problematized as ‘cruelty’, negligence and a range of ‘unacceptable’ parenting practices turned into ‘child neglect’, and both of these emerging problems came to be considered widespread social issues in need of immediate and systematic intervention by the state and ‘the public’. Expressed differently, the connection between parents and their children, the way parents parent their children, emerged as central concerns of the Canadian state and, indeed, the core of colonial politics. We can make sense of these shifts if we consider them in their socio-political context.

**Empire, White Nation-Building, and the Child**

Child welfare in Canada emerged during a time characterized by, both, great imperial expansion for the British Empire, and heightened imperial anxieties regarding its future. In the early nineteenth century, the destiny of the British Empire, it was held, lay in conquest and imperial rule, with native populations either having to die out or being guided towards ‘civilization’ (Hall 2004:47). Despite a massive wave of imperial expansion towards the end of the nineteenth century (Devereux 1999:175), particularly after the Napoleonic Wars in 1820, which saw a quarter of the world’s population living on soil claimed by the British (Hall 2004:47), by mid-century the Empire’s sense of optimism over imperial grandeur and white supremacist rule was in decline. For example, fears over Maori resistance in New Zealand mounted, widespread panic
ensued after the ‘Indian Rebellion’ of 1857, and, to put it mildly, disillusionment followed from anti-imperial conduct of freed slaves in Africa and the Caribbean (Hall 2004:47). Furthermore, the pre-eminent position of Britain as the most powerful and most advanced industrial capitalist society began to be threatened by rivaling white nations, such as Germany and the United States (Hall 2004:48).

Concomitant with fears over a declining empire, anxieties over ‘racial degeneration’ were mounting. Rapidly declining birthrates among Anglo-Saxons after 1881 (Davin 1978:10), apparent epidemics of venereal disease and tuberculosis (Devereux 1999:176; Bland 1995; Davin 1978), and high infant mortality rates (Swain 2009:198; Devereux 1999:176; Arnup 1994:31; Davin 1978:10) threw the ‘health’ and virility of the white race under question. For example, British authorities were extremely disturbed by the failure of a large number of young Britons to meet the health and fitness standards to enlist in the British Army, and were alarmed at the loss of the Boer War in 1902 (Devereux 1999:176; Paisley 2004:241; Bacchi 1983:116; Davin 1978:11). Fears over racial degeneration were expressed through pseudo-scientific theories of Social Darwinism and eugenics. As Stoler (2002) rightfully points out, “the discourse on degeneracy had less to do with the biological survival of the Whites than with their political viability and cultural reproduction” (73). Explained differently, perceived threats to white supremacy and imperial rule were expressed through fears over racial degeneration and the health of the nation.

Relatedly, after Confederation, British immigration propaganda eagerly promoted Canada’s newly ‘opened’ territories in terms of its imperial significance. Alongside Australia, immigration prose advertised these white settler spaces as the Empire’s last frontiers, and Western Canada in particular, as “The White Man's Last Opportunity” (Seton 1908 in Devereux 1999:175). In many ways, Canada was imagined as the last hope for the British Empire.
Imagined as a tabula rasa, the regeneration of the white race, social and moral purity, and imperial renewal were said to be possible in that space (Devereux 1999:175). In short, child welfare emerged at a time in which the Canadian settler colony sought to establish itself politically, economically, and culturally.11

In this context, the figure of the child assumed a heightened importance. Across the British Empire, including the Canadian settler colony, it became a truism of the time that ‘children are the future of the nation’ (see Arnup 1994:14; Davin 1978; Comacchio 1993; Chen 2005; Swain 2009). The child came to be imagined as a symbol of racial regeneration or racial decline. The children, it was believed, held the future of the Empire in their hands (for better or for worse). As Dr. Helen MacMurchy, chief investigator of infant mortality, put it: “We are only now discovering that Empires and States are built of babies. Cities are dependent for their continuance on babies. Armies are recruited only if and when we have cared for our babies” (in Finkel 2006:72). Thus, efficient nation-building efforts had to start with them. Or as the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) put it, “Save the children and you mold the nation” (in Valverde 1993:60). In sum, when it became an acceptable truth that the upbringing of children and the well-being of the nation were correlated, the figure of ‘the child’ assumed a place of heightened significance (see Arnup 1994:14; Davin 1978; Comacchio 1993; Chen 2005; Swain 2009). As future citizens, and indeed the ‘future of the nation’, the constitution, ‘health’, and ‘virility’ of the white settler nations was believed to depend on the children. ‘Childhood’

11 The decades before and after the turn of the century were particularly formative for Canada – not simply as part of a transformative industrial capitalist economy (Polanyi 2001 (1944)) - but also for its status as a settler colony. The confederation in 1867 established the Canadian settler colony as a dominion of the British Empire. Canada established its own Supreme Court in 1875 and its own Criminal Code in 1892. In 1926, Canada became an autonomous entity, and in 1931, was granted legislative authority in internal and external affairs. The Canadian settler colony sought to make itself and the welfare of its children was paramount.
then came be to seen as a crucial time for intervention and management, since the manner in which children were being parented, and the environments in which they were brought up, would largely determine the kind of national subjects they would become. This also meant an increased focus on the ‘family’, which came to occupy a new social space in society (McGillivray 2004:39), a space that was seen as the primary locus for citizenship- and subject formation (Donzelot 1980; Rose 1999). It is crucial to note that the belief that socialization and child rearing were major contributors to adult character formation, was already accepted as truth in the eighteenth century. Yet, it was only in the period that followed – when the child’s socialization was linked to national interest – that concerns over child-rearing became paramount (Stoler 2002:120; Ramirez and Boli 1987; see also Comacchio 1993). In sum, once child-rearing came to be connected to national interests, we witness an explosion of concern over the welfare of the nation’s children. It was then that we see the emergence of ‘child neglect’ as a social problem – and indeed a national problem (Chen 2005:15) – in need of addressing.

Hence, from the 1880s onwards, a diverse range of social/moral reform efforts in Canada began to focus their attention on their children. Child-saving activities first emerged in an organized, institutional fashion with the establishment of the Toronto Children's Aid Society (CAS) in 1891. J.J. Kelso was elected as the Toronto Children’s Aid Society’s first president. In 1893 the Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children (commonly

12 Toronto was also the first city to centralize and coordinate charities and to instruct municipalities to carry out some relief functions. This work began as early as 1893, although a central coordinating body that would oversee the different charities was not set up until 1912. In that year, the first social service (welfare) department was established. Until the 1920s, however, child welfare was largely organized without much assistance of the state. It is also interesting to note that the Toronto CAS was not only the first agency of its kind in Canada, and but also remains the largest board-operated child welfare organization in the country (Lee 2005:63).
referred to as the Children’s Protection Act) was passed, which established the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children. The provincial government appointed Kelso as the first superintendent of the Ontario Department of Neglected and Dependent Children (in 1893), a position he held for over forty years. Shortly after the inception of the CAS in Toronto, Children’s Aid Societies were established in other cities in Ontario, such as Peterborough and Ottawa in 1893, and Hamilton in 1894. The number of Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario increased from 29 in 1896 to 55 in 1906 (MacLaurin 2005). And by 1912, 60 CAS were active in Ontario (Finkel 2006:71). Being the first of its kind in Canada, Ontario’s Children’s Aid movement was depicted as “pioneer work” and lauded for its success by Kelso and his contemporaries. In his 1913 superintendent report, for example, Kelso proudly proclaimed that “in the past twenty-one years it would be a conservative estimate to say that one hundred thousand children have been directly benefitted by the operations of the Children’s Aid Societies, while the number legally made wards and provided with foster-homes is in the neighborhood of fifteen thousand.”

Given the importance of ‘the child’ to the nation, child-saving initiatives emerged alongside other movements that focused on the improvement and preservation of settler children.

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13 The Act of 1888 and 1893 follow the Orphans Act of 1799, which provided the legal basis for orphans to be indentured, and the Ontario Industrial Schools Act (1874), which sought to define a ‘neglected child’. All of these Acts, in their own ways, were established to address the emerging problem of orphaned or neglected children. It is interesting to note, also, that the 1892 Act was heavily influenced by legislation from equivalent Acts drawn up in other white imperial spaces (i.e. Australia and England) (see MacLaurin 2005).


For example, at the turn of the century, provincial legislation and municipal by-laws were enacted that limited or outlawed child labour in street trades (such as selling newspapers), factories (for example, the 1888 factory legislation prohibited the employment of children under 12 years of age), mines, and shops (Finkel 2006:70; Chunn 2003:203; see also Parr 1980; Bullen 1992; McIntosh 2000, 2003; Coulter 2003). Moreover, legislation was passed for mandatory schooling; children were to be separated from adults in the criminal justice system (for example through the Juvenile Delinquents Act and juvenile courts) (Chunn 2003:191; Fitz 1981:31,35; Rutman 1987:72-73; Muncie 2009); the kindergarten movement began to emerge; playgrounds were built; child health initiatives and policies were implemented to prevent infant mortality (such as safe milk depots and well-baby clinics) (Dodd 1991:207; Davin 1978:29); educational ‘mother classes’ were being held and an extensive\(^\text{16}\) dissemination of medical and advice literature was directed at mothers to improve their child-rearing abilities (Dodd 1991; Arnup 1994; Comacchio 1993; Kozak 2005; Turmel 2008).\(^\text{17}\) Even nurses and midwives were sent to settler mothers on the ‘frontier’ to help bear their children (Boutilier 2000).\(^\text{18}\) Later, in the 1920s,

\(^{16}\) For example, nearly a third of all women giving birth in 1921 received the Department of Health’s "Canadian Mother’s Book" (Kozak 2005:188).

\(^{17}\) Child welfare divisions at all levels of government as well as social-welfare agencies such as the Canadian Council on Child and Family Welfare distributed free advice literature on a range of child rearing matters (Arnup 1994:7). For example, thousands of ‘Little Blue Books’ (the federal Department of Health’s advice booklets) were sent to mothers across the country. The titles of these books included: Beginning a Home in Canada (1922), How to Build the Canadian House (1922), How to Make Outpost Homes in Canada (1922), Canadians Need Milk (1923), How We Cook in Canada (1922), How to Manage Housework in Canada (1922), How to Take Care of Mother (1922), How to Take Care of the Family (1922), How to Take Care of the Baby (1922), How to Take Care of the Children (1922), Household Accounting in Canada (1922), How to Take Care of Household Waste (1921), and How to Avoid Accidents and Give First Aid (1921) (in Strong-Boag 1982: 218; for more information on the ‘blue books’ see Dodd 1991; Arnup 1994; Kozak 2005). Within this literature, the investment in making and imagining ideal settler families and proper settler homes (from instructions on how to build an outpost home to proper garbage disposal) is ever-present.

\(^{18}\) It is quite interesting to note that, ironically, while medical personnel were sent across the country to assist women on the ‘frontier’ in childbearing, statistics indicate that maternal mortality rates were actually higher when a doctor or nurse was present during childbirth. Likewise, in the 1920s and 30s, hospital births had higher mortality rates than home births (Kozak 20065:193).
we even see the emergence of the child study movement (with its nursery schools), and child psychology – which ‘scientifically discovered’/socially constructed notions of the ‘normal’ child and ‘normal’ childhood – notions portrayed as objective, scientific knowledge, but yet, were so profoundly raced, gendered, and classed (see, for example, Donzelot 1980; Miller P.J. 1982; Strong-Boag 1982; Comacchio 1993, Arnup 1994; Delhi 1996; Turmel 2008).

In sum, the child-saving movement emerged as a citizenship-building project, aimed at building and reforming the Canadian settler nation. As Honorable J. M. Gibson, Secretary of Ontario, proclaimed in 1894, the work of child-saving concerned children “who are being rescued from moral ruin, and who can be put in a fair way of becoming useful citizens in the country.” ¹⁹ Similarly, R. E. Kingsford, Assistant Police Magistrate of Toronto, praised the child-savers with the following words “great good will result from your efforts and many a good subject will be gained for the Queen and for Canada.” ²⁰ Alongside other social/moral reform movements, child-saving initiatives sought to produce and enhance the life of the nation: to preserve and improve its physical health, to conserve and foster its moral character, and to shape it according to an idealistic vision of what it should be in the twentieth century (Valverde 1993:17-18; 24). Indeed, as Chen (2005) has similarly observed, “[b]uilding a useful, strong, Christian citizenry was the main objective of child-saving when it emerged in the late nineteenth century” (15). To this it must be added that the Canadian “citizenry” the child-savers worked towards was not only “useful, strong” and “Christian” (Chen 2005:15), it was also white. The

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²⁰ Ibid.
impetus for the Canadian child welfare system was the project of white nation-building. This impetus was informed by racial pride/white supremacy and imperial prowess, as exemplified by the following excerpt which was first published in an English publication and reprinted by Kelso. Commenting, as he so often did, on the plight inflicted by working women on their offspring and thus the nation (yet this time in the language of protecting mother and child), he shares the following sentiment:

The one reform in our social life which has been scarcely touched in the nineteenth century is the relief of married women from heavy manual labour. The aristocracy of the human race are the Jews. For several centuries they have forbidden their womankind to exhaust themselves and injure their unborn children by toilsome bread-winning at a period when rest is natural in the interests of the individual, and desirable in the interests of the nation. … It affronts my senses of racial pride that there should be any people on earth who treat their women with more wisdom and consideration than the English, and I earnestly hope to see in the early decades of the century a new respect for women spring into life and practice, and that the result will be to grade up the physical stamina and develop the mental alertness of English child-life.²¹

Child-Saving: “The Highest Kind of Patriotic Service”

The significance social/moral reformers attributed to the child-saving-cum-citizenship project cannot be overstated. A sense of urgency and heightened importance drove this undertaking, for not addressing child neglect among this segment of the population, or not carrying out the work of child-saving properly, could have disastrous consequences on the future of the white nation. “Whiteness in Canada”, writes McKay, “was an expression of confidence in British geo-political might and cultural pre-eminence – and haunted by an ambient dread that both might be lost in the twinkling of an eye” (2008:354). Indeed, the stakes could not be higher. Entire civilizations, it was said, had vanished because they failed to properly manage their children: “[t]he nations of the past have vanished like a dream. Why? If you examine you will find that they cared not for the children.”

As such, many a tale was told of the horrifying consequences of failing to care for the ‘nation’s children’. For example, Massie, while telling ominous tales of child-neglect left unaddressed, shares the following story:

Dr. Harris records another case in the interior of the State of New York, of a family which has entailed upon the community six generations of debased manhood and womanhood. From a single neglected child in a wealthy county has come a notorious stock of criminals, vagabonds and paupers, imperiling every dollar’s worth of property and every individual in the community. Not less than twelve hundred persons have been traced

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as the lineage of six children, born of this perverted and depraved woman. And yet she was once a pure, sweet, dimpled little child, who with proper influences thrown about her at a tender age might have given to the world twelve hundred progeny, who would have blessed their day and generation.23

Neglected children of the nation needed to be saved – perhaps for their own sake, but certainly, for the sake of the settler colony. Hon. G. W. Allan, member of the Dominion Senate, explained it in the following way: “There is no one work in which Christian men and women could or should engage more heartily than in this work of the care and protection of children, inasmuch as it is a work which, if properly carried out, begins at the very foundation;” and furthermore, “it will depend entirely upon how it is carried out, how wisely, how earnestly and how energetically, what those children are to grow up to be, whether they are to become God-fearing men and women or sources of anxiety and expense to the whole community.”24 Similarly, as expressed in the 1908 Report of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children: “Small children neglected grow into law breakers by the simplest rule of evolution. Then by a legal procedure that is beyond their comprehension, these young offenders are easily confirmed in wrong-doing, and become the habitual criminals that war against Society for the rest of their natural life.”25


24 Ibid.

Charles Hastings, key figure in the Canadian urban reform movement and Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health, put it in the following terms. He believed that trying to reform or punish criminals instead of “keep[ing] in touch with childhood, its conditions and environments”, “is about as consistent as treating a patient for symptoms of blood poisoning and neglecting to clean out the source of infection, the abscess cavities from which the poison is being generated” (Lydston in Hastings 1911).

Therefore, as it was said during the first conference on child-saving in 1895, “just as soon as it is evident that the parent has lost control of the child, and it is almost an absolute certainty that it will develop into a criminal, the State ought to interfere and protect itself and save the child.”

Lest we forget, as Kelso himself reminds us, that “[t]he neglected hovel in the valley may bring disease and death to the palace on the hill.” Yet, care for these children and “[i]t is quite possible to convert the neglected children of the state into a source of strength instead of into a source of expense and danger.” At the beginning of the twentieth century, the work of child-saving, therefore, was imagined as “the highest kind of patriotic service.”

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Saving the ‘Lesser-White’ Settler Child

Since child-saving was a project of white nation-building, Massie and Kelso’s stories are also stories of ‘hearts being touched’ along racial lines. We are beginning to see that social/moral reform – the politics of care – was racially marked. Throughout and until the end of the period under examination (1880s-1920s), the predominant child of concern to child-savers was the impoverished white settler child. As can be discerned from the Toronto Children’s Aid Society’s “Complaint Books”\(^{30}\) and its annual reports, the annual reports from the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, as well as the Children’s Court Books,\(^ {31}\) the vast majority of children and families dealt with were impoverished or of working-class Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. For example, most of the children who appear in the pages of the Children’s Court Books between 1900-1907 are listed as “Canadian” – a term that, at this time, was usually reserved for children born to British settlers. Aside Canadian children, a few were recorded as “American”, “Scottish”, or “English”.\(^ {32}\) The CAS complaint books are filled with entries involving the same demographics. The focus on the white child extends throughout this period and beyond. Between 1921-1922 a statistical study\(^ {33}\) was undertaken to gather demographic information regarding children admitted to one of the various children’s institutions that existed in the city of Toronto. These institutions included the Boys’ Home, the Children’s Aid Society,

\(^{30}\) These were ledger books in which the CAS recorded, in chronological order, the details of every case, including demographic information on parents and children, the nature of the ‘complaint’, and/or further steps and solutions. In other words, the complaint books were the CAS’s earliest case files.

\(^{31}\) These are the records from the Children’s Court in Toronto, listing those children who had committed an offence and had to appear before a judge. The court records that were consulted ranged from August 1, 1900-October 1907.


the Girls’ Home, the Haven, the Home for Incurable Children, the Infants’ Home and Infirmary, the Jewish Children’s Home, the Protestant Orphan’s Home, St. Mary’s Infants’ Home, the Sacred Heart Orphanage, the Salvation Army Rescue Home, and the Victor Home for Women. The majority of children and parents under the purview of these institutions during these two years were impoverished white – “Canadian” or “Other British” – Christian settlers.\(^{34}\)

Indigenous children were of no concern to child-savers. They do not yet appear in the records of the CAS, they are not yet a topic of discussion in the annual reports of the CAS or the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, nor do they appear in internal memos or correspondences with other organization. Children from racialized backgrounds, such as black children or those of Chinese backgrounds, hardly appear in any of these records either. The few black families who came under the purview of the CAS, were dealt with swiftly and indignantly – the same amount or kind of ‘care’ was seemingly not afforded to them as it was to white children. For example, white settler women sometimes used the CAS shelter as a temporary relief for their children. The complaint books record several instances in which a (white) mother had to go to the hospital for a prolonged period and hence could not take care of her child. These mothers approached the CAS who would provide shelter to the child until she was released from hospital. One black mother, recorded as “Coloured”, approached the CAS for the same reason.

\(^{34}\) Alongside other information, statistics were gathered regarding the birthplaces of children and of parents, with the following categories: “Toronto”; “Canada”; “Other British”; “United States”; “Other”; “Not Stated.” The clear majority of children admitted to any of these institutions was born in Toronto, followed by some other part of Canada. Their mothers and fathers were primarily born in other places in Canada, or were recorded to have been born as “Other British”. The religious affiliation of parents was also recorded, with the following categories: “Protestant”; “Roman Catholic”; “Greek or Russian Orthodox”; “Hebrew”; “Other”; “Not Stated.” The vast majority of mothers and fathers were recorded as Protestant Christians (e.g. 1056 mothers were listed as Protestant, followed by 455 Roman Catholic, as the second most numerous category. For comparison, only 9 mothers were listed as “Other”, 13 as “Greek or Russian Orthodox, and 73 were recorded under the category “Hebrew”.

and was turned away (case 1455).\textsuperscript{35} Other times, black children were not referred to by name and/or their names were not even recorded in the complaint books (E.g. entries would simply state that a case involved “two coloured girls” (case 79)\textsuperscript{36}). If black children had to be dealt with, it seemed that they were treated more harshly than their white peers. For example, they were more readily sent to industrial schools rather than to a foster family. Kelso speaks of such a case in his 1906 superintendent report: “Colored girl-sent to foster home-ran away and was wandering about from place to place. Had the usual characteristics of her race. Obtained control and placed her in an institution.”\textsuperscript{37} Chambers (2006) and Coulter (2003) offer examples that support this argument. According to Chambers (2006) the Toronto Children’s Aid Society (CAS) pressured racialized mothers more severely than Anglo-Saxon mothers to release their children for adoption to white bourgeois families (see 175-176). Another case in point is the exceptionally harsh treatment of Ethel T., a poor sixteen-year-old black girl who emigrated to Canada from the United States, and who was made a ward of the state by Emily Murphy in her role as judge.\textsuperscript{38}


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{38} In 1917, Ethel found herself in front of the children’s court for being a victim of sexual assault. Blaming Ethel for being sexually assaulted, and hence punishing her for leading an ‘immoral’ life, Murphy declared her a neglected child and made her a ward of the state. Murphy lectured Ethel: “I think you need a good sound thrashing ... They say a thankless child is like a serpent’s [sic] tooth, you are not returning your mother anything, but are bringing disgrace and shame upon [sic] her ... Now you have got to obey me, you have evaded your mother but you can’t get away from me. I am going to make you a Ward of the Department and that means that you belong to the Court instead of your mother, and if you don’t do as they [sic] tell you, and if you run around with those fast men, and with girls like Cutie Wade, they will lock you up. If you are not absolutely obedient, if you are flighty or stay out late at night, I shall know about it and you will be locked up” (in Coulter 2003:94).
The absence of racialized children in the records of the child-savers is not due to racialized families not being present, nor living elsewhere. Non-white people, of course, also lived in and around Toronto. This absence is also not due to racialized residents being so few in numbers, that they proportionally simply did not appear in the records. While it is true that white settlers were the predominant group of residents, and Chinese children in particular made up a very small number of the overall child population, the extent to which racialized children appear in the records of the child-savers is disproportionate to their overall demographic. Hill argues that, at the turn of the century among black and white residents in Toronto, “an atmosphere of ‘live and let live’ prevailed” (1985:98). Borrowing from Foucault’s terminology, I suggest the atmosphere would be more accurately depicted as let live and “let die” (Foucault 2003:241).

There was no support extended to black residents by the white bourgeoisie. They were not wanted, and certainly, not to be supported (whatever ‘support’ meant for the social/moral reformers, for perhaps lesser-whites would have fared better if the social/moral reformers did not

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39 For example, the black population of Toronto can be traced back to 1793, brought to the area as servants and slaves to British officials and officers who were charged with establishing the town of York (Hill 1985:75). In addition, within a few years after the town of York was founded, escaped enslaved people and freedmen from the U.S. began to make their way to Toronto. In 1837, Toronto’s population numbered around 9,000, mostly made up of settlers from the British Isles, including at least fifty black families (ibid:76-77). A survey of 1840 in Toronto enumerates 528 black residents (Hill: 1985:82). During the 1850s, a second influx of black refugees arrived in southern Ontario (likely a result of the passage of the U.S. Fugitive Slave Act in 1850, which allowed for those regarded as former slaves living in the North to be re-enslaved if captured). By 1851 there were at least 35,000 black residents in southern Ontario/Canada West (ibid:87), around 1,200 of whom settled in Toronto (ibid:88). While Chinese immigration to Canada was largely restricted to British Columbia prior to WWI, the earliest record of Chinese residents in Toronto dates to 1877. Chinese residents were then still scattered throughout the city until 1900, at which point rising rental costs and anti-Chinese racism led to the creation of Toronto’s Chinatown (Nipp 1985:149). The 1911 census puts the Chinese population in Toronto at 1,036 (Nipp 1985:160). While most Chinese immigrants were single men or men whose wives and children had to stay behind in their home country, there were some Chinese women and families in Toronto (Nipp 1985:163). According to the 1921 census, Toronto’s Chinese population was made up of 1,947 males and 88 females.

40 Early in the twentieth century, rapid immigration waves had brought hundreds of thousands of new settlers to Canada. They arrived from different quarters of Europe, but predominately they still came from Great Britain. Census data from 1911 records the population of Toronto as 80% of British descent (Harney 1985:3). In 1914, the single largest group of immigrants were still British (McKay 2008:350).
seek to ‘help’ as we will see in the next chapters). From the few instances in which a black child appears in the archives of the early child-savers, it seems the notion that this population needed to be excluded from the nation informs child-saving initiatives. Since child welfare services emerged to improve the white race, they were not readily available (for better or for worse) for those children who were considered extraneous to the white settler nation. Similar to Indigenous children, child-saving initiatives seemingly were not set up to ‘save’ black children or ‘help’ their mothers. Strict boundaries were in place to segregate racial groups from white society. For better or for worse, their children were left to their own devices. Child-saving initiatives simply did not emerge with them in mind.

Child welfare emerged to care for and assist the white members of the nation, to save the damaged but salvageable white child. Neglect and cruelty were not considered problems for all child populations. And not all children needed saving. The bourgeois racial and imperial thinking of early child-savers reveals itself in the fact that it was predominately the children of ‘lesser-white’ – poor white or borderline/tenuously white – settler families who needed to be cared for. It was the children of the suspect members of the empire who needed to be saved.

I use the term ‘lesser-white’ to refer to the children’s inferior class status and/or their racial/ethnic background from nations that were then considered lower on the whiteness scale (for example, Irish Catholics, Eastern, Central, and Southern Europeans, and European Jews) – factors that subordinated these population groups to the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie. In grouping these settlers in the category ‘white’, I do not wish to assert homogeneity amongst these groups.

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41 For example, in May 1914, Ontario amended Section 30 of its Factory, Shop and Office Building Act stated: “No Chinese person shall employ in any capacity or have under his direction or control, any female white person in any factory, restaurant or laundry” (in Nipp 1985:164). This was done to safeguard white women from the imagined corrupting influences of Chinese men. The amendment did not pass, but some municipalities implemented it regardless (Walker 1997:55).
nor imply that there existed no real differences in language, religion, culture, or ethnic identity. Similarly, power was certainly distributed unevenly amongst these groups, even amongst those settlers arriving from the British Isles. As Harney puts it, “ask any Irish Catholic who tried to break the Orange Lodge monopoly on the better positions in city government” (1985:2), or Macedonians who knew there was no employment for them at the Gooderham distillery, despite the plant being located in the middle of their settlement (ibid:15).

Moreover, I do not wish to downplay the difference that class made. The position of poor whites within the nation was also tentative. Several scholars have demonstrated that bourgeois classism and imperial racism often overlapped, were mutually constitutive, and that demarcations of belonging/exclusion were oftentimes ambiguous. McClintock (1995) points out that poor whites were at risk of being racialized, discourses of degeneracy often overlapping with discourses of colonial racism (and both discourses being simultaneously gendered). The British poor, particularly those contained in urban slums in London, were imagined by the bourgeoisie as inherently different from themselves, described as a degenerate ‘race’ apart, from which bourgeois whiteness had to be guarded and through which it could be constructed (classed/raced/gendered forms of boundary control). Susan Thorne (1997) has similarly shown that British colonial missionaries drew on discourses of class and race oftentimes interchangeably to describe and liken the situation of ‘black heathens’ to the British underclass in the metropole. Lydia Murdoch (2006) brings a similar argument to bear on early child-rescue work in Britain. Murdoch, who conducted a historical study (beginning mid-1800s) of child-rescue efforts in London, demonstrates that child-saving discourses rendered poor white parents degenerate and inferior, demonizing and vilifying them without paying attention to the social context (industrial capitalism) that produced these conditions. These narratives, Murdoch argues, “reflected the adult poor’s exclusion from the national community” (7). At heart of these
endeavours were contestations over citizenship and national belonging from which poor whites were to be excluded: “By the 1870s, child welfare reformers increasingly defined citizenship in terms of middle-class domesticity, thereby denying citizenship to large segments of the working, particularly urban, poor” (ibid). In this context, “the urban poor” and “poor children were often construed as a separate race from the English” (26).

Indeed, neglected/impoverished white children were often likened to racial Others, described through depictions that drew on colonial stereotypes of colonized populations, and sometimes referred to by a range of racial epithets. This was especially true for the British metropole as has been pointed out by Murdoch (2006), Swain (2009), and Swain and Hillel (2010) who all comment on homeless children sometimes being referred to as “street Arabs”. Murdoch (2006) quotes Thomas Guthrie who, when describing poor children of Edinburgh, explained that “These Arabs of the city are as wild as those of the desert” (25) and Lord Shaftesbury who similarly declared that, “City Arabs … are like tribes of lawless freebooters, bound by no obligations, and utterly ignorant or utterly regardless of social duties” (in ibid). Children were also referred to as ‘pygmies’ (Swain and Hillel 2010) and described in a similar fashion as ‘street Arabs’. Thomas Barnardo (founder of Barnardo’s Homes and British child emigration schemes) explained that a neglected and homeless child was “in the majority of cases, alone; a solitary Ishmaelite, a lonely wayfarer on life’s great road.” (in Murdoch 2009:25). Swain (2009) provides another telling example of “the street child” being compared to “‘a valuable slave … all the joy and health of his childhood … being sold.’” (in Swain 201). Such explicitly racialized language to comment on the urban poor was somewhat less pronounced in the Canadian colony compared to the British metropole. Yet still, child-savers in Canada also described homeless or neglected poor children as “running wild”, “uncivilized”, “lawless”, borderline or half-savages.
As Swain puts it, in British child-rescue literature, “The imperative to rescue white children from savagery was always dominant” (ibid:206).

And yet, as Radhika Mohanram (1999) has so eloquently put it, while “the distance between the discourse of race and that of class is very short indeed” (38) we must heed caution not to conflate. I hold that what was generally signified was not that poor whites were savages, but lived/behaved/conducted themselves like savages. The use of racialized and colonial language “to describe working-class Britons and Aboriginal, African or other Indigenous peoples did not mean, however, that they were thought of as the same” (Swain and Hillel 2010:81).

Catherine Hall (2002) writes that “Britishness, and whiteness, in the discourse of the missionaries and their allies, should mean order, civilization, Christianity, domesticity and separate spheres, rationality and industry” (113). When white people were rendered “‘savages’, uncultivated and uncivilized”, “it was deeply disturbing” (ibid). Applied to their own, “[r]ace functioned to shame and to shock” (Swain and Hillel 2010:80).

Oftentimes, social/moral reformers utilized racial discourses to draw attention to the plight of poor white subjects (the outcast/Ishmaelite; the valuable slave whose joys had been taken and was now made to suffer), to attract pity, to ‘touch hearts’, to make others spring into action to help – this was about the creation of a child-saving campaign after all. It was a way to drum up support by comparing white subjects as inhabiting a space reserved for those Other-Others (Ahmed 2000). Inderpal Grewal (1996) makes a similar observation in Home and Harem. Grewal shows that when “class comparisons [were] made between the English poor and the slaves” or “with the uncivilized ‘natives’”, “most often” this was done “when it became necessary to reveal the plight of the English poor” (74). The use of racial language to describe poor whites was furthermore used to argue that white people suffered more than racialized or colonized peoples in similar situations. As social/moral reformers contended, “[t]he suffering of
‘civilized humanity in poverty’ was seen as worse than that ‘of the simple Hottentots and Esquimaux … in their deserts of sand or of snow’” (Swain and Hillel 2010). The logic went that racialized and colonized others lived like savages because they were savages; white subjects who were considered destined to live a civilized life, but lived in conditions similar to the racial Other as white people, would experience such dire situations as much worse than those for whom it was considered their natural state.

Racialized class discourses drew attention to and compared white subjects to the most ‘degenerate’ way of being, exemplified by the racial Other – a state of being that was considered outrageously inappropriate for a white subject to inhabit. What underlies these discourses is an anxiety about the terrifying possibility that the white race could decay and degenerate. This leads to the focus on improving and not letting lesser-white settlers sink to ‘that’ level. As such, there is a redemptive side to the supposed ‘racialization’ of poor whites. Lesser-whites could be redeemed and improved, a possibility that was accessible via their shared whiteness and via their intended place in the imperial project. Grewal (1996) explains that efforts to improve and reform poor whites “brought certain sections of the working class into a culture shared with other classes, one that contained common notions of England and its relation to other parts of the world” (87). This culture was one of shared imperialism: “…nationalist culture helped to create the nineteenth-century ‘Englishman’ and ‘Englishwoman’ to whom imperialism became acceptable, if not natural” (ibid). In quoting Thomas Richards, Grewal explains that national belonging was fashioned via displays of imperial power, “‘the best way to sell things to the English was to sell them the culture and ideology of England, its plans for commercial dominance, its dreams of Empire, its social standards, and its codes of conduct’” (88). As Swain and Hillel (2010) put it, “[w]hile comparisons drawn between the urban poor and the ‘tribes’ and
‘savages’ of foreign lands may appear to point to a form of ‘class racism’, the implicit advantages of whiteness remain” (Swain and Hillel 2010:81).

Indeed, in the Canadian settler colony, there was a very real marked difference to those Other-Others, who came from “foreign lands” (Harney 1985), such as Asia or Africa, and who were thus considered something else entirely. For example, William Lyon Mackenzie King, before his term as prime minister, wrote an article in 1897 in the Daily Mail and Empire concerning the ethnic enclaves that existed in Toronto. King wrote about the Germans, French, Jews, Syrian and Italians among others, considering whether “their presence here portend an evil for this city” or whether this “class of foreigners” are “likely to prove at once good citizens and a strength to the community” (in Harney 1985:4). This ‘class’ of foreigners was contrasted to “[t]he Irish, Scots, English, American and Newfoundlander,” who were imagined as “so nearly akin in thought, customs, and manners to the Canadians themselves … that in speaking of a foreign population, they have generally been disregarded altogether” (in Harney 1985:4).42

While King considers whether the aforementioned immigrant groups would cause havoc to the ‘community’ of white settlers, he nonetheless ponders if, or to what extent, they may assimilate or be included in the nation. While their road towards belonging and citizenship was tenuous, such considerations were not extended to, for example, the black residents of Toronto or Southern Ontario.

As a comparison, in 1857 Colonel John Prince, member of the Legislative Council, was quoted saying:

42 The messiness and spatial specificity of racial categories is brought to light, even in in the case of Newfoundlanders, who at this time, were still considered ‘foreigners’ and racial ‘Others’ in Nova Scotia. When impoverished Newfoundlanders had to migrate to Sydney, N.S. to find work in the steelworks, they were described as “miserable half starved pirates” and “devils” (in McKay 2008:360).
of the coloured citizens of Toronto, I know little or nothing; no doubt some are respectful enough in their way, and perform the inferior duties belonging to their station tolerably well … I believe that in this city as in some others of our Province, they are looked upon as necessary evils, and only submitted to because white servants are so scarce. But I now deal with these fellows as a body and I pronounce them to be as such the greatest CURSE ever inflicted upon the two magnificent counties which I have the honour to represent in the legislative council of this Province … It has been my misfortune and the misfortune of my family to live among these blacks (and they have lived upon us) for twenty-four years. (in Hill 1985:98; emphasis in original)

Such sentiments were not exceptional. A few years prior, on June 17, 1852, the Colonist warned the ‘community’ about black immigrants, reporting that every boat coming from the United States seemed to hold “several fugitive slaves, men, women and children as passengers” (in Hill 1985:87). “We fear they are coming rather too fast for the good of the Province”, the paper warned, for “[p]eople may talk about the horrors of slavery as much as they choose; but fugitive slaves are by no means a desirable class of immigrant for Canada, especially when they come in great numbers” (in Hill 1985:87). To this the Provincial Freeman, an anti-slavery newspaper founded by Mary Ann Shadd (lawyer, activist, and the first black female publisher in North America) responded by pointing at the racist double-standard in that no such objection was brought against poor European immigrants (in ibid). Even so, Colonel Bruce, a member of Parliament for Essex, introduced a bill to impose a head tax for runaway slaves entering the
province (similar to the head tax that was later introduced for Chinese immigrants in 1885).\footnote{In 1885 the Dominion government enacted the Chinese Immigration Act, introducing a $50 head tax on all Chinese immigrants entering Canada. British Columbia lobbied for a total exclusion of Chinese, calling their arrival an “Oriental invasion” (Nipp 1985:151). In 1900 the Dominion government raised the head tax to $100, and increased it again in 1904 to $500 (ibid). While the head tax certainly decreased the number of Chinese immigrants, its effects were not drastic enough for the settler state. In 1901, an estimated 17,043 Chinese lived in Canada, with 758 in Ontario. By 1921, the population increased to 36,924 and 5,394 in Canada and Ontario respectively. Throughout these immigration waves British Columbia persisted on their demand for full Chinese exclusion, and in 1923, the Dominion Government acquiesced, banning the immigration of Chinese immigrants (save for specific exceptions) (ibid:159).}

As the above quotes suggest, unlike those ‘lesser-white’ settlers, black residents were not considered members of the community. In his influential book, \textit{Black Reconstruction} W.E.B. Du Bois examined such dynamics and gave credence to an idea that has shaped much critical race scholarship since then. While writing on the role of black Americans during the reconstruction period after the Civil War, he points out that racial privilege/whiteness was extended to the white working class as compensation for its low class status, a move into whiteness through a demarcation and denigration of blackness (1935; see also Ignatiev 2008).

With this, however, I do not wish to suggest that whiteness/racial privilege has its ‘origins’ in class politics (or vice versa), but to point out that for the child-savers’ objects of concern, the route towards national belonging was accessible through the politics of race. As Stuart Hall (1980) reminds us, racism and racial formations are historically specific articulations whose meanings and manifestations shift over time depending on the socio-historic context. “Race”, as Hall so famously put it, is “the modality in which class is ‘lived’” (1980:441). In this context, it meant that, because of their racial background, even those of low social and economic
status and those non-Anglo-Saxon Europeans who would previously and in a different spatial context (such as back in ‘the Old Country’) be excluded (see, for example Ignatiev 2008 (1995), could be considered part of the community.

Including such ‘lesser-whites’ into the nation was not due to some (relatively) progressive or enlightened understanding, but done for pragmatic reasons. This was a time in which the settler colony needed to grow. Settlers needed to populate the land that was stolen in the face of Indigenous nations who resisted, refused, and opposed. This is a context in which ownership over land was continuously contested, in which the colonizers legitimacy was continuously at risk of being undermined, and a context in which white supremacist claims to grandeur, dominance and rule were challenged, both by the colonized and by the presence of racialized immigrants. Hence, the white race’s vulnerability was heightened. Needing to perpetuate the white settler colony in strength and number, meant opening the colony to those more suspect members of the empire. In 1907, Rudyard Kipling visited Canada with the following advice: “‘You want immigration, and the best way to keep the yellow man out is to get the white man in’”; “Pump in the immigrants from the Old country. Pump them in …”’ (in MacKay 2008:354). While immigration of non-white racial others was to be vehemently opposed, immigration of lesser-whites, such as Britons from impoverished or poor working-class backgrounds, immigrants from Scottish or Irish descent, and even lesser or borderline Europeans, was to be allowed. These immigrants had to be closely monitored and managed. As the National Council of Women explained, “Much pain is taken to introduce desirable animals and plants into the country and stringent laws prevent the importation and spread of dangerous weeds and parasites. Is the inspection and supervision of human immigrants less important” (Hallgrimsdottir et al. 2013:38-39)? For this reason, a range of initiatives to monitor and reform such settlers upon arrival were founded. For example, a variety of Settlement Houses (Jeffery
2002:63-68) were established, missionary societies and ‘stranger departments’ sprung up, and societies even set up in, both, Canada and Britain to monitor and facilitate the immigration/emigration of white settlers, such as the Emigrant Temporary Asylum (see Finkel 2006:50), the Columbia Emigration Society (CES), and the Female Middle-Class Emigration Society (FMCES)44 (see Perry 2001:149-150).

The child-saving movement similarly turned to this ‘class’ of people, the lesser-white members of the white community. It was an effort to discipline and reform those segments of the population who were considered suspect, yet a part of the nation nonetheless. Suspect white children had to grow into respectable and valuable citizens, but could not be trusted to do so without ‘proper’ guidance. Without intervention, these suspect populations were imagined to weaken and potentially undermine the racial order. It is possible to imagine that ‘degenerate’ poor whites would have been left to ‘care’ for themselves in ‘the old country’, yet they could not be ignored in the colony. During this fragile time of white nation-building, class and national boundaries of belonging had to be relaxed to bolster the settler colony. Those who were left to their own devices were the black residents of the slum, those who were considered entirely extraneous to the body politic, those who were not envisioned to possess the redemptive quality poor whites possessed. Expressed differently, while their inferior class status marked poor white children and their parents for reformation and disciplinary control, their shared whiteness nonetheless constituted a marker of belonging. These lesser-whites, while heavily controlled and

44 The FMCES, for example, which was founded in May 1862, was set up specifically to assist in the emigration of ‘respectable’ white women (Perry 2001:151). This was done in response to the assessment of the English Woman’s Journal (the mouthpiece of the British upper-class women’s organization known as the “Ladies of Langham Place”) that white emigration schemes too often send “the half-savage and wholly untaught and unskilled population of the wilds of Ireland and Scotland” to the colonies (in Perry 2001:151). The FMCE would help educate and morally regulate women destined to be sent to the white colonies (Perry 2001:151).
managed, were nonetheless considered part of the white settler nation. Hence, it was their homes that needed to be examined, it was their parents’ conduct that needed observing, and it was these children that needed saving. The common language of ‘race’ and ‘empire’ connected social reformers and their objects of concern along racial lines.

As Dr. Helen MacMurchy proclaimed, in Canada,

[t]he lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places, but our goodly heritage will go to the sons of the stranger, unless we put our hands and our minds earnest to the work of rearing an Imperial race. ... The future of our Province, the future of our country, the future of our Empire, the future of our race, is signified by the same sign and that sign is a child. ... The keys that unlock the problem of Infant Mortality, are the keys of National and Imperial hope and power. (in Kozak 2005:182; Arnup 1994:22)

Hence, Dr. Barnardo’s child emigrants – his ‘street Arabs’ or ‘Ishmaelites’ – who were sent from Britain abroad to populate and work in its colonies – and of which Canada was the primary recipient (Paisley 2004:241) – were bid good-bye with the following promise:

Yours is the happier fate, ye rising race -

Though for the instant parting’s pang be sore;

To laugh to scorn the impotence of space

And with Affection's links bind shore to shore. (in Swain 2009:205)

This suggests that racialized class discourses were, on the one hand, utilized to cement and normalize class distinctions by explaining poverty as inherent to and a result of the lowly and degenerate ‘nature’ of the poor, hence obfuscating the fact that inequality, oppression, and poverty were linked to capitalism and the bourgeoisie, while simultaneously drawing boundaries of national belonging to which these lowly whites nonetheless belonged, a form of belonging
based on their shared whiteness and imperialism. In the context of the Canadian settler colony, the lowliest, the degenerate, the suspect, those white settlers most in danger of ‘slipping’ towards savagery and blackness had to be shored up for the effective colonization of Turtle Island. Indeed, as Kelso put it, these children had “something to live up to” (emphasis added). For the sake of the nation, lesser-white settlers had to live up to the potential that their whiteness held. The improvement of lesser-whites meant that it had to be established that they were different from the bourgeoisie, but also different from the colonized. It involved a retention of class within the bounds of whiteness, a coming together via shared colonial violence and imperialism. Distinctions between settler citizens and native, between black and white, and those bodies that lie in between, needed to continuously be re-drawn and managed. Poor whites had to be included in the national project, and child-saving emerged as one method of doing so. How child-savers went about the task of locating the child population that was ‘slipping’ is the subject matter of the next chapter.

Chapter 3
“If Canada is to Rear an Imperial Race it will not be by Children Raised in Slums”

“THOSE OTHER CHILDREN.

I looked at the happy children
Who gathered around the hearth;
So blithe they were, no children
Could happier be on earth;

With their merry plays and their winsome ways,
And the sound of their silvery mirth.

Then I thought of ‘those other children,’
So wizened, and hard and bold,
Who huddle in slum and cellar;
And shiver with want and cold;
Not fresh as the dew, or the morning’s hue,
But haggard, and lean, and old.

But yet may they still, ‘those’ children,
Be taught to forget their pain;
And gathered in arms that love them,
Their laughter may come again;
And the stare of woe and the craft may go,
And the spirit be washed of stain…”¹

Introduction

Since the impetus behind child-saving was to produce a desirable citizenry for the white nation, the prime targets of this undertaking were the least desirable and most suspect members of the white community. Child neglect was not considered prevalent among the middle- and upper-class segments of the population. To the child-savers, it was the urban ‘degenerate’ poor who neglected their children, and it was these impoverished neglected children that could potentially turn into future criminals, slip into ‘savagery’ or ‘blackness’, and hence constitute a ‘menace’ to society. Such poor child-neglecting homes were said to be spatially concentrated in what came to be known as Toronto’s ‘slum districts’.

In what is to follow, I examine discourses that tied child-neglect to poverty, and subsequently follow the child-savers discursive and material moves as they ‘discovered’ Toronto’s slums at the turn of the twentieth century. I pay attention to how social/moral reformers imagined ‘the slum’, how they envisioned the homes of the poor, and finally, how they envisioned their role vis-à-vis their objects of concern: the children of the nation. As will become evident, these children, like the children we have heard about in Kelso’s story, and like the children the above poem draws our attention to, were imagined as forsaken and unloved, existing in a breeding ground of ‘crime, vice, and neglect’, surrounded only by the “teachings and examples of the drunkards, thieves, filthy personalities, gamblers and prostitutes (Lydston in Hastings 1911). Through such constructs, child-savers created a powerful reason for why they

needed to enter the homes of the poor, for as they proclaimed, the children of the nation were ‘calling out for rescue’.

**The Poor and Criminal Class**

The vast majority of recognized leaders within the social/moral reform movement came from the educated Anglo-Saxon middle-class: professionals and managers (Valverde 1993:29), merchants, lawyers, doctors, clergymen (Noble 1979:111-112), politicians, and capitalists-cum-philanthropists.\(^2\) Since the drive for child protection emerged from within the social/moral reform movement, which was profoundly white and bourgeois, the recognized leaders of the child-saving movement, including the board members of the Toronto Children’s Aid Society, similarly came from white, middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Not surprisingly, the problem of child neglect was not to be found among their own segments of the population. Indeed, there existed a consensus amongst early reformers that it was the homes of the poor that were the chief loci of child neglect. For example, as Rev. Thomas Geoghegan explained in his address at the first conference on child-saving in 1895, child neglect arises from a class of people who have what you may term no stake in the country. The man and woman who start out with the idea of making a home for themselves, and owning their own home and building up their family, as a rule control their children and have them home at night and will know exactly where they are. People who wander about from place

\(^2\) Robert Wiebe (1979) identifies this group as part of a newly emerging middle class within the broader bourgeois context. Existing alongside yet distinct from capitalists, this part of the bourgeoisie - precisely because it was newly emerging at that time - needed to make itself as much as it was concerned with reforming the nation (Valverde 1993:29). They learned and adopted both from English and, to some extent, American sources, yet simultaneously strove to define themselves by way of differentiation, e.g. as less corrupt, healthier - initially from Britain and later (from the twentieth century onwards) from the United States (Valverde 1993:16-17; Chen 2005).
to place, renting a house for the time being and sometimes not paying the 
rent, are, as a rule, people who neglect their children, hardly caring where 
they are of an evening. … A man who lives in a rented house and does 
not care whether he has a home or not of his own, is liable to be found 
around the corner, and his children on the street.³

Similarly speaking on the subject of neglected children in 1895, James Massie, Warden of the 
Central Prison of Ontario, explained this in the following way: “It stands in incontrovertible 
evidence that out from among the dwellings of the poor, the vicious, the drunkards” are “born a 
great many children who are unfortunate from the start. Not being born right, they come into the 
world with a load of evil influences within and surrounding them, and their start in the struggle 
of life is handicapped at its very commencement… Neglected, beaten, cast out, what is there of 
good, of beauty, of joy, in life to them?” These children have to live “[i]n terror of their lives 
from brutal parents” and “in surroundings of danger”.⁴

Child neglect was thus consistently associated with poverty-related issues. Crowded 
living conditions, sharing of bedrooms by several people, rooms being damp or cold, rooms 
lacking in furniture, parents having to share a bed with their children (taken as an affront to 
decency and morality), ‘uncleanliness’, children not being properly fed or clothed, children being 
found begging for food or money on the streets, children trying to earn money by, for example,


⁴ Ibid.
selling newspapers (a practice that had been made illegal), were all taken as visible manifestations of vice and neglect. The following case illustrates this:

Case 2232. Was that of two children, a boy and girl, aged two and a-half and four years respectively, who had been fed for months on such food(?) as could be picked out of garbage barrels in the lanes of the city. The father was not drunken, but lazy and shiftless. The mother was nearly blind, and apparently quite unfit to take care of the children. … the Magistrate decided to transfer them to the custody of the Society.\(^5\)

Such cases were not an exception, but the norm. Not poverty, unemployment, nor a lack of social assistance, but the parents were blamed for these conditions and charged with neglect. Hence, the solution was not to fight those economic structures that forced families to live impoverished lives. Rather, the child-savers’ discourses vilified poor parents, and mothers in particular (Swain 2009:202; see also Murdoch 2006). Even the simple fact that working-class mothers had to leave the home to work for pay was considered a form of neglect (Chen 2005:13) and considered a probable cause of youth delinquency. As explained in the 1909 Superintendent Report of Neglected and Dependent Children,

One of the main causes of delinquency in children is to be found in the larger number of poor mothers who are compelled to go out working leaving their children unprotected and untrained. This problem constantly presents itself. When children are allowed to grow up without a good

mother’s supervision their natural destiny is the reformatory, the prison, or, in the cause of girls, the brothel and haven.⁶

Not only were poor homes a subject of concern because of their seemingly rampant child neglect, but worse, (as already insinuated in the above quotation) neglected children were imagined to grow into criminals. Child neglect was feared to be a major cause of crime. According to Kelso, there were four causes of crime and pauperism, “- liquor, foul homes, indiscriminate almsgiving, and neglect of child-life.”⁷ Crime and the reproduction of future criminals was considered a serious matter by the social/moral reform movement. As the Children’s Aid Society reported in 1896, “[i]t is to be feared that juvenile offenders are more numerous, and their offences more grave, than is generally supposed.”⁸ Whether grounded in reality, the feeling was one of crime being on the rise, that its cause was child neglect, and if left unaddressed, this frightening trend could overwhelm the fragile nation.

It was the entanglement between child neglect and crime that was discussed during the first conference on child-saving work, held in Toronto, Ontario on October 18-19, 1895. The conference was organized by J.J. Kelso and chaired by Judge H.S. McDonald. In attendance were many influential men and women from across the province, representing a range of social/moral reform initiatives. These included judges, Crown attorneys, members of the


Dominion Senate as well as the Provincial Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, the Minister of Education, the chairman of the public school board, inspectors of, both, public and Industrial schools, teachers, superintendents of Industrial schools, chairs and representatives of other institutions for children, such as settlement homes (e.g. Dr. Bernardo Homes, Dr. Stephen’s Home for English Children, the Fairknowe Home for Scottish Children), orphan asylums, and Boys’ and Girls’ Homes. Present were also police departments and magistrates, representatives from a variety of prisons and reformatories, members of the Trades and Labor Council, the Knights of Labor, representatives from the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, and the National Council of Women, leaders of city missions, reverends, directors from several Humane Societies, and, of course, the newly formed Children’s Aid Societies. These men and women gathered “for the purpose of discussing in a practical way matters connected with the work of caring for the neglected and dependent children” of Ontario.9

While these men and women gathered to address the problem of child neglect, the majority of the conference was dedicated to discussing “the bearing that neglect has upon crime.”10 For, while these social/moral reformers came from a range of different backgrounds, they did largely agree that “the chief cause of crime to-day is parental neglect.”11 This seemingly causal relationship between child neglect and crime was not just ‘mere opinion’ but presented as ‘scientific truth’. Credence to this claim was based on scientific studies undertaken in Canada, the United States, and Europe (most notably, Great Britain and France), and expert advice on this


10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.
matter was drawn upon from well-respected penologist and criminologists. For example, Chief Detective Wm. Stark, after referencing the French School of Criminology’s findings that “crime arises out of social conditions”, states,

The deplorable lack of parental control over children is, in my judgement, the first and greatest cause of crime. This view is borne out by the Report of the Commissioners [the Prison Reform Commission in 1891], in which they say: ‘On the most thoughtful consideration of this subject and careful analysis of the evidence taken in connection with that branch of the enquiry, the Commissioners are led to the conclusion that the chief causes of crime in the community are the want of proper parental control, the lack of good home training and the baneful influence of bad homes, largely due to the culpable neglect and indifference of parents, and the evil effects of drunkenness.’

D.W. Dumble, Police Magistrate of Peterborough, seconds these findings: “So long as there are mothers who cannot control themselves and fathers who have no control over their families, and who set a bad example, there will be an education of a sort that will result in the bringing up of bad boys and bad girls…”, and furthermore, “As long as there are such parents as that we will have bad children, and my experience of years as a police magistrate is that juvenile offenders, as a rule, come from badly-regulated homes.”


13 Ibid.
Addressing the problem of crime then meant that social/moral reformers needed to do something about its source: the “badly-regulated homes” and their neglected offspring/future criminals. James Massie puts it in the following way, “When the question was asked [of] a leading physician in the South, ‘What do you consider the best remedy for yellow fever?’ his reply was, ‘The only sure remedy is to prevent it altogether.’” In a similar manner, Neglected youth has a very close bearing upon the number of criminals constantly evolving in our city and province, and the only remedy is to begin with the child. Prevent the child being neglected, and instead of its developing into a criminal, to fill up or swell the ranks of the army of criminals in constant march to the reformatory, the prison and the penitentiary, it shall grow up into a good citizen, a respected member of society. Providing another analogy, he continues, In the words of Dr. Reeve, ‘We have to look for some remedy that will not produce criminals faster than we can dispose of them. No sewer can be cleansed by standing at the outlet and trying to purify the sewage, so long as the inlet is supplied with a constantly increasing quantity. No more can crime be reduced by punishing or trying to reform criminals, so

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15 Ibid.
long as conditions exist that procreate criminals faster than the law can
arrest, and either punish or reform them.'\textsuperscript{16}

Such views remained dominant amongst early child-savers throughout this period. In
1910, for example, Kelso writes that “[t]hose who are intelligently studying the problem of
CRIME AND ITS SUPPRESSION hold strongly that a more thorough system of caring for
neglected children and young offenders is the true solution” for “only by cutting off the supply
can the habitual criminal be eliminated. A youth, growing up in a vicious home or without proper
parental control, is almost certain to be a law-breaker at twelve” (emphasis in original).\textsuperscript{17}

Children’s Aid Societies were envisioned as a solution to this problem. In Massie’s
words: Since “it is recognized by all, however they may differ in their views as to the remedy,
that there is no more prolific source from which the criminals are produced than the children who
are born wrong and neglected in the formative period of their lives”, and therefore, he argued,
“the true remedy for the preventure of their developing into criminals is just to carry into full
effect the work of child-saving as now organized in this Province.”\textsuperscript{18} Hence the earliest motto of

\textsuperscript{16} City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s
Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
1894. Box 146483, Folio 1.

\textsuperscript{17} City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s
Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
15. Date 1909. Box 146484, Folio 3.

\textsuperscript{18} City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s
Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
1894. Box 146483, Folio 1.
the Children’s Aid Society being what it was: “It is wiser and less expensive to save children than to punish criminals.”

Given these truisms, it is not surprising then that the histories of the child welfare system and the introduction of a judicial system for ‘juvenile offenders’ in Canada are fundamentally intertwined (see Department of Justice of Canada 2004); they shared philosophies, strategies, personnel, and even facilities. Chen explains this dynamic well by stating that these two systems “served each other as fields of observation for the invention of knowledge [and] supplied each other with reasons for existence” (2005:30). The Toronto Children’s Aid Society, therefore, worked closely with the Toronto Juvenile Court, which for some time were housed in the same building. When the Toronto CAS opened its first shelter in 1892, the society operated the shelter in conjunction with a detention centre in the basement of the same building for children who had committed a crime or were termed to be ‘incorrigible’ rather than neglected (Lee 2005:63). It should be noted, that this relationship between carceral control and child welfare, while modified over time, is also one that continues into the present (see, for example, Landertinger 2015; Garland 1985; Monture 1995; Brown and Bloom 2009).

Urban Poverty

Having concluded that the ‘dwellings’ of the urban poor were the chief loci of child neglect, and that something needed to be done about such “badly-regulated homes”, child-savers began to search for such spaces of degeneracy. Here, the social and spatial construct of ‘the slum’ as a

concentrated manifestation of ‘immorality, crime and vice’ emerges as a significant site of concern. Imagined as concentrated breeding grounds of neglected children, and hence, a future “army of criminals” these spaces were a major source of anxiety for ‘respectable’ bourgeois society. These spaces would have to be explored, studied, and their residents – or the “sewage” in the words of Dr. Reeve – reformed according to values and characteristics deemed appropriate for the settler colony. As Kelso put it in 1894, “By ensuring a happier and healthier home life for the children of the poor it will mean much waste material converted into a valuable product, and, above all, a large diminution in the vicious and criminal class now being maintained at tremendous cost in our public institutions.”

Industrialization, immigration waves, and urban growth had considerably altered the city of Toronto, both, in size and make-up. In 1881, the census of Toronto counted 86,415 residents (excluding the adjacent suburbs). In 1921, that number had risen to 521,893. With industrialization came an emerging and expanding middle class and the rise of prominence of some families (such as the Eatons, Gooderhams, and Masseys) to the status of commercial-industrial elites. Not surprisingly, industrialization and urban growth also meant a disproportionate growth of urban poverty (Valverde 1993:131-132). With the influx of poor settlers and hence cheap/exploitable labour, wages for male workers declined, while a shortage of affordable housing reached crisis dimensions (Piva 1971 in Valverde 1993:132; Weaver 1991:468). This was the case to such an extent that widespread poverty altered the social


landscape of Toronto, and residential segregation became deeply entrenched in the spatial make-up of the city. As Noble argues, “the poor” lived apart from and unconnected to ‘respectable’ society in a way unprecedented in the city’s history” (1979:113).

A number of areas existed in Toronto that were classified as ‘slums’. In 1911, the Department of Health under Medical Health Officer Dr. Charles Hastings, published a far-reaching ‘scientific’ study of slum conditions in the city. This study recorded six such concentrated areas, the most prominent of which were the ‘Eastern Avenue District’, the ‘City Hall District’ (also known as ‘The Ward’), and the ‘Niagara Street District’. Hasting’s slum report provides us with some information on the racial make-up of these districts. In ‘the Ward’, out of 2,051 families, 1,451 belonged to a nationality other than Canadian or British. Out of 851 families in the ‘Eastern Avenue District’, 110 families were of non-British or non-Canadian

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22 For this study, a total of 4,696 houses were investigated, in addition to a select number of houses outside of the six ‘slum’ areas. While the total number of families and individuals living inside those houses is not stated, such numbers are available for three out of the six districts. The study of ‘The Ward’, the ‘Eastern Avenue District’, and the ‘Niagara Street District’ involved an investigation of 3,711 families or 18,790 persons in 3215 houses. This leaves the inhabitants of 1484 homes in the remaining three districts to be added to this count, suggesting a rather high number of investigated families and individuals for this time period. It should also be noted that the number of houses was derived by counting those that were ‘visited’ in preparation for the slum report. Presumably not every house was visited and hence counted.


24 1) The Eastern Avenue District (from the Don river to Parliament Street, and from Queen Street to the Bay), 2) The Central or City Hall District, also known as St. John’s Ward, 3) The Niagara Street District (from Bathurst to Shaw Street, and from Queen Street to the Bay) 4) an area from Parliament Street to the Don, and from Queen Street to Wilton Avenue, 5) an area from Bathurst to Bellwoods Avenue, and from Queen Street to Arthur Street, 6) and, finally, an area from Spadina Avenue to Bathurst Street and from Front Street to King Street.

25 The breakdown is as follows: 1207 Hebrew families (for whom no nationality is reported and religion serves as a racial marker), 180 Italian families, 32 Polish families, 25 German families, 9 Chinese families, 8 Colored families (for whom no nationality is provided either), 7 French families, 3 Armenian families, 2 Macedonian families, 1 Swedish family, 1 Greek family, 1 Assyrian family.
backgrounds, and in the ‘Niagara Street District’, Hastings records 809 families of which 88 were said to be foreign. Most of these non-British settlers were of Italian, German, French, Polish, Macedonian, Russian, or Scandinavian backgrounds. A large number of “Hebrew” families was recorded without information on their nation of origin (since religious affiliation evidently served as their primary ethnic/racial marker). And a total of 12 “Colored” families were recorded in Toronto’s slums. For these families, no nationality is provided either, since such racial classification needed no further elaboration. 12 Chinese families were recorded as well.

While Hasting identifies six distinct districts, more commonly in the parlance of Torontonians at the time (see Toronto Star Weekly 1911), the slums were grouped into the ‘Eastern Slums’ (roughly, from Parliament Street, eastward on Queen Street East, and along the Don River) and ‘The Ward’ (St. John’s Ward) – Toronto’s ‘central slum’ (bound by College Street, University Avenue, Queen Street, and Yonge Street). There also existed a number of shacktowns in Toronto, mostly located on the outskirts of the city. In 1911, these were said to house at least 30,000 people (Toronto Star Weekly 1911). Shacktowns consisted of small houses that were usually self-built by members of the working-class who managed to buy one of the small, in comparison inexpensive, plots of land outside the city limits. These plots were more

26 For this district the following families are listed: 42 Macedonian families, 20 French families, 24 Hebrew families, 6 German families, 6 Russian families, 4 Colored families, 3 Chinese families, 2 Italian families, 2 Polish families, 1 Greek family.

27 This number is made up of 38 Polish families, 15 Hebrew families, 11 Swedish families, 10 Russian families, 4 German families, 5 Italian families, 4 Macedonian families, 1 French family.

affordable, for they were ‘unserviced’, not connected to the city’s sewage or transit system, and generally in poor condition. Shacktowns, however, were less of an immediate concern than the slums in the East-end and the city centre. Not only were shacktowns out of sight, but many of its inhabitants owned the shacks they lived in. While bourgeois society scoffed at the inhabitants and the miserable condition many lived in, “pathetic” as the Toronto Star called them, they were nonetheless ‘property owners’, and hence considered more ambitious; at least they are “making headway towards a competence”, as opposed to those city “slum-dwellers” who seemed to be “content to live in filth” (Toronto Star Weekly 1911), or so it was imagined. Hence, the more immediate problems were said to exist in the ‘Eastern Slums’ and particularly in ‘the Ward’. And, indeed, many of the homes that appear in the CAS complaint books were located within these ‘slum areas’.

It needs reiterating that while many nationalities and racial groups were present in the slum districts, the homes that were investigated by the CAS were those that were home to “Canadian” children (i.e. children born to first or second generation British settlers) or who were more recent immigrants from the British Isles (with one or two parents recorded as ‘English’ or ‘Scottish’ or to a lesser degree ‘Irish’). Indeed, if one were to rely on the records of the Children’s Aid Society to gain insight into the ethnic and racial make-up of Toronto’s slums, one would leave with the impression that the poor enclaves of Toronto were made up of ‘Canadians’, immigrants from the British Isles, and to a far lesser extent ‘other’ (or lesser-white) Europeans settlers, such as Germans and Austrian Jews. In other words, while the child-savers walked these streets, the black homes seem to have been avoided, as were Chinese homes, and homes from the large Macedonian community in the Eastern Slum also do not appear in the records.
“Slums. The Menace of Town and City Life”\(^{29}\)

The slum was imagined as the concentration of all that was wrong with the city, or as S.W. Dean, Superintendent of the Methodist Union of Toronto, put it: “The slum is the city at its worst” (1974 (1914):156). As Valverde (1993:131-132) has argued, ‘the slum’ was primarily conceptualized as a moral and public health problem (rather than understood as by-product of capitalism). Urban poverty itself was not the issue of concern, but the \textit{effects} urban poverty could have on the city, ‘respectable’ society, and the nation at large – a contamination of ‘the public’ through the spread of disease and immorality. Indeed, “[S]lums are exceedingly dangerous to the health and morals of a city,”\(^{30}\) Kelso warns.

Much social/moral evil was imagined to lurk, hidden from view, in the ‘darkness’ of the degenerate space of the slum. Evil deeds like prostitution, drunkenness, crime, gambling, and of course, child neglect, were said to exist there (Valverde 1993:134). Furthermore, communicable diseases, especially tuberculosis, could originate and – worse \textit{spread} – due to the “ignorance, poverty, indifference, and carelessness” (Hastings 1974 (1917): 133) of the slum-dwellers. Similarly, conflating health and morality, Kelso describes the situation in the following words: “Bad housing conditions inevitably tend to drunkenness in parents; to delinquency in children; to disorderly conduct; to wife and family desertion by men who get tired of it all; to immorality in

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the growing generation owing to the lack of privacy and the consequent loss of modesty; to the spread of typhoid fever, diphtheria, scarlet fever, and the ravages of the great white plague.\textsuperscript{31}

Social/moral reformers wavered between blaming the existence of the slum on economic structures or, more often, on the poor and their imagined ‘lowly’ and ‘degenerate’ characters. For example, in 1909, Kelso explains that “Slums result from three causes”, namely “- lack of regulation and supervision on part of the city, the greed of land-owners, and the necessities of the poor.” And yet, in the very next sentence, he provides the following definition: “Webster’s Dictionary says that the word ‘slum’ is supposed to be a contraction of the word ‘asylum,’ and is ‘a back street of a city, especially one filled with a poor, dirty, and vicious population.’”\textsuperscript{32}

Hastings, too, after discussing the inadequate housing situation the urban poor were forced to live in (he reminds the reader, for example, that “slum dwellers [are] not there from choice”), provides us with the following observations. The “social aspect of the housing problem”, as he put it, can be explained as follows. Citing Lydston, he describes slums as “social cesspools” that “breed immorality, crime and vice.”\textsuperscript{33} In these cesspools, he explains, “haunts of depravity and disease are found in their highest development.”\textsuperscript{34} As far as its inhabitants are concerned,


\textsuperscript{34} Ibid.
“Criminals and moral lepers are born in the atmosphere of physical and moral rottenness pervading the slums of large cities.” 35 This is where the city’s and the nation’s problems originate, he held, for “[h]ere is the very fountain head of the river of vice and crime” producing “an endless stream of thieves, murderers, prostitutes, lunatics, epileptics and hospital patients.” 36

It was this dual threat, regarding the moral and sanitary conditions of society, that was the chief concern of the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie, eliciting feelings from disgust to sheer terror. These threats could not be ignored or dismissed, for ‘slums’, as spatialized pockets of concentrated poverty/evil, existed in close proximity to bourgeois society. For one, city slums were located within the city limits, surrounded by respectable neighbourhoods, homes, schools, and businesses. This was particularly the case for ‘The Ward’ – being Toronto’s most densely populated 37 and ‘Central Slum’ – that existed not only in plain view, but quite literally in the middle of ‘respectable’ bourgeois society.

The slum and its inhabitants, therefore, were imagined as the dangerous underbelly of respectable bourgeois society, existing not apart, but in their midst – or as Hastings suggested, “within their gates” (Veiller in Hastings 1911; emphasis added). 38 Constructing ‘slum-dwellers’ as internal threats to the body politic (Foucault 2003 “Society must be defended”; 216), Hastings (1974 (1917): 132) provides the following analogy:

36 Ibid.
37 ‘The Ward’ covered an area of 142 acres with a population of 11,645, or 82 people to the acre (in Ibid).
38 Ibid.
Sir T. Clifford Allbutt, in a recent address, gave the following very apt simile: ‘If any part of the human body is cut off from or lies outside the due irrigation of the nutritive fluids of the body, that area becomes not only useless to the body, but prone to engender a putridity which will infect even the soundest part of the system.’ Thus will the contamination of any one class of the people infect the rest of the social body.

Not only were slums considered useless to the body politic, but, worse, they were imagined to endanger and corrupt the rest of society. Disease, Hastings warns, does not respect the boundaries of class: While the “diseases that are propagated under slum conditions” “thrive most among the poor”, they “do not unfrequently affect the rich” (Hastings 1974 (1917): 132). Similar assessments were made by local health officers in other cities, for example, in Montreal (see Copp 1974) and Port Arthur (Weaver 1991). Port Arthur’s health officer even warned upper-class society of diseases literally being brought into their midst, since from among the poor “come a large proportion of the servant girls, who may contract and pass the fever along into the homes where they work” (in Weaver 1991:468). In Toronto, Hastings made a similar observation on the urban scale. Not only were disease and immorality imagined to seep out of the slum, but like the servant girl who brings disease into the homes of the rich, some suspicious dwelling already began to appear in ‘respectable’ neighbourhoods: “even in Rosedale and College Heights there are apartment houses having one or more dark rooms with no outside ventilation” Hastings warns.39

To those who would doubt the immediacy and magnitude of this problem, Hastings had the following to say: “Citizens who have claimed in the past that we have no slums can find no further justification for living in a fool’s paradise.” Thinking otherwise, is nothing but “neglect and ignorance” and a “failure of its citizens to recognize evil tendencies as they develop – [a] dangerous ignorance on the part of the citizens and public officials of what is going on within their gates” (Veiller in Hastings 1911). Not only can such spaces not be ignored, but “[t]he city slum, with all that that term involves, is a greater social danger than the average citizen ever dreams of” (Hastings 1974 (1917):132).

This danger, he warns, does not only affect the city and the residents of Toronto, but the nation at large. To explain the magnitude of the danger, Hastings likens the situation to Great Britain and references the difficulty of British authorities in recruiting healthy and fit men to fight in the Boer War – which at this time was an example that conjured anxieties over racial degeneration and the decline over imperial grandeur (see Devereux 1999:176; Paisley 2004:241; Bacchi 1983:116; Davin 1978:11). Attributing the loss of the Boer War to the existence of poverty in Great Britain and the “improper feeding, improper housing in overcrowded badly ventilated, unsanitary homes”, he urges to learn the hard lessons from the Old Country and address urban poverty, lest we similarly wake up to such an “impending national calamity.”

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The Children are Calling out for Rescue

Having constructed ‘the slum’ as “the fountain head” of crime and immorality, or as the “gardens of vice” as Hastings (1911)\textsuperscript{42} similarly called them, it is not surprising that social/moral reformers considered the slum to be the worst environment in which to raise the children of the nation. While white bourgeois families were imagined as “giving birth to happy, clean, and obedient children” thanks to “a responsible breadwinner father and a virtuous mother”, ‘urban slums’ imagined as the polar opposite of a virtuous bourgeois environment, were seen as breeding grounds for “social and physical monsters” (Valverde 1993:139).

In the child-savers’ own words, children in such spaces are born to “drunken and degraded parents”, “growing up in a hot-bed of vice”, “hearing nothing but profanity and obscenity”, while “learning nothing of the difference between right and wrong” (Kelso 1894:214). Knowing nothing but “depravity, filth, vice, poverty, and despair” (Dean 1974 (1914):161), these children are “[g]rowing up untrained, except in evil and sharp cunning ways” (Kelso 1894:214). Such a trajectory was almost inevitable, it was held, for “[i]f one lives on a nice street it is impossible to resist the refining influence of association, but in these back alleys and vile, evil smelling rear hovels, how could one avoid being low and sordid and cynically indifferent to the rules of cleanliness and courtesy?”\textsuperscript{43} Seemingly, one could not, it was argued. As a matter of ‘fact’, “[a] child born and reared amid such surroundings has about the same


chance of escaping a life of shame or crime as an un-vaccinated baby confined in a pest-house would have of escaping small-pox” (Lydston in Hastings 1911).44

It was these ‘social and physical monsters’ as Valverde documents others describing them, who needed to be saved from ‘slipping’ into blackness. Degeneracy, David Goldberg (1993) explains, quoting Herbert Spencer, rests on the key notion that “physical, mental, and social defects ‘arrest the increase of the best, … deteriorate their constitutions, and … pull them down towards the level of the worst’” (200). That ‘level of the worst’ was marked by race. That level is the threshold degenerate whites must not fall below, this is where those who were in danger of ‘slipping’ into blackness (Roberts 1994) and savagery had to be pulled back.

Evidently, something had to be done. Without intervention, these children were considered lost to the project of settler colonial nation-building, and worse, they would deteriorate the white race, threatening the very project of colonization itself. As Kelso observed, “the great majority of children who are compelled to live and breathe daily the physical and moral atmosphere of the slums must inevitably be lacking in all that makes for good citizenship, either in physique or character.”45 Children growing up in such “unwholesome conditions” simply cannot “develop the higher type of civilization of which we so fondly dream, and which many emigrants come to our shores hoping to find.”46 Or as an Anglican clergyman speaking at the Canadian Public


46 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
Health Association meeting in 1912 put it matter-of-factly: “if Canada is to rear an imperial race it will not be by children raised in slums” (in Valverde 1993:138).

Not everything was doom and gloom, however. As Goldberg (1993) explains, “[i]f degeneration is the dark, regressive side of progress, then ‘regeneration’ is the reformation – the spiritual and physical renewal – but only of those by nature fit for it” (201). This ‘natural fitness’ was to be found in the reformers and children’s shared imperial history and colonial present. As Swain (2009) put it in quoting Catherine Hall, “the ‘common language of race’ assumed that Anglo-Saxons were marked out by their blood and racial instincts ‘as a people who would conquer and propagate, in the name of their superior civilization’…The child rescue literature consistently argued that the outcast child’s claim to salvation lay in this shared heritage” (Swain 2009:205). The children’s shared whiteness meant that these monsters could be salvaged.

Hence, Kelso could assure his contemporaries that “Potentialities of good citizenship exist in the great majority of children of the slums, including the offspring of actual criminals” (emphasis added). Yet, this was the time and space in which social/moral reformers had to intervene – not only to rescue these children from moral and physical “contamination”, but to rescue the nation from the potential threat these children might pose in the future. As the child-savers’ put it, the “[s]tunted,’ ‘wicked,’ ‘worthless,’ and ‘scorned’” are “‘call[ing] out for rescue’” (in Swain 2009:204).


Ibid.
It was believed that in order to rescue these children, child-savers needed to enter their homes and expose the degenerate conduct of lesser-white parents. There was a great desire to explore the slum-dwellings and expose the immoral activities that were attributed to its inhabitants. Similar to Dean (1974 (1914)) who referred to slums as “lurking”, “hiding”, or “haunt[ing]” spaces, Kelso called them the “unexplored regions” that “are to the great majority of the people unknown.”

Making visible that which was unknown was a prime concern to the child-savers. For, as Kelso observed, “[m]isery and squalor, and a tendency toward the degeneration of human character, are to be found mostly in cellars, in garrets and out of the way places, hiding away from the light.” He explained the purpose of their task by drawing on an analogy by Oliver Wendell Holmes of “a stone half-buried in the ground”: “Remove it from its place and you immediately expose to view a nest of slimy and creepy things that have made their homes there. But let the sunlight in and they soon disappear.” Similarly, Kelso asks: “Is not this equally true of the slums?” Imagine, he furthermore proposes, “a drastic measure passed


52 Ibid.
requiring every house in which human beings dwell to front on a forty or sixty-foot street, or else be pulled down, how long would drunkenness, vice and ignorance exist?”

With this came an unapologetic interventionism into people’s lives and their most intimate of spaces. The social/moral reformers’ desire to investigate, to expose, and to know goes beyond mere curiosity and voyeurism. Their move towards interventionism speaks to their desire to manage, to control, and most importantly, to govern. It was a move that was required for their citizenship project, a trajectory without which colonial governmentality cannot properly function. “The nationalist dream is the dream of transparency” writes Grewal (1996:26; see also Foucault 1980:152). Achieving transparency, visibility, and clarity are prerequisites for discipline, reform, and order – themselves preconditions for effective governance and nationhood. “[T]ransparency implies an ability to govern through knowledge rather than through domination” (Grewal 1996:50), it exemplifies the political rationality of governmentality, the conduct of conduct, as opposed to the right of ‘the sword’ (Foucault 2003 “Society must be defended”: 240). “The politics of transparency and opacity, of knowledge and darkness” (Grewal 1996:28), as mobilized by the Canadian social/moral reform movement indicate a need to establish an orderly, socially and morally ‘healthy’, white settler nation on stolen land. In the process of building the Canadian settler colony, knowing about the conduct of lesser-white


54 In “The Eye of Power”, Foucault (1980) describes the historicity of this desire for transparency as follows: “A fear haunted the latter half of the eighteenth century: the fear of darkened spaces, the pall of gloom which prevents the full visibility of things, men and truths. It sought to break up the patches of darkness that blocked the light, eliminate the shadowy areas of society, demolish the unlit chambers where arbitrary political acts, monarchical epidemics and the illusions of ignorance were fomented. The new political and moral order could not be established until these places were eradicated” (153).
members was a crucial step for effective colonial governance and imperial subject formation. In the next chapter, we follow the moves of the CAS as they begin to ‘remove the stone’ and enter the homes of lesser-white settlers.
Chapter 4
“Home-Restoration” and Foster Care: Solutions for the Neglected Settler Child

“All politics converge in the home, the unit of the nation.” – J.J. Kelso (1909)¹

“Give me the child and the State shall have the man.”²

Introduction

I previously discussed the emergence of the problem of the ‘neglected settler child’. I made the argument that these children were considered a potential threat to the body politic if left to their own devices. Thus, intervention on part of child-savers was deemed necessary – not only for the sake of the children, but more importantly, for the sake of the white settler nation. The subject matter of this chapter explores the two main solutions early child-savers pursued to address the problem of child neglect: the work of “home-restoration” and “foster care”. I engage a similar line of inquiry as in the previous chapters and ask what these ‘solutions’ tell us about white subject formation and imperial governance at the turn of the twentieth century.

Once child-savers entered the spatial construct of the slum, their task was to assess the situation by examining the poor and their surroundings, and make a decision concerning the


future of the child in question. The solution was to either ‘restore’ the dwellings of the poor and reform their inhabitants, or remove the children from such imagined places of neglect and improper socialization. If it was deemed necessary that a child be removed, a structure needed to be in place to care for the child and do the work the parents were accused of failing. Central to the notion of child-saving was the idea that the child needed to be ‘saved’ from moral corruption, and that child-saving/reformation was considered more effective if done in a more intimate setting, modelled after the ‘good’ white bourgeois family, rather than large impersonal institutional settings. This led to the emergence of the foster home system, a network of surrogate families set up to raise the nation’s children according to values deemed appropriate and necessary to the white settler colony.

I begin by describing how the Children’s Aid Society went about the task of investigating allegations – or as they called it “complaints” – regarding child abuse and neglect. I then follow the child-savers’ moves into the homes of lesser-white settlers, pay attention to what they ‘found’, how they assessed the homes and their inhabitants, and what solutions were drawn upon to mitigate the situation. Much of this analysis relies on the Children’s Aid Society’s “complaint books” (the Society’s case records) for the years 1892-1911.3 Example cases4 from these complaint books are drawn upon to provide insight into how child-savers categorized the homes, families, and children they encountered and the sort of allegations that were considered worthy of investigation. In this context, I discuss the disciplinary and regulatory function of emerging social work practice.


4 In providing these examples, I refer to the original case number for complaints/abuse allegations. Any identifying information (such as names and home addresses) have been removed.
My central argument is two-fold. I hold that an analysis of the child-savers’ solutions provides us with a glimpse into a racial episteme in which the assessment of proper conduct/white bourgeois civility was measured according to how people conducted themselves in private, in their homes, behind closed doors. At the heart of these solutions was a strict policing of boundaries of what was considered acceptable for members of the settler society. These boundaries were boundaries of national belonging and racial membership, boundaries based on people’s performance and adherence to criteria of bourgeois whiteness, boundaries that were based on an assessment of the activities of the everyday. ‘Proper’ parenting and domestic skills, or weaning and cleaning, emerge as microsites in which bourgeois whiteness was to be reproduced. If parents fell short of this idea(l), their children had to be raised by other members of the white community. Secondly, child-saving-turned-social-work emerged as a core method with which those boundaries could be affirmed. Social work rose to prominence as one of the professions that had the ability to intervene in and manage these microsites of social (re)production. As such, social work had (and still has) a prominent role to play in the broader aim of molding the Canadian settler nation along white heteropatriarchal values.

 Surveillance and the Structure of Complaint-Investigations

 Soon after the ‘discovery’ of ‘the slum’ and all its associated evils, child-savers began to enter these spaces of ‘crime, vice, and neglect’. They began with the practice of ‘door-to-door visiting’, ‘ward-visiting’, or ‘home-visiting’ as it was called. In 1894, when the Toronto

\footnote{My approach in analyzing these complaint books and the Children’s Aid Society’s modes of engagement with impoverished white settlers – how I ‘read’ them and made sense of them – was influenced by the writings of Ann Laura Stoler (in particular, \textit{Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power} (2002), \textit{Race and the Education of Desire} (1995), and \textit{Along the Archival Grain} (2010)). While Stoler’s work is only marginally referenced here, I want to acknowledge that it has profoundly shaped my thinking, argumentation, and the approach with which I came to write the present chapter and the next.}
Children’s Aid Society began to enter the homes of the poor, a central position was established to attend to this type of work. This position had the ominous title of ‘the Agent’. The first individual who held this position was John Graham. It was the Agent’s job to conduct in-home visits and to investigate ‘complaints’ regarding alleged child abuse or neglect. At this time, the Agent was one of two permanent staff members at the CAS. The other permanent staff position was that of the Children’s Aid Society’s Secretary, which was held by Stuart Coleman. The Secretary was tasked with the work of keeping detailed case records regarding the children and families that came under the scrutiny of the CAS.

The workload of the Agent consisted of two broad areas. First, the Agent had to attend to those children who were brought before the Children’s Court. This usually meant investigating the child’s home situation to aid the Magistrate in determining what sentence should be given, whether, for example, the child should be admitted to the CAS Shelter ‘for discipline’, whether the child would fare well returning to the home after the sentencing, or whether the home environment was likely the reason for why the child had committed a crime and hence alternative placements had to be found (such as an Industrial School). The Children’s Aid Society’s fifth annual report (1896), describes this part of the Agent’s work as follows.

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6 It is worth mentioning that the low number in permanent staff is less reflective of the size and reach of the Toronto Children’s Aid Society, but the prevalent attitudes at the time that favoured volunteers over paid officials (see Rutman 1987:72; Noble1979:123-124). For the first thirty years, the Toronto Children’s Aid Society was largely run on a volunteer basis with few permanent staff members. And despite its reliance on volunteer labour, the CAS faced constant criticism that it employed paid staff at all (McCullagh 2002:55).

7 In 1906, the role of the secretary was merged with the position of inspector and superintendent of the CAS shelter. William Duncan assumed this position and his wife (whose name had not been recorded) was employed as the matron of the shelter. Several nurses and housekeeping staff assisted her in this task (McCullagh 2002).
The Agent’s work is of a kind which cannot be well confined to definite hours. In the morning on his way to the office there is generally a call or two to make in regard to some boy or girl, … [and] something of the same kind after supper. After his call at the office, the Police Court, as a rule, claims his attention. Here he has to spend a great deal of time, as almost every day finds one, and more often several, children brought before the Court on some charge. He is essentially the children’s man, and usually after the case is heard and before sentence is given, the young offender is remanded for a few days or a week, in order to give time to the Agent to find out all about him and be able to bring before the Court such information as will enable the Magistrate to see what is best for his future.8

The other side of the Agent’s work was to attend to matters of child-saving outside of the Children’s Court. This part of the work consisted of, first, receiving “complaints” (i.e. allegations) of alleged cruelty towards or neglect of children and, secondly, investigating these complaints through in-home visits. To this end, the CAS established and relied on an intricate web of surveillance, comprised of ‘the public’, the police, and other reform organizations.

Many investigations were set in motion due to complaints received by ‘the public’. The CAS would receive such complaints by telephone, by letter, and most often through verbal statements made at the CAS office. Many of these complaints would be submitted anonymously. As such, neighbourhood surveillance and the utilization of community members as informants,

came to be a fundamental part of how child-saving work began to be carried out. Not only were child-saving investigations initiated after receiving complaints from members of the community, but neighbours were also drawn upon to build a case against the parents. For this purpose, the CAS would call on homes in the vicinity of the family under investigation to receive additional information regarding the conduct of the parents and children. For example, after receiving a complaint that a family was “drinking and keeping an immoral house”, the CAS conducted an in-home visit. During this visit, it was found that the “Mother is living with man – [name withheld] – who is not her husband. Both drink a lot and a number of disreputable men and women visit the house, especially on Sundays” (emphasis in original). The visitor then “went to seven houses for evidence. All said they knew what was going on but were afraid to appear against the woman as they were afraid of her.” Furthermore, the CAS also engaged the public’s assistance in monitoring families after such in-home visits were conducted. For example, in case 6735, neighbours were instructed to “keep an eye on them and report if matters do not improve”. Even in cases where complaints were not substantiated, the public was drawn upon to continue to monitor the situation. For example, case 6864 speaks of an anonymous complaint regarding a child that was said to be ill-treated. The CAS recorded that the “Inspector investigated but could get no evidence as to the ill treatment of the boy” and that “[n]eighbours will let the society know if there is anything to complain of in future.”

10 Ibid.
The CAS took allegations from the public seriously, and so sometimes the CAS was also strategically used by individuals of the community to advance their own interests under the guise of child neglect. For example, case 15020 tells of a well-to-do family who filed a complaint regarding one of their female servants, asking the CAS to intervene on their behalf: “Mrs. [name withheld] phoned saying [name withheld] their servant girl was threatening to run away, and desires that one of our men come up and give the girl a talking to, and discourage any such action. Visitor called and warned the girl.” 13 In another case, a husband filed a complaint regarding his wife, similarly using the CAS as leverage against her: “father accuses wife of immoral conduct” (Case 6589). 14 At this time, the accusation of ‘immoral conduct’ was a serious matter. It could lead to the mother losing her children to the CAS if the allegation was substantiated. The CAS intervened and the wife was asked to better her conduct. Another such case came from an anonymous caller, who complained that a “Mother left husband and is living with another man. Complainant wants her to leave this man” (Case 6583). 15 In none of these complaints the mistreatment or neglect of children was the primary concern. Through their involvement in such cases, the CAS went beyond their proclaimed mandate to save children. This involvement is indicative of the Society’s broader role as a reformatory and disciplinary institution, a role seemingly understood by the public as their strategic use of the CAS apparatus exemplifies.


15 Ibid.
Alongside their reliance on the public, the CAS would receive complaints from other social/moral reformers (such as Women’s organizations and missionary societies), some from Toronto’s Department of Morality, and many from officials employed by the state, such as teachers, truant officers, and police officers. Since the Children’s Court and the CAS emerged side-by-side, the police in particular were a helpful ally in the child-savers’ endeavours. Not only were many complaints brought to the CAS by the police, but the CAS also routinely relied on the assistance of the police in monitoring the conduct of parents and children that had come to their attention. For example, after conducting an in-home visit for case 1854, “Police [were] instructed to keep an eye on house and report any charge to society.”  

The CAS also collaborated with other institutions for children, such as maternity homes, the Hospital for Sick Children, various Industrial Schools, orphanages, Boys and Girls Homes, the Working Boys Home, the Roman Catholic CAS, the Salvation Army Infants Home, the House of Providence, the House of Industry, the Bernardo House, the Isolation Hospital, and the Reformatory for Boys. Children would be referred to the CAS from such institutions, and vice versa, and information on parents would be shared among them. Taken together, through their collaboration with and reliance on the public, other social/moral reform organizations, and state institutions, the Children’s Aid Society was able to establish a sophisticated web of surveillance and control.

Due to the efficacy of this web of surveillance and the prevalent anxieties over alleged child neglect, the number of complaints the CAS received was extensive. Despite the CAS having just recently begun this form of work, they described the amount of complaints as “so
numerous as to make it impossible for the Agent, while doing all he can, to overtake all.”17 For example, in 1896 “over 1,400 visits to houses” had been conducted in Toronto, “besides sending very many notices to parents warning them that their cases will be brought before the Magistrate unless amendment of conduct was made.”18 Despite volunteers who would assist the Agent, the workload was considered too large and shortly after the creation of the Agent’s position an assistant had to be hired to help with the work.19

Over the next few years, the number of cases grew further and it was found that more permanent staff was needed. For this purpose, in 1907, the CAS Board appointed Ms. V.C. Hamilton as the first “lady visitor”. By 1911, three such ‘lady visitors’ were employed by the CAS. Similar to the work of the Agent, the task of these lady visitors was to investigate homes for alleged cruelty and neglect. Yet, these women would also go beyond the Agent’s work. While the Agent investigated homes for which he had received a complaint, the lady visitors would also go out in search for ‘degenerate’ homes, looking for signs of cruelty and neglect.

MacDonald, then president of the CAS, described their role as “[going out to] see what child life in the city is without waiting for complaints or police action” (in McCullagh 2002:57).

It needs pointing out that it was a deliberate decision by the CAS to hire women for this investigative work. Aside financial considerations (as they could be paid a fraction of their male counterparts— a leading factor openly acknowledged well into the 1940s20), it was believed that

18 Ibid.
19 Ibid.
20 See correspondence between Hugh Ferguson (CAS County of Perth) and E. Mills (CAS Toronto) dated November 1, 1940. Fonds 1001, Series 537, File 36, Title: Philosophy of child care and organization concepts. Dates of creation: 1925-1940. Box 143652, Folio 8.
these women would be able to see and hear things their male counterparts could not. The assumption was that ‘a lady’ would more easily be let into a home than a man. As CAS President MacDonald explained, “The women with love of the Saviour and children in their hearts will find entrance into homes where it is not possible for men to get in” (in McCullagh 2002:57).

Sent on their way, the lady visitors would go about their investigations in a systematic manner. Overlaying Toronto with an organizational grid, the city was divided into several districts, and each lady visitor was responsible for a district. With a few volunteers under their supervision, the lady visitors could then systematically attend to homes identified for investigation. They would travel around Toronto to inspect working-class homes, assess and report on the housekeeping and child-rearing conduct of poor mothers, and to a lesser extent, fathers. In 1911, the three lady visitors conducted over a thousand such investigations (McCullagh 2002:57).

### Inside the Homes of Lesser-Whites

Once inside the homes of the poor, the lady visitors and the Agent paid close scrutiny to the living conditions of those visited. Like other social/moral reformers (see Noble 1979; Valverde 1993; Hallgrimsdottir et al. 2013), they investigated kitchens, bedrooms, clothes, cupboards. Nothing was considered too private or too intimate for the gaze of the child-savers.

Not surprisingly, the Agent and the lady-visitors encountered what they set out to find. As recorded in the complaint books, the homes they encountered were generally “badly kept”, “dirty”, and lacking in amenities that were said to make for a ‘comfortable’ home. For example, homes would be described along such lines: “home in a filthy condition with very little furniture.
Children in a very rugged condition dirty and looking as though they were not fed properly” (Case 6904). 21 Sometimes, the descriptions were more vivid:

Complaint by letter that family named [withheld] at address [withheld] were being neglected. Inspector called at 11:45 a.m. found four of the youngest children in their bare feet and night-dresses. Kitchen in a most filthy condition with a hen in a box beside the stove. Children were extremely dirty. On expostulating on their condition to the mother, she replied they didn’t want to go into debt. The father is an expressman and has a phone in the house and I warned the woman to clean up home and children preparatory to a second call. Called again Feb 29th/08 and found very little improvement in the condition of the home. Warned her again.

(Case 13605) 22

Most children who lived in such homes were considered neglected. Reasons for such an assessment were sometimes noted in the complaint books, such as variations of: “father deserted family” or “mother can’t support child.” A full case description could read something like this: “Father a drunkard. Mother out to work, and children neglected” (Case 6194), 23 or “Mother...
neglects children and squanders money earned by her husband…” (Case 6095). Generally, not much more information was recorded in regards to neglected children and entries were very concise. Often, assessments such as “Parents drink, children neglected” (as in case 6029) would be all the information that was provided. This is for the reason that the initial assessment was usually made by the caseworker (the lady visitors or the Agent) whose judgements were taken as sufficient for the time being. Most often, the sole information on a case of neglect would simply be “children neglected”, or a variation thereof: “child badly neglected”, “mother neglects child”, “father neglects child.” Other times, and less frequently so, the visitors encountered children who were found to be “ill-treated” or “cruelly treated”. Oftentimes, it also came to light that a child was “illegitimate” (born outside of wedlock), which was considered reason enough for intervention.

Frequently, if the CAS received a complaint by someone who had observed questionable or objectionable parenting conduct, the investigation would focus on the parents’ behavior and appearance. Usually, such complaints were substantiated by the visitors’ investigations. In such cases, the CAS would find that parents were, for example, “intemperate”, that they were “turning children out of the house”, as “leaving children alone”, and most often, parents were found to be “drunkards”. If the father was the reason for the complaint, they would usually be described as physically abusive, such as “cruel”, or as “ill-treating” children and wife. Alternatively, if he was found to be failing in his ‘duty’ as a responsible breadwinner, it would be noted that he was “out of work”, that he “has done no work in [x amount of time]”, or simply assessed as “lazy”. In

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25 Ibid.
contrast, if the mother was the reason for the complaint, she was generally found to fail in her
domestic duties. For example, homes were described as being in a state of disarray, children as
not properly dressed, fed, or their hair was observed to be unkempt. Often, it was discovered that
a mother was not always physically present, and the case file would include a note regarding her
absence, such as “mother leaves home for work”, or “mother out at night”. For example,
consider the following case:

Case 2941: Was that of three children, from two to nine years old, whose
mother had proved unworthy of them and would not stay home. The
father became so ill, owing to his wife’s bad living, that he felt that it was
his duty to the children to find homes for them. They were accordingly
adopted to the Society, and are now all in homes.\textsuperscript{26}

In-home investigations furthermore found an abundance of mothers who were said to
exhibit serious character flaws. In such instances, the women were described as “low in
character”, or as having a “bad character”, as “immoral”, “insane”, or “weak-minded”. These
cases would be recorded along such lines: “mother imposes on people by pleading poverty, and
is a loose character” (Case 6121);\textsuperscript{27} “widow … living and immoral life” (Case 3886);\textsuperscript{28}
“Complaint … that the mother drinks fights with neighbours and makes use of bad language. In


presence of children” (Case 6854); 29 “Mother of child thought half-willed…take action if necessary to send mother to Asylum for Idiots and Child to Infants Home” (Case 7082). 30

Often, it was not the parents’ ‘bad’ conduct that elicited a complaint, but rather it was the children who had committed an ‘offense’ or displayed a character-trait that was said to be objectionable. The child-savers would then describe them as, for example, “impudent”, “dishonest”, “disobedient”, “unable to control”, “going to the bad”, or “incorrigible”. The last label was frequently used and could result in dire consequences, for it referred to a person that was said to be beyond reformation, correction or improvement; a label usually attached to children who were sent to Industrial School (instead of being allowed to stay in the home or sent to foster families). Other times, the CAS received a complaint that children had been observed to engage in actions that were considered unacceptable. For example, they were found “wandering the streets”, “begging”, “stealing”, “trespassing”, “running wild”, “running away from home”, “annoying the neighbours”, “associating with bad characters”, and “playing truant” (i.e. skipping school). A complete complaint could read something like this: “Do not go to school and make use of bad language, make themselves a nuisance to neighbours and throw stones at poultry” (case 7527). 31 Such children would usually find themselves in front of the Children’s Court.


30 Ibid.

Home-Restoration

The fate of neglected children depended on the assessment of the home-environment. Depending on what they encountered in the home, child-savers would recommend that children were allowed to stay with their parents until the next visit (providing the parents and/or children with some time to improve their conduct), that parents temporarily place their children in the CAS shelter for the duration of this time (the lady visitors had the power to make discharge and admission decisions), or sometimes they would advise parents to consider permanently giving up their children for adoption (particularly in cases of ‘illegitimate’ children). The preferred solution by the Children’s Aid Society was to improve ‘degenerate’ homes and ‘uplift’ the home environment to a level that was considered acceptable in the eyes of the child-savers. Hence, the priority for the lady visitors was to engage in child-saving work ‘within’ the homes they had visited. This was work described as “home-restoration”.  

The work of home-restoration involved the following steps: After the initial investigation and assessment, parents and children would receive instructions for improvement. Child-savers conceptualized this process as systematic and methodological, indicative of a trend within the wider social/moral reform movement towards professionalization and standardization. When in 1909, J. A. Turnbull, President of the Associated Charities of Toronto addressed the Canadian Club of Toronto, he explained this process as follows: “every case should be thoroughly investigated before any help is given … This investigation work is like that of the skilled physician, when in response to a call for his help he enters the home. He will first of all make a

thorough diagnosis of the case ascertaining the condition of his patient;” only then will he
prescribe the remedy that is needed (Turnbull 1910). Similarly, child-savers would tailor their
instructions for improvement to the specifics of the home under scrutiny. Such instructions
would encompass a range of activities, primarily of course, in regards to child-rearing, but also in
regards to proper cleaning, cooking, sewing, dressing, home décor, civilized conduct (for
example, in regards to alcohol consumption, use of profanity), and employment (to be avoided
by the mother, but a prerequisite for the father). After issuing instructions on how to ‘better’ their
homes and conduct, the parents would then have some time to rectify and change their behaviour
and surroundings.

For parents to take these instructions seriously, they would also receive a warning. In

Once the probationary time-period had come to an end, the visitors would call again and assess the home situation anew, judging on whether conditions of home and conduct had improved. The following example is an excerpt from a letter of the Society’s Agent in which he recounts the successful transformation of a deplorable dwelling into a clean, Christian home, consisting of a bread-winning father, happy children, and a grateful mother:

There was a family in my district that were so extremely low in their tastes that their house was a most disagreeable place to enter. Everything about the place was dirty, as well as the mother and children, and so cheerless that it was not to be wondered at that they spent most of the little money they obtained on whiskey. After repeated visits and a threat to take away the children for good unless there was a decided change, the parents began to pull together, and every day saw some fresh improvements. I dropped in on Christmas to see how things were going and was astonished to find a Christmas tree in the centre of the room with
toys and decoration. One of the little girls, who evidently understood that the Children’s Aid Society was responsible for the miraculous change, came and hugged me very vigorously, and the mother gratefully acknowledged that, it was a better Christmas than they had known for a considerable number of years. The best feature about it was that the dinner that day was not supplied by charity, but was earned by the father of the household.”

Not all homes could be reformed. If after subsequent inspection(s) it was found that the home environment or the parents’ conduct did not sufficiently improve, the parents could be charged with child neglect, and in worst case scenarios, lose their children to the CAS. The following example illustrates such a scenario:

Case 2346: Was one where the father of the two older children had died. Some time after his death the mother went to live with a man as his wife. The younger children in the group – who are twins – are the fruits of this union. Naturally the couple descended to a low level and became drunkards. The parents were warned some time before action was taken; but last New Year’s Eve an urgent appeal came to the Society to at once rescue the children. The sight that met the eyes of the officers on entering the house after dark was deplorable. Both parents were stupid with drink, and the house was in a state of disorder and filth. Many of the windows

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were broken and there was no food in the house. The children were in a pitiable condition when brought to the Shelter. They were, a little later, made wards of the Society by the Magistrate. The two oldest are now in good homes. It was the intention of the Society to have adopted the twins … when the mother pled so hard for them that they were given into her care on her promise of future good behavior; and she is now constantly under the eyes of the Society’s officers. Previous to the return of the children to her, she had parted with their father, and is now apparently trying to live a respectable life; but the children are still wards of the Society, and she is only their guardian during good behaviour.\(^{35}\)

There were also cases in which home-restoration was not considered an appropriate solution from the onset. This was true for home environments that were found to be in such a degenerate state upon the initial assessment that they were considered beyond improvement or reformation. These cases, for example, involved mothers who were found to be prostitutes, “houses of ill-fame” (i.e. brothels), and houses that were assessed as “disreputable”, or “disorderly.” The term ‘disorderly house’ was a classification adopted from English criminal law. It was used to refer to a brothel, a gambling den, or a saloon, but could also apply to any ordinary residence in which it was believed that individuals lived or congregated in such a way as to pose a threat to public health, morals, convenience, or safety. It also applied to homes that were believed to have become a public nuisance or an affront to public decency – a classification that, if loosely applied, would seem to have fit any slum-dwelling at the time. And indeed, this

was a descriptor so commonly used by the CAS at the turn of the century that sometimes the classification “d.o. house” would be all the information recorded in the complaint books. In such cases, home-restoration was not an option and an alternative living situation had to be found for affected children. As an immediate step, children from such homes would be taken to the Children’s Aid Society’s Shelter for the time being. This, however, was considered an interim solution only and a more long-term solution was needed.

The Foster Care System

It was evident to the child-savers, and social/moral reformers more generally, that the children of the nation needed to be removed from un-improvable homes. Hence, for cases in which home-restoration had ‘failed’ – that is, the child and/or parent could not convincingly display the Children’s Aid Society’s bourgeois and heteropatriarchal notions of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ living – and for those cases which were considered beyond improvement from the onset, children had to be placed in an alternative environment. How to address this problem, however, was not an easy answer and different social/moral reform organizations provided different solutions.

This issue received much attention during the first Ontario Conference on Child-Saving (1895). During his address, Honorable J. M. Gibson, Secretary of Ontario, explained that there are already ample provisions made for “children of defective intellect” such as the Orillia Institution in Ontario, for “delinquent children” who are dealt with through Industrial Schools, such as the Victoria Industrial School or the Alexandra Industrial School, and in worse cases through Reformatories, such as the Ontario Reformatory for Boys or the Reformatory at Penetanguishene.36 And yet, while these incorrigible “classes” of children were already taken

36 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
care of, “the dependent children of the Province had been left without any particular provision for their treatment.” For Gibson, and many others, the answer to this problem should be provided by the Children’s Aid movement. While Gibson’s remarks were representative of the general direction in which child protection initiatives were developing, not everyone agreed.

For most of the nineteenth century there already existed some voluntary organizations for different groups of children who were considered in need of saving. For example, there already existed a range of orphanages for parent-less children within and in the vicinity of Toronto, and there were the Boys’ Homes and Girls’ Homes. There existed institutions for children who lost their fathers in the war of 1812, institutions for deaf and blind children, for ‘feeble-minded’ children, and children of unmarried mothers (Chen 2005:19). Children’s hospitals sometimes took in children who were found to be in need, while others were sometimes placed in workhouses. There existed poor houses in New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, regulated under the maritime poor laws (modelled after the British Poor Laws), that also housed children (Rooke and Schnell 1981:488; see also Finkel 2006:49, 68). It was also common practice to place children into apprenticeships and send them to farms or private homes as labourers and servants (Finkel 2006:46; 49).


37 Ibid.

38 For example, there existed the Protestant Orphan Asylum in Montreal (1822), the Female Orphan Asylum in Quebec City (ca 1830), the Catholic Orphanage in Montreal (1832), the Orphans’ Home in Kingston (1857), the Protestant Home for Women in Quebec (1859), the Home of the Friendless in Hamilton (1859), the Girls’ Home in Hamilton (1862), the Orphans’ Home of the City of Ottawa (1865), and the Working Boys’ Home in Toronto (1867), among others (Mitchinson 1987:90; Finkel 2006:44).

39 This did not always mean that both parents had died or deserted the child. Given the heteropatriarchal structure of society, the desertion or death of one parent – mostly the mother – sometimes warranted admission to an orphanage.
Hence, when the Children’s Aid Society began the work of child-removal, some social/moral reformers suggested that neglected children could find shelter in some of the existing institutions. For example, during the same conference, some of the attending representatives from Industrial Schools, reformatories, orphanages, maternity homes, and similar institutions, voiced their belief they were well equipped to care for dependent children within their respective institutional frameworks. And some of them also regarded the Children’s Aid movement as a threat to their institutional existence (a concern which proved to be correct).40

The Children’s Aid movement vigorously disagreed with such proposals. For example, in the Superintendent Report for the year 1903, Kelso publicly denounced a clergyman who when asked to give his views on the issue, suggested that a section of the poor house could be set apart for the care of dependent children. Kelso responded by pointing at the “great danger of men in public position, through lack of knowledge, advocating a wrong policy and helping very materially to perpetuate a system that is recognized by practical workers as entirely wrong.”41

To the child-savers, none of the existing institutions were appropriate solutions. There were a number of reasons for this. First, some of these places were considered inappropriate because of the populations they were built for. Since environmental factors came to be seen as determining a child’s character, many existing institutional arrangements that were said to house a rather suspect demographic, especially workhouses, almshouses, and poorhouses, came to be


seen as inappropriate places for children. For example, Mr. S. H. Hattie, Inspector of Humane Institutions in Nova Scotia, found children living “day and night in the company of irritable and complaining old people, of mischievous and profane lunatics, and of driveling and unclean imbeciles” (in Rooke and Schnell 1981:488). In such spaces of degeneracy, the child-savers’ argued, children would not fare better than if they had been left with their parents. Fortunately for Kelso, in Ontario it was already against the law to admit children (between the ages of two and sixteen) to poor houses or other institutions for adults. As Kelso explained, this was done due to the recognition that “Children are too valuable to be brought up in association with the wrecks and failures of society.” Similarly, if the child was to be ‘saved’ before becoming a criminal, then s/he could also not be placed amongst the delinquents and incorrigibles for which Industrial Schools or reformatories had been established.

Yet, even institutions that did not necessarily house a suspect child population (such as orphanages) were considered inadequate. This was for the reason that these places were established to serve a different “class” or group of children. The children the child-savers were concerned about were of a specific kind. A serious complication stemmed from the recognition that unlike orphans or unwanted/disposed of children, ‘neglected and dependent’ children did not fit easily into any of the aforementioned institutions. Dependent children constituted a ‘class’ of children who most profoundly differed from those other classes due to the presence of their parents (Swain 2009:200). Given that neglected and dependent children had living parents they

hardly fit into orphanages. Nor were any of the other institutions for the ‘crippled’ and ‘feeble-minded’ created with ‘healthy’/ ‘normal’ dependent children in mind.

Regardless of the social/moral reformers’ differing solution, they did generally agree that ‘neglected and dependent children’ were a specific “class” of children, and that this class required special attention. ‘Healthy’ and ‘not-yet-delinquent’ settler children were too important to the nation. These children were considered “little citizens,” they were “the future rulers of this country,” and hence, these children needed a different form of care. For the child-savers, dispersing these children over a variety of institutions was considered insufficient. They argued that a solution was required that was specifically designed for this class of children, a solution that was uniform, systematic, wide-reaching, and effective. Kelso, at once providing direction for a solution while dismissing his critics, argued that,

What is needed is a personal service, the complete organization of charitable forces, harmony of action, and the appointment of trained and experienced workers, instead of isolated action, rivalry and jealousy, and spasmodic and amateur administration. Only then can we hope to adequately relieve genuine distress and at the same time prevent the evils of pauperism from taking firm root in this young and rapidly-expanding country.45


45 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
The ‘solution’ put forth by the child-savers was one, not based on institutions as had thus far been the norm. To them, institutions were old-fashioned, uncaring, and archaic. Institutional care, they argued was inappropriate, and not the form of care required for the children of the nation (as will be discussed in chapter seven, the appropriateness of institutions for Indigenous children was framed quite differently). As Kelso passionately argued in 1896, “An institution is not the proper place to bring up children. All dependent children should be grafted on the body politic as soon as it can possibly be done. The child must make its home attachments and grow into society through the family.”

Hence, the child-savers’ solution was to be modeled after the ‘good’ – i.e. white, bourgeois, Christian – family home. Child-savers believed that “[t]he best type of citizen can be evolved only from the hearty, robust child, who has had a full and well-rounded youth, spent in cheerful and clean moral environment.” To them, the cleanest and most cheerful environment was ‘the family’. As they put it, “[t]he happy Christian home with its family life is the divinest, most sacred place for man, woman or child this side of heaven.”

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Such homes were considered the bedrock of the white settler colony, or “the foundation stone of the State.”

Hence, if their own families could not be improved to live up to this idea(l), then a surrogate settler family had to be found for the dependent children of the nation. The child-savers envisioned a web of such ‘good’ surrogate families, spread throughout the country, willing to take in someone else’s children – not as servants or farm labourers – but with the intent to raise them like they would raise their own.

This was the emergence of the foster home system: a connected web of child-saving outposts, monitored and managed by local Children’s Aid Societies, with the purpose of raising the children of the nation/building a useful citizenry. Foster families were imagined as the spaces in which the moral and physical transformation of neglected settler children from waifs into useful members of the nation was to be accomplished. If lesser-white parents were found to be inept to bring up the next generation of settlers, other members of the settler community had to step in and raise them on their behalf. The intent was to bring up these children – through love, discipline, and moral guidance – as ‘good’ and industrious members of the white settler community. Or, in the child-savers’ words, the task was to “[t]urn these little ones from the path of sin, degradation and crime to enter into and become integral parts of the homes of our land – the foundations, stays, and life of our beloved country.”


Parens Patriae

Putting this idea into practice, however, was not without its hurdles. Another major complication arose from the fact that the children of concern were ‘dependent’. Not only did neglected and dependent children have living parents, but generally, these parents did not want to have their children taken away. Even if parents could be convinced to give up their child for adoption or transfer them to a foster family, what would happen in circumstances in which a parent refused or later changed their mind? How does one assume guardianship over children whose parents were alive and, worse, unwilling to let them go?

For this reason, the first child welfare legislation was passed in Ontario in 1893 (two years after the founding of the Toronto CAS). For the first time in Canada, the 1893 Act for the Prevention of Cruelty to and Better Protection of Children, commonly referred to as the Children's Protection Act, made neglect of and cruelty towards children a punishable crime. In cases where parents were found guilty of such a crime, the Children’s Aid Societies could be granted guardianship over the children. Through these provisions, the placement of children into foster homes was legally possible. The Toronto CAS explained the purpose of the Act as follows:

In the cases of neglect and cruelty, if frequent remonstrance and warnings do not lead the parents to mend their ways, information is laid, and they are brought to the Police Court, and the case is dealt with according to its merits, and when other means fail, the children are taken – it may be for a
time or altogether – to be placed in other and better homes, where they
will have a chance to grow up to be respectable citizens.\(^{51}\)

The Act was met with criticism by some who accused the Children’s Aid movement as
too intrusive, of ‘meddling’ in private affairs, and of making matters worse by turning parents
into criminals. To this, the Toronto CAS responded with the following:

The assumption of some people that the ‘Children’s Protection Act’ of
1893 made criminals of people who were formerly innocent, is
unfounded. The offenders were not innocent previous to the passing of
that Act, but their neglect of their children was not then legally a crime,
although their conduct was and has always been a crime against nature
and morality.\(^{52}\)

Proponents of the Act furthermore pointed out that, not only children, but adoptive and
foster parents would also be protected by this law, safeguarding them from having to negotiate
with parents who were trying to have their children returned to them. As his Honor J. H. Ardagh,
County Judge of Simcoe, explained, the Act allows “that those people who undertake the charge
of children can do so without being afterwards molested by parents who have neglected them.”\(^{53}\)
The significance of the passing of such a law should not be underestimated. At no point prior was it acceptable or legally possible to interfere in such matters as they were previously considered private and personal. Previously, children were considered the property of their father (Backhouse 1991). Until then it was not possible for an external authority to assume guardianship over and against the rights of the father. Such matters were considered “inviolable” earlier in the century. This speaks to the enormous importance ascribed to the entangled projects of nation-building and proper citizenship formation. At stake was the future of the settler colony, its children needed to be cared for, and a legal structure needed to be created to enable this. As the CAS explained, “Previous to the passing of the Act under which the Society operates, and similar Acts in Great Britain and the United States, there was no protection for the ‘little citizens,’ and parents often seemed to think that they owned their children and could use them and abuse them as they liked.”54 As they saw it, the effect of the Act “has been to rudely awaken cruel and neglectful parents to the fact that the law of the land regards them as the rightful guardians of their children as long as they do their duty by them, while it clearly shows that the children are citizens whom the state is bound to protect.”55 This solution was not only desirable, but necessary for the preservation of the settler colony. As quoted by James Massie,

‘When parental neglect reaches such a state that the family and the children become a menace to the common good, the preservation of the State demands that the State should interfere, because while the parent has a right over the child by the law of nature, when he neglects or fails

55 Ibid.
to perform his duties toward the child, then it is not only right, but it is the duty of the State to step into the homes and enforce the performance of a parent’s duty toward the child.”

Hence, if the birth parents failed in producing desirable citizens, the State, via the Children’s Aid Society and its foster families, would step in to ‘parent’ or ‘nurse’ the children of the nation. Rev. Thomas Geoghegan explained this in a similar fashion: “I think this Society sets out with the very best program, to help the parents to help the children [i.e. through home-restoration], and to punish the parents if they neglect their children. It is a very serious thing for the State to step in and become a general father and mother, a sort of dry nurse to the whole population of what may be called questionable people.”

While controversial to some, the idea of foster care and the necessary legislative changes underlying it, rapidly garnered wide-spread support. During his conference address, Gibson was interrupted by applause after proclaiming, “I think the foster home system is the correct one, and I hope it will come to that ultimately – that the foster home system is the system that we should try to reach as soon as we can without in the meantime interfering in any way with existing institutions or existing interests.” Speaking at the same conference, Hon. G. W. Allan, was


similarly interrupted by applause after stating that “nothing can be of more value or more desirable than all the sweetest influences of home life upon a young child. Therefore I think this system of foster homes a most important feature of the Ontario Act, and it is one which I hope to see very largely carried into operation.”

This idea rose in prominence not only in Canada, but also in the United States and Western Europe. Hence, support also came from outside the country, and the Children’s Aid movement found a most powerful ally in the White House in President Theodore Roosevelt. Roosevelt was similarly driven by a desire to build a white settler nation and ensure the proliferation of the white race. And he too believed that the white child was at the centre of this endeavour. In particular, Roosevelt feared that non-Anglo Saxon immigrants, Indians, and the black population were ‘too fertile’, bearing more children than the white race. Informed by theories of eugenics, Roosevelt charged that white settlers were committing “race suicide” by allowing racial Others to proliferate while their own birth rate seemingly declined (Dyer 1992; King and Ruggles 1990; Slotkin 1998:chapter one). For Roosevelt, the white family was of utmost importance, the bearing and upbringing of white children, and the ‘duty of mothers’ to raise and bear the next generations of white settlers (see, for example, Roosevelt 1905), inexplicably linked to the proliferation of the white race and the American nation.


For January 25 and 26, 1909, Roosevelt invited “philanthropic workers” to a conference in the White House “to confer on the best methods of providing for dependent children”. The conference call-out was rather general, stating that “Leading minds in all countries have been centering on social problems and endeavoring to decide on the best methods of combatting sickness, misery, pauperism and crime. And no matter where the enquiry begins it invariably leads to the conclusion that in the proper care of the nation’s children will be found the surest remedy for many social evils.” Personally, however, Roosevelt was already convinced that the foster care system was superior over institutional settings. Roosevelt sent a personal letter to Kelso inviting him to attend the conference. In this letter, he wrote the following.

Surely nothing ought to interest our people more than the care of the children who are destitute and neglected but not delinquent. Personally, I very earnestly believe that the best way in which to care for dependent children is in the family home. In Massachusetts many orphan asylums have been discontinued and thousands of children who formerly have gone to the orphan asylums are now kept in private treasuries, or in adopted homes provided by the generosity of foster parents.


61 In Ibid.

62 In Ibid.
Ultimately, the child-savers were successful in implementing the foster care system, which is also the system that remains with us today. It was an idea began to take root towards the end of the nineteenth century and was firmly cemented as a ‘truism’ in the decades following.\textsuperscript{63}

The structure with which this system was put to work looked as such: Families would apply to the CAS to foster children and these families would then be vetted by the Society. MacDonald, then president of the CAS, personally reviewed every application of potential foster parents before a child would be entrusted to their care (McCullagh 2002:55). Once a child was sent to a foster home, their case was reported to the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children. The Department kept a record of the cases, and made attempts to keep track of the child and his/her ‘new’ family. To this end, the Department would send a visitor to the foster family. The visitor would call on the family at least once a year if the child was placed in Ontario, and less frequently so if the child was placed farther away. Most children were placed in rural environment in Ontario, many were sent to Manitoba to reside on farms, and some were sent to the Northwest Territories. Generally, the connection between the children and their biological parents was severed. It was the policy of the Children’s Aid Society to “as far as possible, dissociate the minds of the children with their former surroundings.”\textsuperscript{64} To this end, contact between children and their parents and/or siblings was to be prevented. Usually, the parents were not informed where their children had been placed. The CAS firmly believed that “Except in rare cases … parents are not informed of the whereabouts of their children, because communication between parents and children under such circumstances often spoils the home for

\textsuperscript{63} This shift is well explained in Rooke and Schnell’s seminal work \textit{Discarding the Asylum}.  

the child, because of the parent’s interference.”⁶⁵ “To shield the little ones … from a knowledge of the past”⁶⁶, children were not meant to be reminded of their prior surroundings, and if young enough, it was desirable that foster children would never learn of their biological parents. The Department’s visitor was instructed to not give any of this information away: “Where children are not old enough to have known of their connection with the Department or the Society, care is taken to make the visit in such a way that the child will only know the visitor as a friend making an ordinary call on its foster parents.”⁶⁷ This system seemed to work for the child-savers. By 1908, over five thousand children had been placed in foster families in Ontario alone.⁶⁸

**Ma(r)kers of Modernity**

“Prisons.

Fewer prisons – more reformatories.

Fewer reformatories – more industrial schools.

Fewer industrial schools – more Aid Societies.

Purify and elevate the home life of the poor.

Find homes for homeless children.”⁶⁹

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⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.


⁶⁹ City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
Social/moral reformers were heavily invested in their own sense of modernity. The passing of the Children’s Protection Act in 1893 was considered a milestone in this regard. It was considered progressive and enlightened by contemporaries, and it was envisioned along such lines in retrospect. Indeed, in the late 1950s, the Department of Public Welfare declared that “Commencing in 1893” Canadian society entered the “Modern Period” (Spettigue [ca.] 1958:3).

The child-savers actively pursued an argument of modernity and progress to implement the foster home system, which, after much debate, came to be considered the most effective and the most modern form of child-saving. Relying on scientific (i.e. modern) studies on child development and child-saving in the United States and Western Europe, the Children’s Aid movement and its foster home system came to be portrayed as the most enlightened, informed, scientifically grounded, and progressive solution of care. Like in the above poem, the beginning of the foster home system was portrayed in evolutionary or Darwinian terms, as if it had evolved from prior, more archaic, and indeed inferior, ways of practice.

Hence, the making of the modern came with its own sets of practice, new/better/modern ways of doing things. It is in these forms of practice– or modes of conduct – as utilized and popularized by the CAS, that we see the emergence of a method of ‘doing’ child protection. It was a method that came to be considered efficient, modern, and scientific, one relying on techniques and sets of practice that could be learned, taught, and hence ‘professionalized’. In other words, what we are witnessing here is the emergence of social work. Such modes of


conduct – in-home visits, assessments, warnings, surveillance, record keeping, probationary time periods, and if all fails, the removal of the child – are powerful examples of emerging sets of practices that would come to define present-day child welfare work. And, in fact, the ‘lady visitors’ are now largely regarded to have been the first ‘social workers’ employed by the Toronto CAS (see McCullagh 2002:57; Lee 2005:63).

What we are further witnessing is the entry of white women into the public sphere and thus colonial governance, and a glimpse of the conditions of possibility that were available to white women in the first half of the twentieth century – conditions emerging out of a patriarchal insistence that women were/are ‘naturally’ dispositioned to nurture and care, limiting the participation of white women in the public sphere to certain ‘care-giving’ professions, social work being one of them. It was a path limited by patriarchy, but also enabled by a shared whiteness and participation in imperialism. Several authors have observed that, during this time, white bourgeois women were cast as the “mother of the race” (Gilman in Valverde 2002), the “Great White Mother” (Jacobs 2008:192), or the “foremothers of a great nation” (in Thobani 2007:85), these white/colonizing women were positioned as the bearers of a superior (Devereux 1999:178) and redefined colonial morality (Stoler 2002:57). Grewal (1996) has further demonstrated that colonial space was utilized as a proving ground for white women’s capabilities. In such a context, many white middle- and upper-class women were able to fashion careers for themselves (for example, as matrons, ‘lady superintendents’, nurses, doctors, missionaries, teachers, writers, deaconesses, and social workers). In such spaces colonizing women could become, at best, comrades or, at least, “helpmates” (see Boyd Kinnear 2010 (1869); see also Perry 2001:154) to colonizing men. Naturally, not all women were able to acquire these positions. Those women who would fall outside the racial and class-based norms of white bourgeois respectability were largely imagined as social problems (see Valverde 1993:29-
In this context, the careers white women were able to make for themselves, were based on studying and reforming ‘the problem’ of women other than themselves. Thus, while subordinate to heteropatriarchal power relations within their own society, these women were instrumental actors of colonization and imperial rule – not only by bearing its children, but also by managing the childrearing conduct of other-mothers. As such, white women were positioned as, both, subordinates within patriarchal colonizing hierarchies and “agents of empire in their own right” (Stoler 2002:41). The management of childhood offered them a place in modernity, and by the early twentieth century, a place in colonial governance.

Through the above discussion of home-restoration and foster care, it further becomes evident that underlying the CAS’ modes of conduct was the notion that child-saving was a two-pronged approach, with punitive-disciplinary measures on the one hand and pedagogical instructions on the other. That this two-pronged approach is a foundational function of social work has been theorized by a range of authors (see, for example, Donzelot 1991; Garland 1997; Foucault in RT 1999; Moffat 1999). In the context of the Children’s Aid Society, this meant that lesser-white settlers needed to be surveilled, reprimanded, warned, and/or punished, while also be taught lessons in domesticity and civility.

This punitive and pedagogical approach also lends itself to blame those targeted for reformation for their imagined ‘shortcomings’. As Hasting put it, “Many of these people, by

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71 As Foucault explains, “social work is inscribed within a larger social function that has been taking on a new dimension for centuries, the function of surveillance-and-correction: to surveil individuals and to redress them, in the two meanings of the word, alternatively as punishment and as pedagogy” (Foucault in RT 1999:92). Social work is seen as punitive-disciplinary in so far as it centres on the individual body, whose functions and performances have to be disciplined (Foucault 1990:139) (e.g. the learning of acceptable modes of behaviour in matters of domesticity and child-rearing), who can be placed under surveillance (e.g. be monitored by the CAS, the police, and even neighbours), and if necessary, punished (Foucault 2003 “Society must be defended”:242) (e.g. be charged with child neglect and have their children taken). And it is also ‘regularizing’ (Foucault 2003 “Society must be defended”:247; 2007:66) in so far as it sees the regulation and reformation of ‘deviant’ or ‘degenerate’ individuals as improving ‘the race’ or species body as a whole (Foucault 2007:105).
reason of birth and environments, have neither the moral stamina or the intellect to rid themselves of their vices and shortcomings.” (Hastings 1974 (1917):136). Hence, as we have seen throughout this chapter, in their efforts to ‘restore’ the home, the solutions put forth by the social/moral reformers did not combat the conditions that caused them to intervene, such as unemployment, a shortage of affordable housing, access to running water, a lack of affordable nutrition, sufficient clothing for children or adults. For example, contra the argument for affordable housing Hastings explained, “Unless we educate the slum dwellers to the dangers of unsanitary methods of living, the placing of them in proper homes will not materially decrease our mortality” (1974 (1917):133). Or, as S. W. Dean (1974 (1914)) explained in his characteristically blunt fashion, “A pig in a palace is still a pig. Some may be convinced that ‘the sty makes the pig.’ There can be no question but that ‘the pig makes the sty,’ and to prevent sty conditions the porcine nature must be transformed” (160). Instead, we find individualized solutions to the systemic problem of poverty: solutions intent on reforming impoverished lesser-white subjects. As the social/moral reformers saw it, a successful transformation had to attend to both, the home environment as well as the individual. Again, as S. W. Dean (1974 (1914)) put it, “It is desirable that the transformation of the individual and the environment should go forward, side by side. To transform one without the other is not enough (160).” To save the child, both, the parental conduct and the home had to be reformed, or in Kelso’s words, “character-building and home-restoration work” had to go hand in hand.  

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Evidently from the above accounts and example cases, a ‘good’ home or ‘character’ meant particular things to the CAS. The ideals and values the Children’s Aid Society embraced, and forced their ‘clients’ to embrace, were not neutral but profoundly bourgeois, heteropatriarchal, ableist, and white. Hence, many scholars have discussed social reform initiatives as attempts to instil norms and values associated with white heteropatriarchal bourgeois respectability among populations identified for reformation (see, for example, Noble 1979; Bacchi 1983; Bland 1995; Epstein 1983; Snell 1983; Kinsman 1987; Iacovetta 1992; Fitts 2001; Chunn 2003; Ray 2003; Carter 2004; Hallgrimsdottir et al. 2013). Some of these authors have framed these initiatives as forms of social control that sought to discipline the working class, and others as forms of patriarchal power seeking to reinforce gendered divisions of labour.

Yet, it also needs to be explicitly stated that the white bourgeoisie’s attempts to modify the behavior of people along their own values and idea(l)s, goes beyond a mere form of control or a crude, top-down, exercise of power. Their desire to ‘instil’, ‘educate’, and ‘reform’ was not only repressive – for example, as a mere form of control by the bourgeoisie to suppress class struggle, or a patriarchal insistence that women stay in the home and tend to child-rearing. The power exercised by the child-savers/social workers should also be recognized for its ‘productive’ (Foucault 1980:119) function – for, both, those targeted for reformation and for their reformers.

What makes power stick, as Foucault explains, is that it is not solely negative or juridical (like a repressing or prohibiting force) – but that it creates and produces things (1980:119; 121). It

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73 As Foucault so (perhaps uncharacteristically) plainly explained: “When you are told it is bad to steal, you are offered a certain definition of private property that is given the value the bourgeoisie assigns to it. When you are taught not to like violence, to make peace, not to seek vengeance, to prefer justice to a struggle, you are taught to prefer bourgeois justice to social struggle. You are taught that a judge is better than vengeance. That is the work that has been accomplished so well by those intellectuals and elementary school teachers and is now being pursued in their own way by the social workers” (Foucault in RT 1999:96).
creates institutions, discourses, forms of knowledge, modes of conduct, and it produces
subjectivities (ibid:112; 126). In this sense, social work functions as a form of governmentality.
It emerges from, remains embedded within, and reproduces a form of power that manages to be
exercised through social service and social production and, as such, through ever finer channels.
Social work is crucial for effective governance for it gains access to the intimate lives of
individuals, their acts and minute tasks, their attitudes, their gestures, modes of behaviour, even
what one might consider the mundane – routines of hygiene, sleeping patterns of children,
contents of people’s cupboards, how and what they eat and at what time, even how one’s bed is
made up. Everything – from larger processes concerning the population to the above microsites
of social reproduction – becomes important for the purpose of effective (and affective)
colonial/liberal governance.

Furthermore, what we are witnessing here in the acts and discourses of the child-savers-
turned-social workers is a production of dominant subjects along racial, gendered, and class
lines. For one, through the condemnation of domestic life of lesser-whites, we find a reassertion
of a dominant subject status for the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie, including the social/moral
reformers themselves. In this context, the seeming superiority of the child-savers was readily
assumed. For their efforts to study, assess, judge, and educate are performative modes of
behaviour that continuously reassert a claim of moral superiority and a superior/heightened

74 See in particular Foucault (1980), “Truth and Power”: “In defining the effects of power as repression, one adopts
a purely juridical conception of such power, one identifies power with a law which says no, power is taken above all
as carrying the force of a prohibition. Now I believe that this is a wholly negative, narrow, skeletal conception of
power, one which has been curiously widespread. If power were never anything but repressive, if it never did
anything but to say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power hold good, what
makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn’t only weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it traverses and
produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive
network which runs through the whole social body, much more than as a negative instance whose function is
repression (118-119).”
understanding of civility – an understanding that is imagined to be inherent to their class and racial backgrounds, one that is theirs to assess and to teach, and one that underscores their inherent right to rule and govern. Moreover, going beyond their own subjectivities, in defining, assessing, and correcting that which was *unacceptable*, social/moral reformers simultaneously articulated the meaning of the *acceptable*. Or expressed differently, the vocabulary of right and wrong living was utilized to articulate and enforce the standards of a Canadian settler colonial morality, a value-system based on notions of bourgeois respectability, patriarchy, and racial superiority. In instructing lesser-whites in ‘proper’ conduct and the values of a white settler society, social/moral reformers simultaneously articulated the meanings of whiteness, bourgeois civility, and Canadian citizenship/national-belonging.

The cultivation of white Canadian civility was articulated in burgeoning discourses on parenting, domesticity, and child rearing – microsites in which bourgeois whiteness was to be reproduced. With this came an insistence on a performance of a certain racial or what Stoler calls “cultural competence” (2002:118), a competence through which, if mastered, access to the white settler community was to be granted. An assessment of proper conduct/civility, and an invitation into national belonging and racial membership, entailed an assessment of peoples’ private lives. The child-savers’ assessments and instructions provided guidelines on how these values were to be practiced and instilled through the routines of the everyday. Part of this was an adherence to settler colonial morality, and the enactment of displayable characteristics that evidenced one’s ability to rule over themselves, their households, their children, and, as one may infer, the ability to also rule over others. Proper performances of weaning and cleaning served as the observable criteria according to which a persons’ racial/cultural competence could be measured. Expressed differently, the way individuals conduct their lives, a conduct that needed to align with the social/moral reformers’ sense of right and wrong, served as racial and national markers of
belonging. And as such, what we are witnessing here is the production of morally and physically ‘good’, ‘healthy’, and ‘useful’ national subjects, the production of an ideal citizenry that was profoundly raced, classed, and gendered. We can see this in the child-savers’ assessments of homes and conduct. We can see this in the child-savers’ instructions for improvement. And we can see this in the child-savers’ very terminology of “home-restoration”. For referring to their reformation work within the homes of the poor as home-restoration work, the child-savers worked from an understanding that these homes could potentially be restored – a terminology implying that they sank to a level lower than they could be, and to a level too low of where they should be. It is an invitation (and a forceful one at that) to lesser-whites to fulfil their inherited potential and take up their role in the nation, a nation built on whiteness, heteropatriarchy, capitalism, and Indigenous dispossession. And it was their duty, to raise their children – ‘the future rulers of the country’ – to do the same. If not successful or compliant, this would have to be done by someone else in the colony.

Chapter 5
Stories of Success: Colonial Subject Formation and the ‘Saved’ White Child

In the time that the Act [Children’s Protection Act] has been in force some seven thousand children have been thus transplanted and of these it has been calculated that more than 98 per cent have grown up, or are growing up, well. There have been less than 2 per cent of failures. And those seven thousand are only the children actually taken. A larger, probably a much larger, number have been saved in their own homes by improving the home conditions. What an army of future criminals has not this work transformed into good citizens! – W.L. Scott (1909)¹

“…the subject of the dream is the dreamer…” – Toni Morrison (1990:17)

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the Children’s Aid Society’s disciplinary-pedagogical efforts centered on lesser-white parents and their ‘dwellings’. This chapter turns to their children. Once removed from their families, children for whom the CAS assumed guardianship were taken into the CAS shelter before being sent to foster families. While it was in the foster home that the children’s transformation from waifs into citizens was to be accomplished, it was already in the

shelter that the Society began the transformative process. This was done to prepare the children for foster families, and ultimately, set them on the path towards ‘good’ citizenship. The first part of this chapter examines the efforts of the Children’s Aid Society as they started the child’s ‘transformation’ process in the shelter.

I then turn towards child-savers’ self-proclaimed evidence of their success: narrative and pictorial representations of foster(ed) children that detail their successful transformation from neglected waifs into proper, white, civilized citizens and imperial subject. The distribution of printed stories and photographs were popular mediums through which child-savers would showcase their ‘success’. Hence, my analysis turns to these mediums.² We hear from the child-savers, foster families, and to a lesser extent from the children themselves, as they provide evidence of childhood successfully transformed. Through an examination of these stories and photographs I provide content and depth to what social/moral reformers meant by the category of ‘good citizenship’, what national belonging ‘looked’ like, and what their ‘success’ was meant to signify.

Nowhere are the anxieties over proper white subject formation as explicitly visible as in the child-savers’ stories and pictorial representation of children they claimed to have ‘saved’. Indeed, I hold that no other colonial archive could make clearer that the discourses of child-saving, nation-building, imperialism, and white bourgeois civility were as intimately tied than the messages these pictures and stories were made to convey. It becomes evident that struggles over children were struggles over citizenship and the nation. National belonging was firmly rooted in gendered notions of bourgeois whiteness, and children were made to perform such

² This analysis relies on stories and photographs that were published in the Annual Reports of the Children’s Aid Society (1986-1910), the Annual Reports of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children (1894-1913), as well as the Children’s Aid Society’s archival records filed under “photographic album”.

raced, classed, gendered markers of belonging. At issue for these children was “the learning of place and race” (Stoler 2002:18), the cultivation of a white settler self who harbored affective ties to the white nation, and who would thus embrace and continue the project of colonization, Indigenous dispossession and erasure.

The Children’s Shelter: Beginning the Transformative Process

Children for whom the CAS assumed legal guardianship were taken to the CAS shelter for a limited time before being sent to a foster family. While this ‘new’ and ‘better’ family was imagined as the space in which the transformation of waifs into useful citizens was to be accomplished, the CAS tasked itself with “preparing morally, physically and socially those children who have been made wards of the Society for foster homes.”

This work already began at the point of reception, during the shelter’s intake process. As part of the intake, the children were searched upon admission (the boys by the Superintendent of the shelter, and the girls by the Matron). All moneys, articles that could be used as a weapon, or items that could facilitate escape, were taken from them. After being stripped of these items, the children were cleansed and purified. As set out in CAS Constitution and the Shelter’s “Rules and Regulations”, “children received at the Shelter shall be immediately bathed, and if deemed necessary, their hair shall be cut, their clothes changed and cleansed, and they shall be kept, or be required to keep themselves, clean and decent in their person.” For this purpose, it was


stipulated that each child should have “at least one bath each day, either before breakfast or before going to bed.”

Such prepared, the children would begin their time in the shelter. Each day they would be taught discipline and civilized conduct through a strict adherence to regimented daily routines. A ‘normal’ day at the shelter looked something like this. The children had to rise at 7 a.m. Regulated meal times set the time for breakfast at 8 a.m., after which ‘family worship’ was to be conducted by the Superintendent. After the worship service, a minimum of six hours a day was dedicated to school instruction and work. Children would receive lessons equivalent to those taught in public schools, and/or perform certain forms of labour as required or authorized by the Shelter. Regarding children’s labour, the stipulation was as follows: “The labor of the children so far as they are capable shall be utilized under the direction of the Superintendent and Matron in ordinary housework of the Shelter. The services of the children may also be utilized in carrying on any industrial work of which the children are capable.”

Lunch would be served at 1 p.m., and supper was to be served between 5 and 6 p.m. After supper, a second worship service was to be conducted. After the worship service, between 6 and 8:45 p.m., the children had to prepare for the night. Those who had not bathed before breakfast, would do so now. At 9 p.m. all children

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had to be in their beds. Boys and girls were kept apart, not just in their sleeping wards, but also during playtime (there were two different playgrounds, spatially separated).7

During their daily activities, the children were closely monitored. This was done by the shelter staff and the shelter volunteers (such as resident Officers and Assistants). In addition, at least twice per day, the Superintendent and the Matron were required to conduct ‘rounds’. During these rounds, they would inspect every part of the shelter (rooms in the girls’ and boys’ wards, shelter facilities, and the playgrounds) and were required to see how each child was adjusting and coming along.8 During the night, a night guard would stand watch. All staff and volunteers at the shelter were asked to “perform their duties in a kind but firm manner.” 9 If children were found to misbehave or conduct themselves improperly, they would be punished. While the staff was generally permitted to verbally reprimand children, and to some extent physically discipline them, harsher disciplinary measures were to be authorized by the Superintendent alone. As set out in the shelters’ “Rules and Regulations”, “Punishment or deprivations shall be administered only under the special authority of the Superintendent.”10

Through such disciplined and hygienic living, alongside lessons learned through school, work, prayer, and regulated play, children were prepared for foster families and their

7 Ibid.
transformative process had begun. This was “not always an easy task”, as the CAS readily admitted. Yet, nonetheless, their methods worked, they said, and “a goodly measure of success may nevertheless be fairly claimed.” To showcase their ‘success’ child-savers would rely on stories and pictures detailing their successful transformations.

‘Before’ and ‘After’

For this purpose, sensationalist stories abound of the degenerate characters and abhorrent appearances of the children who were received at the shelter. These children were described as uncivilized ‘half-savages’, ‘disorderly’, ‘dirty’, and ‘contaminated’ (physically and morally). Sometimes they were found in such ‘degenerate’ states that all their clothes and belongings were burned at the point of reception. These were children, it was said, who up until this point knew nothing of law and order, children who were simply allowed to “run wild” and do as they pleased. Stories of these children were told along such lines: “Strange incidents happen when children are first placed in the Shelter”, Kelso recounts. For instance, “[o]ne little girl, five years of age, was so wild and uncivilized and so accustomed to living like an animal that she would not eat at the table with the other children, but when given food would hide under the table with it.” While a range of explanations could be drawn upon to interpret this scenario (the girl being scared as one of them), the decision to read the girls’ actions as uncivilized and animalistic are

12 Ibid.
significant. So interpreted, the girl displayed characteristics that stood in contradistinction to all those qualities that make for ‘good citizenship’, qualities that are opposite of what the white settler society claims and strives to be, qualities expressed through value-laden and racially-charged binary constructions (animalistic and wild/civilized; bad/good). This was a girl who was being saved from slipping towards savagery, expressed through a dichotomy that was easy to comprehend for it resembled the real-world politics underpinning Canadian settlement.

Descriptions of this sort were visualized through a variety of pictures showcasing the ‘uncivilized’, impoverished, and dirty state of children when taken from their parents. Because of the way these pictures were presented by the child-savers, I describe them as ‘before and after’ pictures. In these pictures, the anxieties involved in the production of white settler subjects is particularly pronounced. Indeed, these ‘before and after’ pictures bring the entanglement of child-saving with imperialism and white bourgeois civility to the forefront.14


14 For an excellent analysis of ‘before and after’ pictures as they pertain to Indigenous children see Milloy (1999).
The ‘before’ pictures show children in their ‘degenerate state’ as received by the CAS. They show children in dirty, holey, and/or ill-fitting clothes. Their hair is unkempt, their faces often dirty. Generally, these children do not wear shoes, not many have belts – some boys are shown with pieces of yarn wrapped around their waist to keep their pants up. Many have ‘bad’ postures and slumped shoulders. Pictures were taken of half-starved children, some in a lying position, seemingly too weak to sit on their own. Some of these half-starved children were shown only partially dressed, presumably to show their malnourished state. None of the children – not even the girls – smile. The pictures are generally taken against a plain background – no adornments, no wallpapers, no screens.
In contrast, the ‘after’ pictures, present a very different story. These sorts of pictures show children that have been ‘saved’, not just in the sense that they were removed from their degenerate environments, but more importantly in that they are in the process of, or have already completed, their transformation into useful citizens. These are the children who are now ready to join the nation, or at the very least, have been placed on their path towards ‘good’ citizenship.

These children are well-dressed per gender-specific bourgeois Anglo-Saxon tastes. Boys are generally pictured in some suit or uniform, and the girls wear a frock or dress, generally adorned with frills or collars. They wear shoes, and their shoes are polished. Some of the boys wear ties. Others wear bow ties, most wear pocket squares. Some children wear hats or hold an item that otherwise signals civility and middle-class belonging, such as an umbrella or a walking
stick. Their postures similarly convey refinement and civility. Many of the boys stand upright having one arm behind their backs. Some of the boys pose in a seated position, with one leg over the other and one hand on their ankle – a posture of refined relaxation. The girls usually smile. The boys look astute. The children are well groomed. They are clean, their hair is kempt. The boys usually sport a slick side-part, and the girls usually wear curls, braids, or a neat bun. All of which is to signal hair, dress, and posture that belong to a ‘lady’ or ‘gentleman’, gender-specific performances of white bourgeois respectability.

Gendered forms of representation were not only visible in dress and posture, but also in the acts children had to perform. Sometimes, girls more so than boys would be pictured against a backdrop that placed them in nature, amid flowers, or in a park, in which they were sitting,
smiling, waiting, exhibiting qualities associated with passive femininity. Boys, in contrast, appear with wooden rifles asked to pose like soldiers, dressed like sailors, or scholars. In the rare case that girls were pictured as actively ‘doing’ something, they would perform domestic tasks. See, for example, “Picture 7” and “Picture 8” – two pictures taken against the same backdrop, yet with the boy and the girl having very different roles to play.

Not only dress and posture, but also the environments in which the children were placed to have their pictures taken were meant to convey wealth, power, and social status. In contrast to the plain backgrounds chosen for the ‘before’ pictures, many backdrops for the ‘after’ pictures look like the interior room of a wealthy residence, such as a reading room or parlour. Pictured, for example, are pillars, marbled floors, large draperies, fire places, intricate wall paneling, or wall papers. Against such backdrops, certain props would be placed around the children. Most often, the children were positioned so as to sit on top or stand in front of a chair, usually a high-backed wooden chair with ornate carvings, most of them upholstered in leather or expensive looking fabrics, such as damask patterns. Sometimes potted plants would be in the picture, sometimes there would be a side table, either made from intricately carved wood, sometimes with a white crocheted table cloth, or pictured would be a side table with a marble top. Many of the children would stand on a rug, and sometimes they would stand on or near a fur throw. Whatever the item was, it was something that signified luxury, comfort, and a particular European sense of refinement, elegance, and style. These are items owned by those of a superior class status, items that are not needed for survival and that are not necessary for day-to-day living, items these children would certainly not have been around in their own homes.
Stories of Success

Like these photographs, the success stories child-savers told through their annual reports paint a similar picture. A number of success stories were featured in every annual report by the CAS and the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children. Most notably, these stories involved the foster family. In all the success stories child-savers and foster parents told of children, the children were portrayed as growing up ‘well’ – they were developing into physically strong (for boys), beautiful (for girls), morally pure, industrious, civilized, obedient, and disciplined young men and women. For boys, descriptions such as this were common: “He is growing in health as well as in stature and is becoming a fine manly boy who promises to be an ornament to
society.”15 Saved girls, in contrast, would often be described along such lines: She is “quite a pet, not only with her papa and me, but all who see her seem to love her at once. She is very attractive and seems to grow fonder of us day by day.”16

To substantiate the ‘fact’ that children were successfully transforming, stories were told of children attending school regularly, going to church, and eagerly helping with work in the home and/or on the farm (the latter being a reality for many children who were sent to the Prairies). Not surprisingly, since patriarchal gender roles were taken as markers of a civilized existence, showing evidence of such performances were taken as manifestations of the children’s successful transformation. Girls were described as obedient and delightful little home-makers, for example, learning or knowing how to sew, cook, clean, milk the cows, or as ‘helping out her mother’ with whatever task at hand. Showing obedience to the father was another such criterion. For example, a foster mother’s letter printed in the annual report of the CAS (1898) provides the following story:

We love her very much, and she loves us; but her papa best. …. She is a very lovable child, her only fault being a very strong will. She was very obstinate at first, but has learned by degrees that we mean what we say, and now she is a very happy child. …. She knows how to bring her papa’s

slippers, and put them in their place when he puts them off; and we think her just a splendid girl.\textsuperscript{17}

It is not hard to imagine that teaching children such gendered performances required some disciplinary enforcement and training. The following example is similarly telling in that regard. This time, a foster father recounts the positive developments they experienced with their new foster daughter:

[name withheld] is in good health, is growing nicely, and appears to be contented with us. … She is certainly a beautifully dispositioned child.

… She has quite the family of dolls. … [name withheld] named all those dolls herself, and performs the duties of a mother as well as she can. The other day she had Jessie [the doll] to be with her, and when she awoke Jessie was off the pillow where she had placed her before she went to sleep. For this she gave her a real good spanking. Her mother was in the next room and heard her correcting Jessie, so she slipped in and enquired what was the trouble. [name withheld] promptly replied that Jessie was a bad girl, and had moved out of the place where she had put her.”\textsuperscript{18}

The learning of domestic skills and obedience served as prime markers of success for girls. For boys, obedience and discipline were also important criteria to acquire. Yet, other qualities were also stressed to indicate a successful transformation. Boys were either described as strong and competent ‘lads’, especially if they were ‘good workers’, or they would be portrayed


as ‘fine young men’, if they succeeded in school. In the following story, a foster father recounts the successful transformation of a boy into a ‘lad’:

He is well and doing well. He was very delicate and small for his age when he came here, but we thought we would give him a trial. So we fed him with good strong wholesome food, kept him well clad, and gave him plenty of out door exercise, and to-day you would hardly know him. He is healthy, hearty, and robust, and a good and faithful little worker. He is very obedient, and seems to take great delight and interest in horses and cattle. If he continues to do as well in the future as he has in the past, I do not think I could wish for a better lad. We could never see any signs of him being homesick. He seems to feel quite at home; just the same, I should judge, as if he was born and brought up in the family.¹⁹

Curiously, while most forms of labour, especially selling newspapers for boys, were considered punishable crimes and forms of neglect in the city, once in their foster homes, children’s labour – as long as they would also attend school and church – were considered positive signs indicative of discipline and industriousness. Children’s letters describing their work would often be featured in the annual reports of the CAS as signs of positive improvement. For example, one girl’s letter was printed saying “[my sibling] and I are well … I am going to school. I sweep the school at night and light the fire and dust in the morning, and will get for it five dollars when the year is out.”²⁰ Another letter reads: “I am getting along very well. I am


healthy and strong, and I am doing lots of work. This is the busiest time of the year, and I am glad that Sunday is a day of rest, for I am always very tired at the end of the week. I would like to hear from you again, telling me something about my brother.” The reality of this child being used as a labourer, while in search for his brother, did not elicit sympathetic commentary by the CAS. Instead, this story was published as another positive example, indicative of the child’s industrious nature.

In general, ‘saved’ children were not only described as much improved in health and character, but, furthermore, happy. This ‘fact’ was stressed repeatedly, throughout the different stories, throughout the different publications, and throughout the years. The children were not sad. They were not homesick. They did not miss their parents. The children were loved, and they loved being where they were. Many foster parents would send letters stating how happy the children were. For example, “He has never been lonesome”, one foster parent declares. And “[h]e could not bear to go back to you, but he says he had such fun at the Shelter.” “[The girl] is just as happy as the day is long”, another one writes. And “She is the joy of our home, and we like her better every day. I hope all the others who come to Manitoba are as happy as she is.”

Similarly, letters were printed that were written by foster children themselves. These letters were a rare occurrence (since it was the policy of the Children’s Aid Society to break the ties between children and their former surroundings, communication between the children and


\[\text{\textsuperscript{22}}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{23}}\text{Ibid.}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{24}}\text{Ibid.}\]
the CAS once in foster homes was limited). In cases, however, where the children were old
enough to remember their former homes and parents, some correspondence between the CAS
and the children was occasionally upheld. These letters would then be showcased in the CAS’
annual reports. In these letters, children would declare their happiness, their love for their ‘new’
mother and father, and their gratitude towards the Children’s Aid Society for having saved them.
“I have a lovely home here,” writes one of the children.25 “I am glad to have a nice home”,
writes another.26 Sometimes, children were so grateful, it was said, that they would send the little
money they made back to the Children’s Aid Society. The children did so, the CAS claimed, to
ensure that other children could also be saved. Such monetary contributions would then be
highlighted in the annual reports. For example, one foster child writes: “I am going to school
every day; I am quite a man; I can ride my pony. If I don’t spell all right you must excuse me. I
will try and do better next time. Find enclosed $1.50 from my bank. I will try and get more next
time.”27

A Different Story

Of course, the reality for many children may have looked quite differently. One can imagine that
their experiences may not have been as perfectly happy as described, or perhaps that the term
‘happy’ was rather loosely applied. Moreover, the above statement by a foster parent that their
foster child “had such fun at the Shelter” seems particularly suspect. Life at the shelter seemed to

25 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 532. Fonds Title: Fifth Annual
26 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 532. Fonds Title: Seventh
27 Ibid.
have been a far cry from fun, or even comfortable. Indeed, beyond the highly regulated and
disciplinary manner in which the shelter was run, the conditions at the shelter seemed to have
been quite abhorrent.

The Toronto CAS was criticized for its shelter conditions on numerous occasions.
Criticism came from the public, other social/moral reform organizations, and even from Kelso
himself. The nature of this criticism was mostly directed at the shelter’s carceral features. For
example, in April 1916, Kelso charged that “the conditions prevailing at the shelter were
scandalous and worse than to be found at any common jail” and “that boys were locked up in a
basement room for a week or longer without once during that time being permitted to enjoy open
air or exercise.” 28 J. K. Macdonald, then President of the CAS denied Kelso’s charges. While he
admitted that boys were locked in the basement, and while he also admitted that they were not
provided mattresses (a further charge that was laid against him), Macdonald pointed out that the
boys of concern were transferred to them from the juvenile court – a class of children that
required a different treatment than those who were prepared for foster families. And even so,
these boys did receive blankets, he explained. Mattresses were withheld only because
“[e]xperience had shown that it was not desirable to furnish mattresses for such boys whose
bodies and clothing were frequently in a filthy condition”. 29 Kelso’s charges were thus dismissed
as “sensational”, “untruthful and unfounded”. 30

28 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Historical Records. Fonds 1001, Series 537. Fonds
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
According to contemporary sensibilities Kelso’s accusations do not seem ill-founded.

The level of carceral control employed at the shelter was indeed reminiscent of a prison, rather than what one might expect of a space that claimed to be a ‘safe haven’. We can infer this from the “Rules and Regulations” for the shelter. For example, the rules and regulations stipulate that the Superintendent and the Matron of the shelter were to lock the doors and safeguard all keys.\(^{31}\) This was done, not to prevent the loss of the keys, but to prevent the loss of the children. For one, there were reported cases in which parents were accused of secretly taking their children back home, or “stealing” them as the CAS put it. And quite frequently, cases were reported of children running away from the shelter and simply returning home.\(^{32}\) To prevent such scenarios, the rules and regulations laid out that:

In order to prevent escapes, he [the superintendent] shall see that the front guard door, and the yard gate, except when in use, are always locked. He shall in his daily visits observe carefully all parts of the Shelter, and shall at least once a week inspect all the doors, windows, gratings, locks, chimneys, and openings of every description, and search the bedding and furnishings, and all parts of the yard, in order to see that everything is secure and that anything which would facilitate an escape is removed beyond the reach of the children.\(^{33}\)

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\(^{33}\) “Constitution and By-Laws together with Rule and Regulations for the Shelter of the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto.” 1900. In City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 537. Fonds
Like Kelso, the Toronto Council of Women similarly criticized the CAS Shelter for its carceral nature. For example, the Council of Women disapprovingly commented on the fact that the night guard employed at the shelter was a former prison guard. The women’s criticism of the shelter also went beyond its carceral conditions, showing concern that even there – in a space dedicated to save the children of the nation – children were not properly cared for. The Council of Women claimed that several cases of alleged malnutrition had come to their attention. They further accused the shelter personnel of improper supervision, and spoke of cases of physical punishment that they considered inappropriate. Believing that something needed to be done, the council women (like Kelso) called for an official investigation into the conditions of the CAS shelter. At their monthly meeting, in April 1916, the women passed the following resolution:

Whereas it has come to the attention of the Toronto Local Council of Women that conditions prevailing in the Children’s Aid Society, 229 Simcoe Street, are not conductive to the physical, mental and moral welfare of the children, who have become wards of the city and are entrusted to this institution. Be it resolved that the council of women ask the City Council to give this matter a full, thorough and immediate investigation and urge a reorganization of the whole society in the interests of our future citizens.

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After this resolution, the Council of Women with Mrs. Heustis as their spokeswoman appeared before the City’s Board of Control, demanding such an investigation. During the delivery of their charges, they spoke of a boy who was “allowed to go three days with a broken ankle without any care being given” and that “children are dubbed ‘feeble-minded’ who are simply half-starved”. After citing cases of malnutrition, Mrs. Heustis was challenged by a member of the Board of Control who asked whether she had any evidence for her claims. To this she replied: “If a certain institution states that it costs only 7 ½ cents a day to feed the children, I would say that that is mighty little upon which to build up bone and muscle” and, further, that they had witnesses willing to testify if need be.36

The Council of Women did seem to have such witness accounts. Indeed, it seems that the Council engaged in some investigative work into these matters. Handwritten notes indicate that the women took statements from adults who shared first-person accounts of occurrences they had witnessed in connection with the shelter. Statements were also taken from children who had been at the shelter and whom the Council of Women interviewed afterwards. One of these children recounts not being let outdoors, not even in the yard, for over a week, that the rooms were ‘dark and gloomy’, that they were not given light in the evenings, that they did not have enough to eat, that they were given only beans, no potatoes, and very little meat. The same child alleges that she had to get up at 6:30 am “to wash floors before breakfast”, claiming that she “felt quite faint”. The notes also refer to other children who allegedly received nothing to eat but bread and jam,

and reference is made to a little boy who “wept because he had to be sent back to the shelter and when asked why said they didn’t get enough to eat there.”  

Make-Belief and Dress-Up: Affect, Place, and Race

“What the camera allows you to do is to invent, to create. That’s really what photographs are, not records of moments, but rather imaginative acts.” – Thomas King (2011:39)

I do not know whether these charges were substantiated. Regardless of the accuracy of these accusations, regardless of whether the stories about the happy state of affairs in the foster homes or the shelter are true (albeit they likely are not), the questions that concern me here are of a different kind. Why the enormous investment in portrayals of childhood successfully transformed? And why do we need to hear that the children are happy with their transformation?

These questions are particularly pertinent when analyzing the ‘before and after’ photographs produced by the CAS. This is for the reason that these before and after pictures were nothing but make-belief. The pictures were not taken in the children’s’ new homes. The children were not placed in luxury. Instead, the backdrops of the pictures were screens. The items of comfort and luxury were props. Not even the clothes were theirs to keep. The clothes were costumes. The pictures show screens, costumes, and props, recycled and to be worn by a number of children. Why the effort to dress up the children, fashion screens, and collect props? Given that these ‘before and after’ pictures are mere make-belief, what is their purpose?

It would be too simplistic to suggest that the pictures were merely used as promotional material by the CAS to make a case for itself, albeit that too was likely part of the reason. Yet,

there was more at stake here than merely convincing the public of the good work the society was doing. These performative acts are part of the same project that led to the disciplinary intervention by social/moral reformers into the lives of the children’s parents. As such, this is similarly about the making of a national identity along heteropatriarchal, bourgeois, and European values. What we are witnessing in this play of dress-up and make-belief is quite literally the fashioning of the idea(l) of the perfect white settler subject. These are images that convey how a ‘citizen’ should look like, how they ought to behave, and how they should carry themselves, now and in the future – classed, gendered, and racial makers of belonging and exclusion. This is what it meant to cultivate the nation’s “little citizens.”

The fact that these pictures were make-belief speaks to how powerful the investment in this project was.

Through this reformatory project, children were meant to be drawn into the imperial project and settler colonial citizenship, made to embrace the project of colonization. One of the most striking pictures in this regard is one of a little boy in front of a backdrop that presents him as standing in a harbor or at a dock in front of a body of water (“Picture 10”). Behind him, in the distance, one can see one or two large ships. The ships appear to be schooners, a type of sailing vessel invented by the Dutch in the 17th century, popularized by the British Royal Navy, and perfected in the colonies in North America from the 18th century onward. A type of sailing vessel used for purposes such as exploration, offshore fishing, trading, and slaving. A type of sailing vessel that, therefore, serves as the quintessential signifier for the British empire, imperial

prowess, and colonial expansion. Not just this boy, but a number of children were placed in front of the very same screen.

At issue here is, what Stoler calls, “the learning of place and race” (2002:18). What we see here is a glimpse of a reformist education “in which children destined to be citizens rather than subjects were required to share” (ibid:112). Before these children were ‘saved’, like the little girl described by Kelso as eating under the table like an animal, they were imagined as having grown up below a certain threshold of civility, a threshold that was deemed unacceptable for their kind. Untrained in the roles they were ‘destined’ to fil, these children lived at a level of existence uncouth for who they ‘really’ are, and who they were meant to become. Instead of conducting themselves like imperial subject, these settler children behaved like savages; they acted like animals – descriptions indicative of a racial episteme to which the dichotomy between savagery (Indianness)/civility (Whiteness) is foundational. Settler children should have never
found themselves there, for the realm below that threshold belongs to that wild, uncivilized racial Other that need not explicitly be named, but against which the meaning of ‘Western civility’
could be established. What we see in those ‘after’ pictures is an instruction manual towards
national belonging, a route towards citizenship and inclusion via the route of race and imperial
belonging. Despite their inferior class status, and despite their borderline whiteness (for some),
these children were required to participate (or made to look as if they participated) in those
efforts that promoted the political, economic, and cultural stability of the nation. And for the
Canadian settler colony, this meant participation in white nationalism, heteropatriarchy, and
capitalism – interlocking forms of power and domination that took root and proliferated through
the dispossession and attempted erasure of Indigeneity. It was via these routes that the
transformation of neglected lesser-white children into imperial ‘civilized’ subjects was supposed
to be accomplished. These children were to be turned into something the ‘savage’ is not.
Learning their place in the racial and social hierarchy meant that they were to be clothed in
expensive (or, rather, expensive-looking) garments and positioned so as to mimic rulers, colonial elites, civilized ladies or men of importance and authority. These were, of course, imaginary
social positionings for their class-status certainly prevented these children from occupying these
roles in the present, and very likely, also in the future.

Furthermore, why was it necessary to know that these children were happy? Why did the public need to hear from the foster parents that the children were content? And more importantly, why was it necessary to hear it from the children themselves? Children’s stories of happiness and gratitude were not exceptional. On the contrary, every annual report of the CAS featured stories of love, happiness, and gratitude. And moreover, every time children’s statements were printed, in either the annual reports of the CAS or the annual reports of the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children, it would be stories such as these. The space in which these children were
able to share their experiences, and the narratives they were allowed to tell, were already predetermined. The children’s’ stories told through these reports could only ever be stories of this kind. I suggest that what we are witnessing here is an insistence on the happiness of these children. And furthermore, that this insistence on their happiness, and the ardent repetition of this ‘truth’, bespeak a larger anxiety.

It is a racial anxiety about the future of the settler colony, about perceived threats to imperial rule and white superiority. This is about a white nation that perceives itself under attack. The struggles over children, are struggles over citizenship and the nation. These children were needed to bolster the colonial settler society, they had to be transformed to ensure the continued viability of white bourgeois settlers and to partake in Indigenous dispossession and erasure. As Kelso’s charges and the Council of Women’s investigative work exemplify, anxieties over the future of the nation ran so high, that even the very Society (the CAS) whose sole purpose it was to care for the children of the nation, was scrutinized and accused of not caring for them well enough. It is an anxiety that also informs the quotation with which this chapter begun. The quote by W. L. Scott, which was re-published by Kelso, tells of thousands and perhaps even tens of thousands of children who have been successfully transformed into good citizens. It is claimed that 98 per cent of child transformations have been successful, that only 2 per cent have failed. Of course, this statement of success is also nothing but make-believe. There is no measurement with which to establish such numbers, no calculation to be drawn upon to show that an imaginary army had been stopped. Yet, it is the assurance of this ‘truth’ that is significant.

The declarations of love and happiness from these children served as a source of encouragement, comfort, and appeasement to those anxious about the future of the settler colony, an easing of anxieties over the future of the race and nation, an assurance that something was being done – and that this something seemed to work. If ‘saving the child’ meant ‘saving the
nation’, then the child-savers’ stories of success conveyed the message that the nation was indeed in the process of being saved. This is about the building of a white nation that goes beyond merely having European settlers accumulated in a bound territory. As the Presbyterian press put it in 1908, “we want to build a nation, not gather together a mob” (quoted in Valverde 1993:26). Because of the importance of this citizenship project, and the anxiety involved in being successful in this endeavour, it seems that having the children perform and display character traits that were judged useful to settler colonial citizenship did not suffice. At the core of the production of white settler subjects was a citizen that did not only dress and act the part, but one that also harbored affective ties to the nation, to his/her community of fellow white settlers. The above pictures were displays of characteristics, disposition, and traits favoured in a Canadian citizen. The stories that were told were stories about children performing roles a Canadian citizen ought to perform. However, what these pictures showed, and what these stories told us, were also the only ‘displayable things’ that provided insight as to the state of the child’s transformation. Expressed differently, these displayable things were also the only observable criteria for what was far more difficult to judge: the affective attachments of these children to the white settler society, an adherence to its values, and hence a commitment (implicitly or explicitly) to its economic, social, and political national project of colonization and Indigenous erasure.

The insistence on the children’s happiness, the fact that the ‘before’ and ‘after’ pictures were make-believe, and the sheer enormity of the work involved in reforming (or insisting to have reformed) “waste material” into “useful citizens” (“Picture 1” and “Picture 2”) – the locating, assessing, and entering the homes of poor settlers, the fashioning of Aid Societies, shelters, the newly invented system of foster families – speak to the level of importance ascribed to the project of fashioning a Canadian citizenry. Such a project involved the learning of political, economic, and racial affiliations, the fostering of certain positive sentiments towards
the nation, and, hence, a production of a citizenry that willingly reaffirms the settler colonial project. Individuals needed to learn to uphold certain values and ideals, but more, they needed to want to uphold these values and ideals. As quoted before, it was believed that the child must be “grafted on the body politic… through the family.” To do so, the children had to be happy and content with their new place, their new family, and by extension, their transformation into colonial subjects. As such, these children needed to profess their love to their new home and their new family. Not only did we need to hear it from the foster parents, but ideally the children themselves needed to voice it. Presumably, this is what Kelso (1913) meant when he declared that they “conquer by loving.” And presumably, the battle was considered won if their objects of concern loved them back.

PART TWO
Introduction to Part Two
Stories of Violence and the Object(ification) of Analysis


We now shift our focus and enter the second part of this dissertation, a part that takes as its analytical focus the settler society’s management of Indigenous children. Each remaining chapter provides a glimpse into this history and present, a part which I begin with a focus on the colonizers’ conception of the ‘Indian child’ and their corresponding management through Indian Residential Schools, after which I turn to a discussion of the child welfare system.

I approach this part of the dissertation with trepidation. So, allow me to begin with a preamble. As someone who writes from a post-structuralist perspective, I am wary of the materializing effects of discourse and the power of discursive production. During the months I spent sifting through the colonial archive of the Department of Indian Affairs to write something on Indian Residential Schools, I was confronted with the many documents produced by the Department on the subject matter of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous children, documents that speak of their ‘savage nature’, reiterations of the Indian’s inherent inferiority, declarations of the need to change them and considerations on how best to do so. In attending to Indian Residential Schools and the white supremacist logics leading to their creation, I inadvertently re-tell stories of dehumanization, I re-circulate the settler society’s insistence of their own imagined civility and superiority vis-à-vis Indigenous peoples’ savage nature. How does one speak about such a subject without re-inscribing that which one seeks to decenter? I do not have an answer to this.

Relatedly, how does one speak of the institutionalized and institutionally authorized forms of cruelty and violence the Canadian settler society meted out against Indigenous children,
without inadvertently inviting white readers to imagine Indigenous peoples as damaged as a result – a discourse so very central to present-day Canadian colonialism as Razack (2015) has shown us? We know that violence, abuse, and cruelty have routinely been carried out by priests, bishops, nuns, principals, teachers, nurses – no matter the denomination of professional designation, the terror inflicted on Indigenous children by their white care-takers was horrific. We have heard accounts of medical experimentations, starvation, children being left to die, torturous punishments. Many such gruesome stories have been told (see, for example, Knockwood 1992; Linda 1993; Assembly of First Nations 1994; Miller 1996; Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council 1996; Secwepemc Cultural Education Society 2000; Sellars 2013; Chrisjohn and Young 2006; TRC 2015 “Survivors Speak”, “Missing Children”; Mosby 2013). We know what white Canadians did to these children. And we have known for a very long time.¹

A turn away from stories of violence could run the risk of trivializing what was done. Remaining with these stories runs the risk of inadvertently adding to the plethora of “damage-centered research” (Tuck 2009) that already exists on the subject matter of Indian Residential Schools, portraying Indigenous nations as damaged, broken, and suffering, as mere victims of colonial violence. This of course, is not accurate, for we know that the Indian Residential Schools system was not successful. Indigenous peoples’ proliferation and indeed mere existence today being a constant reminder of the failure of the schools’ purpose of annihilation. Yet, this is also not to say that a century of Indian Residential Schools had no lasting detrimental effects.

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(see, for example, Ing 2011; Grant 2004; Million 2013; Sellars 2013; Assembly of First Nations 1994).

Yet, even with such a qualifier, how does one speak of this violence, without turning this violence into a spectacle for our consumption (Hartman 2003)? Remaining with stories of violence risks inviting white readers into a form of “race pleasure”, as Razack (borrowing Anthony Farley’s terminology) puts it (2007). For if we know what happened, why do we, as settlers, need to re-read and re-hear horrifying stories? Do we need to feel sick to our stomach, aghast, ashamed, sad, outraged? And if so, why? To convince others that what has been done was wrong? Or to convince ourselves that we would have acted differently? Whatever the reason, we do so by revisiting that scene of pain and suffering, once again using that ‘body in pain’ (Razack 2007) to do something for us. And as such, as Saidiya Hartman (2003) has argued, we operate from the same relations of domination and power that underpinned the violence. In her analysis of racial subjugation and slavery, Hartman refuses to reproduce spectacular scenes of cruelty and suffering, suggesting that such representations once more reproduce the objectification and fungability of blackness, positioning the suffering black body again as a sentimental resource for the spectator, a resource/object for enjoyment and pleasure. And there we have it: ‘Race pleasure’. A form of pleasure derived from stealing or consuming the Other’s pain, trauma and suffering (Razack 2007). This is not a simple sadistic pleasure in seeing others suffer (although it could be that too), but more insidiously, “the pleasure of flinching” (Sontag in Razack 2007:389), the “pleasure of indignation” (Hartman 2003:21), the pleasure that comes from not deriving pleasure. This goes beyond the level of the individual. Referring to Hartman, as well as Toni Morrison (1997) and Elizabeth Alexander (1995), Razack reminds us that “North Americans have a long history with Black bodies in pain” (2007:391). We rely on the spectacle
of the Others’ violated bodies “to forge a national and white consciousness” (ibid), she argues, “confirming white superiority through images of Black suffering” (ibid:378).

I have thus made a deliberate decision not to recount vivid descriptions of survivors’ and witnesses’ stories of torture, death, physical and sexual abuse. But I also contend that we must not turn away from the violence as such. I am reminded of Ned Blackhawk’s analysis that draws on violence as, both, “an interpretive concept as well as a method” (2008:5) through which the logics of white supremacy, colonial expansion and settlement can be examined.² Violence is a foundational category that settler colonialism requires for its actualization, the force that holds the colonial system together, producing a foundational relationship through which white subject formation is realized, through which colonizers can emerge as powerful, industrious, and owners of the land. An analysis of settler colonialism therefore must include a theorization of violence. Perhaps there is a fine line then in analyzing and turning to stories of violence. Perhaps one route is to follow Hartman’s suggestion and attempt to make sense of the violence “of the mundane” (Hartman 2003:4), rather than “exploit the shocking spectacle” (ibid) of tortured and mutilated bodies. I attempt to take this route by turning to the story of Anatanwin in the following chapter, the purpose of which is not to re-tell a story of an Indigenous child’s ‘body in pain’, but to render visible and critique the violence inherent to and required by white settler colonialism that took hold of this girl.

Yet, still, this is not entirely satisfying. For whether I dissect the mundane or the spectacular, the fact remains that I use Anatanwin to do something for me. I arrive at an analysis

² And, indeed, a range of scholars have done just that (see, for example, Razack 2002 “Gendered Racial Violence”, 2008, 2015, 2016; Ostler 2016; Young 2015).
of colonial governance via this child’s body, a body which I use as a heuristic device. And in
doing so, I say very little about Anatanwin. Her personhood remains largely unacknowledged.
Again, I turn her into an object – this time, for analysis. I am using her for a different purpose
and to say different things than the white colonizers over a century ago – but the fact that I am
using her remains. Perhaps we can subvert this by naming racial power as our own (Razack
2007:391), to read/consume the narrative in such a way that we remind ourselves that we are
always implicated in settler colonialism. Perhaps we can read contrapuntally (Said 1993), not
just across spaces, but also across time – between the then and now – to remind ourselves that
these issues have not been resolved, that the colonial relations of the past have been sustained
and still structure the now, that even in my attempt to add to anti-colonial critique, I am re-
inscribing the very relations of power I seek to decenter. Perhaps the conditions of possibility are
not in place for a colonizer to think and speak beyond this. And perhaps this is the point. – A
sober reminder that we are so deeply embedded in colonial relations, structurally, materially,
ideologically, and epistemologically that Western theorization cannot undo itself. Or perhaps it is
just I who cannot see and think beyond it. And it is with this that I have laid my thinking bare so
others can dissect it and intervene.
Chapter 6
The Indian Child’s “Intolerable Significance” or the Theft of Anatanwin

Introduction

Throughout the previous chapters I have made an overarching claim, namely that social welfare reform – or what I call the politics of care – are racially marked. Social/moral reform work was racial work, a fact that comes to the forefront again in this chapter. At the turn of the twentieth century, the subject of concern at the heart of child-saving/welfare reform was the white child. Outside of this framework of child-saving stands the Indigenous child. Excluded from the concerns of child-savers, yet of no less concern to the colonial state, this child population was to be managed differently.

To examine the contrasting, yet mutually reinforcing, forms of child/racial management, I begin by examining the colonial conception of the ‘Indian child’ (which underpins their management). Here, I turn to a story that I utilize as an entry point into this analysis. The story I tell is that of Anatanwin, a Lakhóta teenage girl, whom white settlers imagined as, both white and Indian at different times. Her management, or what was done to the girl, differed according to her racial classification. As such, this is a story that brings together colonial anxieties that center on white children and on Indigenous children – expressed on the body of the very same child – a microcosm of the racial and colonial strategies underlying the politics of care.

In turning towards the Indigenous child, and in making this figure central to my analysis, I deepen the theoretical framework that I have thus far utilized. Until now I drew on notions of biopolitical and disciplinary power to make sense of the ways white settler children were disciplined, punished, and reformed for the purpose of folding them into the white settler body
politic. Now that I center my analysis on the management of Indigenous children, and in order to make sense of the colonizers’ conception of the ‘Indian child’, I complement my framing by drawing on Julia Kristeva’s (1982) notion of “abjection” and Jodi Byrd’s (2011) insights on ‘Indianness’ (2011). Such a framing allows me to speak to the embodied and affective qualities of racial logics, through which the Indian child emerges as ‘the abject’, ontologically (Byrd 2011) different, inherently unsettling, and intolerably significant (Kristeva 1982:11).

**Gertrude – The Stolen White Child**

Anatanwin’s story takes place in South Dakota in the late 1890s, involving both settler colonies, Canada and the United States. I tell it as it unfolded for white society.

In the summer of 1897, Reverend O. H. Sproul, a minister from Pierre, South Dakota made his way to the Cheyenne River Reservation. There, Sproul was to deliver an address to the children at the reservation’s Indian boarding school. What Sproul discovered during his visit would shock white society: It was a white girl that had been abducted by ‘the Indians’, and worse yet, for years she had been forced to live among them. Sensationalist stories of the “stolen white child”\(^1\) appeared in newspapers in both Canada and the United States, telling “blood-curdling accounts of her rescue.”\(^2\)

The South Dakota Children’s Home Society, a key player in the unfolding of events, provides us with the following account. During his sermon at the Cheyenne River Agency

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school, Reverend Sproul noticed a girl that was not like the others, she was “a bright girl,” a girl “of light complexion”, a girl “that seemed out of place among Indian children.” After his address, the minister spoke to Major Couchman, the Indian Agent of the Cheyenne River reservation, conveying his observations. The agent agreed. He too thought that the girl looked like a white child. Most likely, they concluded, the girl was “stolen during some of their [“the Indians”] wanderings from the reservation.” While not sure yet about the details of her kidnapping, it was evident to the men that the girl had to be removed and “placed among whites.”

Since the child was thought of as white, child-savers were called upon to help. The Children’s Home Society was contacted who, with the help of U.S. Senator for South Dakota James H. Kyle, successfully obtained a child removal order. With the assistance of the Indian Agent and the school teachers, the girl was taken from the reservation and brought to the Society’s Home in Sioux Falls, some 320 miles away.

When the child-savers first saw the girl, they were taken aback. The girl they pictured, did not look like the girl they received. After hearing sensationalist accounts of a white girl living among the savages, they pictured the girl somewhat differently, somewhat whiter. As they admitted, “[w]hen we first met her we were somewhat disappointed.” The girl, it turned out,


4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.
had black eyes. Her hair was “coal black”. They suspected that, perhaps, she even “had Indian blood”.  

This fear, however, quickly subsided for the more they got to know her, “the more satisfied” they were “that she is Indian only by association and assimilation.” After all, the girl had been forced to live among the Indians for over a decade. While in the beginning, they recounted, the girl “had all the taciturn disposition so characteristic of that race”, this was “fast disappearing and her countenance [was] lighting up with an expressiveness and vivacity so common to American girls.”

Eventually it was concluded that the girl was not American, but “evidently of French Canadian parentage”, “doubtlessly stolen by the Indians.” Apparently, the theory went, “a number of Indians left the reservation during one of their periodical uprisings and went to Manitoba”. Upon their return, they “had this child with them.” This, they believed, must have happened some twelve or thirteen years ago, for the girl seemed to be about 15 years of age and she could not remember her real parents. In fact, the girl had no recollection of her kidnapping at all as “[sh]e was so young when stolen that she knows nothing of her true


9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.
history.” Worse, the child-savers lamented, she now “believes herself an Indian.” The Indians did not say when and from where they had stolen her. In fact, they denied stealing her at all and even had the audacity to “claim her as their own child”.  

In an attempt to find the girl’s real parents, the Society made plans to raise money for a detective. If not successful, they were “anxious to place her in a warm christian atmosphere where she will get a liberal education in the hope that she may give her affections to the Lord and her services to the race with whom her lot has been so mysteriously cast among.” Fortunately, this was not necessary. No detective was required and no foster family had to be found, for the girls’ parents found her.

Upon hearing of this child in the papers, John and Adelaide Turton of Moose Mountain, Assiniboine, in the North-West Territories in Canada, were convinced that it was their missing daughter Gertrude. According to Sarah Carter, the Turton’s contacted the Children’s Home who then sent them a lock of the girl’s hair. Mrs. Turton received the hair – the black hair – but insisted that it only looked black because it was dirty and dyed. Mrs. Turton washed the hair and insisted that its real colour was brown. The colour of Gertrude’s hair (Carter 1997:153).

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15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Sarah Carter (1997) discusses this story as one of the last sensationalist captivity hoaxes (see *Capturing Women*, chapter four: “Captivity Hoaxes and Their Uses.”).
In February 1898, the Turton’s made the treacherous journey to Sioux Falls to claim their long-lost daughter. John and Adelaide immediately recognized her as their child, and satisfactorily proved their parentage to the Society by noting a birth mark on Gertrude’s shoulder. The Turton’s, according to Carter (1997), did notice that the child’s complexion was not quite white. They were convinced however that there was a white child underneath that darkened skin. The Turton’s believed that their Gertrude had literally been darkened through her association with the Indians. Mr. Turton claimed to have some “knowledge of Indian practices” which “led him to suspect that the girl’s body had probably been dyed from head to foot with vegetable dye, which can only be removed very slowly and with great difficulty” (in Carter 1997:153). Mrs. Turton shared her husband’s belief and was convinced that her daughter’s colour would gradually lighten. This absurd belief seemed to have been shared by the matron of the Children’s Home Society as well. To prove their theory, the matron applied acid to the girl’s tender skin on her neck. It was reported that in doing so, she successfully proved that the girl’s colour could be removed (ibid:154). Finally reunited, the Turton’s took Gertrude home with them.

Annie – The Saved Half-Breed.

Eventually, it was concluded that the child was not Gertrude. After some further investigation, the various Indian Agents and commissioners involved in this case on both sides of the border had to conclude that the child was not the Turton’s lost daughter. In fact, as they found out, the

child was not actually white. As Indian Agent T. W. Aspdin explained, “although white featured”, “she is no white girl, but a half breed” and “belongs by blood to the Indians of the Cheyenne River Reservation.”

It seemed that the Indians claimed the child as their own, because she was, in fact, one of their own. In reality, the child’s name was Anatanwin (Charging Female). Anatanwin was the child of a Lakȟóta woman recorded as Susie Her-Road. Her father was a white man who left the mother before the birth of the child. The mother died when Anatanwin was about five years old. After her mother’s death, the girl was raised by her aunt Ptań-Winyan (Otter Woman or Otter Robe Woman) and her uncle Dog Eagle. Her grandmother (recorded as the Serpent’s widow), too, helped raise the child. Anatanwin’s relatives, of course, had insisted on this from the beginning. So did the community. As did Anatanwin herself. Yet, neither the child, the relatives, nor the community were believed, their credibility annulled by their Indianness. It was not until this was confirmed by Indian Agent Aspin – who had apparently known the girl since she was a baby and hence was able to “to speak from actual knowledge” (emphasis added) – that this was believed to be true.

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Everyone now largely agreed that Anatanwin – “Anne” or “Annie” as the colonizers insisted on calling her – was not the Turton’s biological daughter. Everyone but the Turton’s that is, for they were very unhappy with the whole affair of having their parentage questioned. By now, Anatanwin was already in Canada with the Turton’s, and they were not prepared to send their ‘Gertrude’ back. U.S. Senator Kyle stepped in once again to propose a solution to this conundrum, namely for the Turton’s to simply keep the child. On May 12th, 1898 Kyle met with the Commissioner of Indian Affairs in South Dakota who informed the Senator that one of their inspectors, Major James McLaughlin, was “well acquainted with the Otter-robe-woman”. 23 McLaughlin had informed the Commissioner that he could “easily get from her papers of release and consent” so that the Turton’s could legally adopt the child. 24 The men agreed on this course of action. This would be a “happy solution” as Kyle put it, for the child would be “a thousandfold better off in a good American home than among her former associates”. 25 Whether American or Canadian did not seem to matter. The Turton family was white and Christian and, hence, the child would surely be better off there. Major McLaughlin was sent to secure those papers from Ptan-Winyan and was successful in this task. Anatanwin stayed with the Turton’s as Gertrude. 26


24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

Skin-Deep or Intolerably Significant?

“…I am being dissected under white eyes, the only real eyes.” – Frantz Fanon (1986:116)

The significance placed on deciphering whether this child was white or Indian, the amount of scrutiny placed on Anatanwin’s body (the colour of her hair, skin, and eyes), and the differing forms of management that ensued for Gertrude, who needed to be saved and placed among her own, and Annie, who was a thousand times better off being removed from her own, tells us that in the colonial imagination the figure of the Indian child signifies something very different than the white child. Anatanwin’s management provides us with insights into a white supremacist colonial logic in which she was imagined as either Gertrude/the stolen white child or as Annie/the half-breed. From the colonizers’ horror at the thought of a white child living among Indians, to the act of rubbing off Gertrude’s colour/removing the outer layer of her skin, and to the colonizers’ “happy solution” to have Annie live with white people, how can we make sense of what happened to Anatanwin?

In previous chapters I have framed child-saving initiatives at the turn of the twentieth century, and the kind of pedagogical-punitive-disciplinary power these initiatives authorized and instilled via the bodies of white children (and their parents), as a biopolitical project centered on the reformation of citizen-subjects/potential threats within the body politic, a project of modernity and settler colonial state formation, a new form of liberal governance through a turn towards the social (and hence social reform). In the realm of child-saving, where child-savers paid no attention to Indigenous children, the figure of ‘the Indian’ functioned as an absent referent/signifier (present as not present) against which the civilized white citizen-subject could be established. The management of Anatanwin benefits from a complementary conceptualization, for there are details and specificities that a biopolitical framing does injustice to when it comes to the body of an Indigenous child. To understand the colonial imaginings of
the figure of the Indian child requires a conceptual framework that can reckon with, both, the centrality of the child’s body – a body who is scrutinized, washed, re-clothed, and whose skin was bleached with acid to prove racial purity – as well as the significance attributed to its imagined difference, a difference that led to visceral and psychic responses in the colonizer.

To begin to understand what Annie signified to the colonizers – the significance of the difference that her Indianness makes – and to make sense of the differentiated yet mutually supporting colonial approaches (saving Gertrude by placing her with her own/saving Annie by removing her from her own), I turn to Jodi Byrd’s (2011) insights on ‘Indianness’ which I place in conversation with Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection (1982), for the latter can speak to both, “the ‘physicality’ of the phenomena of racism – its bodily fascinations and anxieties” and “the visceral quality of its most primal reactions” (Hook 2006:216). 27

To the colonizer, Annie was no ‘ordinary’ or ‘normal’ child. This child was an Indian child, a figure that comes into being in the white colonial imaginary through its Otherness or difference. Annie’s difference is located in her ‘Indianness’. As such, Doxtator (2011) explains, Annie is read through a web of imaginary renderings produced by and for European imperialism and colonialism that presents ‘the Indian’ as sometimes noble, usually savage, and always inferior. Yet, more profound than a mere set of ascribable characteristics, the imagery of the ‘Indian’ as Byrd (2011) explains, serves as the constitutive feature of imperialism and settler colonialism, as its “ontological ground” (Byrd 2011:xix). Through this epistemic practice of naming and evaluating (Goldberg 1993:150), the ‘Indian’ emerges as a (or perhaps ‘the’) difference against and through which white subject formation is made possible (as powerful,

superior, civilized – all that which the Indian is not). Via this route the white community of citizen-subjects can be established, and white property\textsuperscript{28} and dominance over land and people can be secured (Byrd 2011). Byrd’s (2011) conceptualization can be likened to Sara Ahmed’s (2000) reflection on the figure of ‘the stranger’, where the latter concludes that “‘the stranger’ is produced through knowledge, rather than as a failure of knowledge” (16). (We do not not know the stranger; we know the stranger as not knowing them (Ahmed 2000:55).) Or as David Theo Goldberg (1993), drawing on Edward Said, puts it, “Naming the racial Other, for all intents and purposes, is the Other. There is … no Other behind or beyond the invention of knowledge in the Other’s name” (150). Similarly, it is not the case that we do not know the Indian because he or she is different than us. We know the Indian as difference. Difference not only serves as the conduit of identification; difference is identity.\textsuperscript{29} Through this difference, ‘Indian’ delineates the boundaries of what it means to be human (the Indian does not make the cut, signifying that which constitutes its outside).

Yet, the \textit{significance} that is ascribed to this difference/Indianness, entails even more than this self/Other dialectic is able to suggest. Establishing one’s dominance by insisting on another’s inferiority is inherently fragile and unstable. As Elia Zureik (2016) puts it, “it must be constantly fed by the illusory inferiority of the Other – and is thus constantly at risk of being discredited” (95). The difference that the Indian makes/is, as that which inherently reminds the settler of his/her unstable subject-position, is so meaning-laden, so powerful, that it elicits

\textsuperscript{28}Building on C.B. Macpherson, Leslie Thielen-Wilson (2012) has argued that in the European ideology of possessive individualism, ‘property’ similarly functions as an ontological category delineating the boundaries of humanity – who belongs and who does not.

\textsuperscript{29}I will draw on this insight again in the last two chapters when discussing ‘culturally-relevant’ and ‘inclusive’ approaches to child welfare, approaches that are premised on the settler’s understanding, appreciation, and acceptance of ‘the Indian’s’ difference, approaches that remained similarly deadly for those on the receiving end of this form of ‘care’.
visceral, affective and psychic responses in the colonizers. We can see this in the reactions of
horror and outrage at the sight of a white child among the Indians, we witness this in the child-
savers’ desire to wipe of the dirt and skin colour/to clean the white body of its contamination. It
is here that I turn to Kristeva, for I believe that this is a difference that emerges out of abjection.

“L’abjection is something that disgusts you”, according to Kristeva (1980 in Oliver
2002:374). When referring to the abject, we mean “the contemptible, the repugnant, the
wretched, that which is unwanted, filthy, contaminating” (Hook 2006:216-217). Yet, the abject is
not a subject nor object per se (Kristeva 1982:1-2). Nor is the abject that corresponding Other
through which identity and meaning are established.30 Expressed differently, the abject is not
merely the ‘Other’ (e.g. the Indian) through which the Self (e.g. the white settler) can be
established. Kristeva writes that “[t]he abject has only one quality of the object – that of being
opposed to I (1982:1): ‘it’ ‘harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not
nothing, either. A ‘something’ that I do not recognize as a thing” (ibid:2). This ties to Byrd’s
insights regarding the ontological quality of the ‘Indian’, as there is also an ontological quality to
the abject. The abject inherently disturbs/is inherently unsettling. The abject is the place, the
boundary, or the border where meaning collapses. That which disturbs one’s identity, system,
and order is what causes abjection (Kristeva 1982:4). “We may call it a border”, writes Kristeva
(1982:9). For, above all, abjection is ambiguity (ibid). Further, the abject continues to draw me
towards that place or disturbance, “a burden both repellent and repelled” (ibid:6).

If such a framing is applied to racial logics, then racism can be said to emerge out of
boundary threats, “threats to the physical, psychological and symbolic integrity of the racist

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30 The abject is “not an ob-ject facing me, which I name or imagine. … What is abject is not my correlative, which,
providing me with someone or something else as support, would allow me to be more or less detached and
autonomous” (Kristeva 1982:1).
subject” (Hook 2006:216). If the Indian is imagined as the abject, then the Indian, by their mere existence, is threatening/disturbing/unsettling to the proliferation of colonial society, the health and wealth of the white colonizer, the psychological and material well-being of the white subject.

Speaking to the significance of the abject, the weight of its disturbance, Kristeva writes that the subject encounters the abject through a “massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness” (1982:2): “We are no longer within the sphere of the unconscious but at the limit of primal repression that, nevertheless, has discovered an intrinsically corporeal and already signifying brand, symptom, and sign: repugnance, disgust, abjection” (ibid:11). This is experienced as a “weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, which crushes me” (ibid:2). There is nothing insignificant about the Indian/the abject. Instead, “[t]here is an effervescence of object and sign-not of desire but of intolerable significance” (ibid:11). The significance of the abject – its very existence, the threat it is imagined to pose – becomes intolerable and unbearable. Since the abject is at once loathsome, inherently disturbing, and unbearable, ‘it’ needs to be cast out,31 or “radically excluded” (Kristeva 1982:2). This is about exclusion and expulsion – not only from the white body politic, but from the very category of the human. If cast as the abject, then the recognition of the human in the Indian has to be disavowed.

However, the subject’s desire for this exclusion and expulsion is never truly accomplished. There is never a true separation from the abject, “[t]he experience of abjection is never complete” (Hook 2006:217). The abject cannot truly be cast out, continuously haunting and drawing the colonizer towards that place of ambiguity where (white) order and (white) identity collapse. What the subject is left with is a feeling of disgust, dread, and horror – needing

31 Hook explains that the term abjection (in Latin ab-jicere) literally means the state of being “cast off, or out” (Hook 2006:216).
to be separate, yet unable to fully arrive at this separation (see Kristeva 1980 in Oliver 2002:374). 32

If abjection is above all ambiguity, and this ambiguity elicits feelings of horror, dread and crisis, then we may understand why it was essential to the colonizers to establish ‘what’ Anatanwin was – whether she was a white settler or an Indian. Anatanwin’s body was central in this process, constituting the site through which her racial membership was to be determined. A range of authors remind us that racial logics are logics of embodiment (see, for example, Fanon 1986; Mohanram 1999; Gordon 1997; Spillers 1987; McKittrick 2000, 2006; Weheliye 2014; Razack 2016). For Indigenous peoples, Mishuana Goeman (2013) explains, “traveling through constructed colonial and imperial spaces, the body can be hypervisible as the abnormal body, and at times hyper-invisible as it becomes spatially disjointed from the map of the nation in both physical and mental imaginings” (12). Anatanwin’s body was hypervisible. Her skin, her hair, her eye colour all emerged as markers of difference and identification. Hook (2006) explains that the “original and primary ‘surface’ of the abject’s realization is the body” (217), or as Patricia Moran (1996) so eloquently puts it, “[a]bjection is the disappearance of the speaking subject into the intolerable, uncontrollable, and engulfing significance of materiality: the body overwhelms, speaks for, drowns out the subject” (35). This, at once, speaks to the visceral reactions of the subject at the sight, smell, or thought of the abject, as well as the significance of the materiality

32 Kristeva explains this as “an extremely strong feeling which is at once somatic and symbolic, and which is above all a revolt of the person against an external menace from which one wants to keep oneself at a distance, but of which one has the impression that it is not only an external menace but that it may menace us from the inside. So it is a desire for separation, for becoming autonomous and also the feeling of an impossibility of doing so – whence the element of crisis which the notion of abjection carries within it” (1980 in Oliver 2002:374).
of the abject – as not arriving at a subject-status, but trapped in its materiality, free to be probed and prodded by white settlers.

Moreover, if the abject is something that disgusts, something from which the subject desperately needs to distance themselves yet is unable to do so, then we may also be able to understand why the thought of a white child among the Indians elicited white panic, and why the child-savers were alarmed when they saw Gertrude’s not-so-white skin. When Anatanwin was imagined to be Gertrude/the stolen white child, Gertrude was found to be dirty and darkened, her manners degraded, her white body and character seemingly contaminated by the Indians. Z. T. Daniel, the physician responsible for the Lakȟóta on Anatanwin’s reservation described Indians as follows. “Their personal cleanliness is a matter plainly neglected … and as a rule their persons are covered with unctuous, dusty accretions, which disgust the eye and offend the nostril”, while “[t]heir houses are untidy, their window panes are almost never washed, woodwork rarely scrubbed, bedding rank and foul and loaded with vermin” (in Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:393). Gertrude could not be ‘that’. Gertrude could not be like them, for white, clean, civilized settlers are nothing like this (“Not me. Not that”). And yet, that from which the colonizer needed to separate himself/herself had taken hold of Gertrude. The abject had stained the flesh of a white child. And it had degraded her character. Worst of all, Gertrude actually believed herself to be ‘that.’ It is in the stripping of her flesh that we see a most desperate attempt at the erasure of abjection/Indianness and the re-drawing of those boundaries.

For the separation between the subject/the white child and the abject/the Indian needed to be re-made. Gertrude did not belong among the Indians, and she did not belong in an Indian boarding school. Gertrude was a child whose association with the Indians (figuratively and literally) darkened her but who deep down, by her inherent whiteness, remained a civilized subject. Gertrude’s white body needed to be scrubbed clean and bleached. The Indian had to be wiped
off. Her character needed to be cleansed and purified. Gertrude needed to be returned to the white community from which she was taken and to whom she belonged. She was to receive a “liberal education”, be raised according to white Christian ideals, and take her place in the colonial order as a citizen-subject who would do her part in the politics of care (“give…her services to the race with whom her lot has been so mysteriously cast among”).

The anxiety and panic that resulted from the belief that a white child could grow up among Indians was extraordinary. Let us remind ourselves that this was a time period in which lesser-white parents were already subjected to scrutiny and assessed on their ability to raise the next generation of settlers. It was simply inconceivable that a white child should be raised among Indians. It is worth stressing that this was about more than matters of degree – it is not merely a case of white children growing up with inferior white parents being considered bad enough, and hence having white children growing up with Indians being thought of as much worse. This anxiety runs deeper. Having a white child – a settler child – grow up and raised by Indians, and worse grow up to believe herself an Indian, goes against everything settler colonization stands for and is supposed to accomplish. The existence of the Indian disturbs the very core of white identity, system, and order. The Indian needs to disappear if settler colonization is to be successful. Ever-present in the field of signification as disappearing and death-bound, the Indian needs to be expunged and replaced. In other words, to a settler colony – that can only prosper by displacing and erasing those nations who were there before, by taking away their lands and resources, and by retaining a grasp on power (something difficult enough given that these nations refuse to be erased) – having a white child think herself an Indian is both

symbolically and materially threatening. Having one of their own – a white settler child/the
future of the colony, a child who is supposed to displace and conquer – instead join and
strengthen one of the nations that stand in the colony’s way, simply cannot be. And worse, if the
abject had successfully taken over Gertrude, then this could happen to other white bodies.

When Anatanwin was found out to be Annie/the half-breed, the anxiety and panic among
white settlers over the well-being of this child swiftly vanished. No longer do we hear from the
child-savers, no special report was published by the South Dakota Children’s Home, no more
‘blood-curdling accounts’ in the newspapers. Anatanwin was not a white child that had been
wronged; she was just an Indian after all. Annie/the half-breed was a child whose contamination
ran deeper than the epidermal layer. She was a child whose savagery could not simply be wiped
off. Annie was not contaminated by association; Annie’s contamination was intrinsic. She
carried her contamination in her blood. Ill-fated by being of her race, the most beneficial course
of action would be to remove her from her own, break her ties to family, community, nation, and
land, and perhaps have her function as a source of happiness for a white family – this was not
only a preferred method that furthered colonization and dispossession, but framed as a very
fortunate outcome for Annie as well, since living among white settlers was evidently far superior
than any other alternative.

Surrounded by a better and more civilized culture, perhaps she could even be improved
by association. Perhaps Annie’s white part could be elevated through association with the
Turton’s, while the Indian in her could be subdued – a project already apparent in the seemingly
innocuous act of referring to Anatanwin as Annie. Annie was a half-breed after all. A result of
miscegenation. Annie personified the dreadful “in-between, the ambiguous, the composite”
(Kristeva 1982:4). However, given that the abject had mixed with whiteness, perhaps she had
access to some of the subject’s qualities. The white colonizers assessing and inspecting her likely
regarded her as already being on a higher plane of existence than her ‘full-blooded’ Indian relatives. According to the ‘scientific’ opinion of the reservation physician Daniel, half-breeds – due to the imaginary positive influence of whiteness – fared better. As Daniel explained it,

[t]he mixed bloods show an improvement … They are healthier, more intelligent, enjoy life better, are physically stronger, have cleaner, larger houses, and approach the domestic condition of the white man. I could name many half-breed women who keep neat, tidy houses, who can prepare a palatable meal, whose beds one can sleep in, whose children are washed and are seen with clean clothing on; but it is the exception to find one such full blood. (in Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:393)

What Anatanwin had to say about her fate did not seem to matter, no records were kept by the Department of Indian Affairs (or perhaps were ever produced) on what she had to say about the Turton’s. Neither did it matter that her family and community wanted to retain their child. While Anatanwin’s aunt was reportedly “very sad” and “anxious”34 this was of no consequence. The desire of a white family to have her took precedence.

The Theft that Never Happened

Anatanwin and her community existed in a context in which they had no recourse, nor the ability to refuse compliance. Let us remind ourselves that Anatanwin lived/was contained on the Cheyenne River Reservation. This was a reservation that the U.S. government created as part of

a multi-million-acre land grab just a few years prior to the unfolding of this story. Anatanwin’s reserve was created to contain several of the seven Lakȟóta bands, including the Miniconjou/Mnikoju (plants by the water), Itazipco (sans arc), Sihásapa (blackfoot), and Oo’henumpa (two kettle). By this time, wild buffalo, the Lakȟóta’s main provider for shelter, food, and clothing, had largely been decimated in the Plains. Having their main source of subsistence – and hence independence – taken, the U.S. government largely succeeded in containing the Lakȟóta on the reservation. There, they were to sustain themselves through freighting, raising cattle (and to a lesser extent horses and hogs), and subsistence farming. While much government emphasis was placed on turning ‘roaming Indians’ into sedentary small-scale farmers, this was virtually impossible for the reservation was not situated on land suitable for homesteading. As the Superintended of the Cheyenne River Boys’ Boarding School readily admitted, conditions “can not be much worse” (G. W. Wroten in Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:391). As such, the Lakȟóta had to dependent on government rations – rations that purposefully were kept so low that, at times, starvation conditions were reported.

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35 This was enabled by the Dawes Act and a corresponding vote passed in Congress that subdivided the ‘Great Sioux Reservation’ (which was created in 1868 with the Fort Laramie Treaty) into five smaller reservations: Standing Rock Reservation, Cheyenne River Reservation, Lower Brule Indian Reservation, Pine Ridge Reservation, and Rosebud Indian Reservation.

36 In a deliberate attempt to eradicate the main source of subsistence for Indigenous peoples in the Plains, the colonizers had reduced the wild buffalo population from a size estimated to have been somewhere between 30-60 million buffalo (mid 1800s) to around 400 animals (by 1893) (see, for example, Isenberg 2001; Smits 1994; Ostler 2004. For the Canadian context, see for example, chapters 6 and 7 in Daschuk 2013; chapter 4 in Hall 2015; Lawrence 2004:30-1).

37 For example, in his Annual Report for the year 1890 concerning the Cheyenne River Reservation, Indian Agent Perain P. Palmer writes that “Congress failed to make the necessary appropriation to enable the Indian Office to comply with the agreements of the treaty 1877, and the reduction of subsistence was the result. Very little complaint was made by the Indians of this reserve on account of short rations, as the Indians were paid about $30,000 for beef cattle, which enabled some of them to provide the necessities of life which the Government failed to supply. Much complaint was, however, reported at other agencies, and the attention of Congress was called to the starvation condition of some of the Indians…” (in Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:391).
There were several schools on the reservation – two boarding schools and a number of day
schools. Anatanwin, like all Indigenous children on the reservation, had to attend one of them.
In these schools, as the superintendent of the Cheyenne River School put it, Lakhóta children
were “learning the better white man’s way” (in Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report
1891:392; emphasis in original). As such, Anatanwin grew up in a highly controlled white
supremacist environment. Her people were contained, made dependent, starved. They were seen
as dirty and lazy. White homesteaders surrounding the reservation would continuously harass
them (Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891). Diseases and suicides took their
toll, which was not seen as a result of the politics of starvation or colonial violence. Rather, it
was the Indians’ own fault, a result of their imagined inherent inferiority: “their mode of living,
habitations, ignorance of the laws of health, and particularly their tribal intermarriage and love of
the warpath are the explanation of their steady decrease” (Daniel in ibid:393).

This was also a context in which the violence of the mundane and the spectacular cannot
easily be separated. Anatanwin’s reservation served as the backdrop for the massacre at
Wounded Knee, an event that took place a few years prior to Anatanwin’s removal. In December
1890, an arrest warrant was made out for Hunkpapa chief Sitting Bull. At this time, Sitting Bull
was confined to the Standing Rock Indian Reservation (bordering on the Cheyenne River
Reservation to the North). During the arrest Sitting Bull was shot. Following his murder, many

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38 There were two boarding schools – one for boys and one for girls – as well as a number of smaller day-schools at
the Cheyenne River Reservation. The number of day schools fluctuated, with eight such schools in operation in
1891. The boys’ boarding school and the day-schools were maintained by the government. They girls’ boarding
school, called the St. John’s William Welch Memorial School, was maintained by the Protestant Episcopal Church
(Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891).

39 As Daniel explained “most of their time is passed in eating, sleeping, lounging, visiting, and performing in an
inefficient manner only those duties that if neglected result in immediate and palpable distress” (Commissioner of
Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:393).
of Sitting Bull’s supporters fled Standing Rock to seek out Sitting Bull’s half-brother and Miniconjou chief Uŋȟáŋ Glešká/Spotted Elk who, at that time, lived at the Cheyenne River Reservation. There, the Hunkpapa and Miniconjou held council and decided to head south to seek refuge at the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation with Oglala Lakȟóta leader Maȟpíya Lúta/Red Cloud. While some stayed behind at Cheyenne River, around 350 people (230 women and children and 120 men) made their way to Pine Ridge. While they made it onto the Pine Ridge Reservation, they never made it to Red Cloud. Having received knowledge that the Lakȟóta were on the move, General Brooke sent Major Samuel M. Whitside with several troops from the Seventh Cavalry, as well as a platoon of artillery (including two Hotchkiss guns capable of rapid fire) to intercept them (Richardson 2010:259). The soldiers intercepted the Hunkpapa and Miniconjou southwest of Porcupine Butte and escorted them to Wounded Knee Creek (where the Seventh Cavalry had set up camp). Once General Brook received word of the successful capture, he sent reinforcements to Wounded Knee: Colonel James Forsyth and four more troops of the Seventh Cavalry, as well as a platoon of Light Battery, First Artillery, and two more Hotchkiss guns (Richardson 2010:261). Around 500 soldiers were now at Wounded Knee (Nixon 2012:258).

On December 29, 1890, the soldiers opened fire. First with rifles, then with Hotchkiss guns. Despite having most of their guns confiscated, some Lakȟóta tried to fight. Most tried to flee. Some ran towards the creek, some towards a ravine to the south, some tried to make it to the nearby post office and store, some tried to hide in the wagons, tents and tipis. The soldiers tried to make sure no one made it out alive. Those who ran were pursued. Slaughtered bodies of

40 The Seventh Cavalry, it is worth noting, was the same unit that had served under George A. Custer when they were defeated by the Lakȟóta, Dakota, Arapaho, and Northern Cheyenne under the leadership of Sitting Bull in the Battle of the Greasy Grass/Little Bighorn in 1876.
children and women were found as far as two miles from the site (Nixon 2012:35, 285).

Eyewitness Capt. Geo. E. Bartlett recalled that “They run in every direction and the soldiers followed them and killed them while they run” (in Jensen 2005:34):

Five of them [Lakȟóta women] run … and got up on those hills and two soldiers followed them and as soon as they saw they were being followed by the soldiers they sat down on the hill and faced them and the soldiers killed all five of them. When they saw they were going to be slain they covered their faces with the blankets and awaited death. (in Jensen 2005:33)

Those who hid were killed as well. One journalist remarked that after most of the shooting was done, “desultory rifle shots could be heard at short intervals, aimed wherever a blanket was seen to move regardless of what or who might be under it” (Richardson 2010:272). American Horse (Oglala Lakȟóta chief and relative of Red Cloud) claimed that “after most all of them had been killed, a cry was made that all those who were not killed or wounded should come forth and they would be safe. Little boys … came out of their places of refuge, and as soon as they came in sight, a number of soldiers surrounded them and butchered them there” (in Nixon 2012:36).

Somewhere between 200-300 Lakȟóta were killed. The majority came from Anatanwin’s reservation. Their bodies were thrown into a mass grave at Wounded Knee.

While some decried the massacre, white colonial society largely seemed to have been sympathetic, exemplified by the fact that twenty Medals of Honor were awarded to soldiers of the Seventh Cavalry. Similarly, already after the killing of Sitting Bull, The Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer, a weekly newspaper published in Aberdeen, South Dakota declared that:

With his fall the nobility of the Redskin is extinguished, and what few are left are a pack of whining curs who lick the hand that smites them. The
Whites, [by] law of conquest, by justice of civilization, are masters of the American continent, and the best safety of the frontier settlements will be secured by the total annihilation of the few remaining Indians. Why not annihilation? Their glory has fled, their spirit broken, their manhood effaced; better that they die than live the miserable wretches that they are.

(in Nixon 2012:285)

Commenting on the massacre at Wounded Knee, The Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer reiterated its position: “Our only safety depends upon the total extermination of the Indians. Having wronged them for centuries, we had better, in order to protect civilization, follow it up by one more wrong and wipe these untamed and untamable creatures from the face of the earth” (in Nixon 2012:287).

Both editorials were written by Lyman Frank Baum, a beloved American author well-known for writing books for (white) children, the most famous of which being The Wizard of Oz. The extermination of Sioux children did not seem to rouse Baum’s sympathy. Seemingly to Baum, as to many of his contemporaries, these children were not ‘normal’ children, they were ‘Indian’ children. Something else entirely. And much can be done to some ‘thing’ that is so fundamentally different, whose difference not only places them outside the body politic, but outside the category of the human.\footnote{In an effort to resist those who would like to relegate such violence and the dehumanization of Indigenous peoples to a more violent colonial past, I wish to point out that at the time this chapter was written, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe tried to prevent the construction of the U.S. Dakota Access Pipeline, a construction that cuts across their lands, risks the contamination of their water sources, and thus stands in violation of treaty rights. The very morning I set out to write this paragraph, news broke that police had detained Indigenous water protectors in dog kennels.}
Back on Anatanwin’s reservation, colonial authorities welcomed that after the Wounded Knee massacre, the “spirit of insubordination” that seemed to “defy all authority of the Indian Office” (Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:390) had been dampened. This is the context in which Anatanwin grew up and which she and her relatives had to navigate. In this highly controlled white supremacist environment, an environment in which the Lakȟóta (and the Sioux more broadly) were contained, starved, and killed, the threat of colonial violence must have been palpable. Indeed, remarking on the low school attendance, the superintendent of the Cheyenne River School lamented that “[p]arents were reluctant to send their children away from home [to an on-reserve school] not knowing at what moment they themselves might be required to fight or to fly” (Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:392). Enmeshed in colonial violence, Anatanwin’s relatives could not refuse to have their child taken. In fact, the very person who was sent to Ptan-Winyan to secure the release and adoption papers for Anatanwin was Indian Agent and Inspector James McLaughlin – the very same James McLaughlin42 who had ordered the arrest of Sitting Bull, the arrest that led to Sitting Bull’s murder and culminated in the slaughter at Wounded Knee.

The cruel irony that, it in the end, it was not “the Indians” who stole a white child, but that it was the white settlers who stole a Lakȟóta girl seemed to have escaped the colonial societies north and south of the border. The theft of Anatanwin was not recognized as theft. Annie was not stolen by being taken from her own. Annie was saved. So imagined, colonial society managed to perceive the theft of an Indigenous child not as theft or an act of colonial violence, but rather as an act of benevolence, as an act of care. Through such a construct, the

42 McLaughlin also seemed to have had a reputation among the Lakȟóta. Sitting Bull himself apparently remarked, “Just because I don’t kneel down to him every time I see him, he has threatened to have me killed, to starve me and my people to death, and I don’t know how many more threats” (in Hans c1907:571).
colonizer not only emerges unscathed, but instead as caring and benevolent (‘not damned, but innocent’). The inhumanity of the abject/the Indian ensures that even in the act of violence, even in the act of stealing a child, the settler retains his/her civility. And perhaps this is one of the most sinister and insidious aspects of the colonial politics of care. The colonial domination inherent in its techniques are not readily recognized as violence, but framed as benevolence. And its enactors are not perpetrators, but benefactors. The enormity of this ‘mundane’ act of violence is underscored by the fact that the theft of this Indigenous child, of having Anatanwin taken and transferred to colonial society, is what many Indigenous people experienced; what happened to her, happened to hundreds of thousands more.
Chapter 7
Residential Schools – Solutions for the Abject/Indian

“There are classes which have no future: the chronic insane, the hopeless wrecks of life, whether moral or physical – these alone should be placed in institutions; but normal child-life never.” – J.J. Kelso

“We were not normal children at these schools…”

– Xatšūll First Nation Chief and Indian Residential School survivor Bev Sellars

Introduction
At the time child-savers were preoccupied with saving white settler child through home-restoration and foster families, the colonizers’ management of Indigenous children was effected through the Indian Residential Schools system. These schools have a long history in Canada. The first failed attempts of Indian boarding schools date back to the early to mid-1600s in New France. These schools were created and run by Catholic missionaries (first by the Recollects, then by the Jesuits and the Ursulines). In the 1820s, Indian boarding schools began to re-appear

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3 These early attempts were eventually abandoned as Indigenous peoples failed to be convinced of their benefits and hence the children simply stopped attending them (see TRC 2015 “The History, Part 1; see also Carney 1995; Miller 1996:40-1).
(the first one being opened by an Anglican missionary), and by the 1860s the Anglicans, Protestants, Catholics and Methodists all operated several schools. Upon Confederation (1867) and increasing waves of settler west-ward expansion, more boarding schools were established in the prairies and western Canada. In 1876, existing Indian Residential Schools were consolidated by the passing of the *Indian Act*, officially establishing the schools as a church-operated, government-funded undertaking (this joint-management strategy remained in place until 1969 after which the federal government took over sole control). From then on, the number of Indian Residential Schools expanded considerably with 80 such schools in operation in 1931. The last school closed its doors in the late 1990s (See, for example, RCAP 1996 “Residential Schools”; TRC 2015 “The History, Part 1”, “The History, Part 2”; Milloy 1999; Miller 1996; Carney 1995). It is estimated that over 150,000 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children had to attend an Indian Residential School, and according to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) at least 6,000\(^4\) of these children did not make it out alive.

Indian Residential Schools emerged as institutions through which settler colonization was to be effected by taking hold of those children whose very presence on the land signified an obstacle to settler colonial success. Through these institutions white colonizers systematically abused generations of Indigenous peoples, institutions that emerged as manifestations of and conduits for the enactment of “white terror” (Thielen-Wilson 2012). Once Indigenous children were confined within these schools, those who were instructed to care for/manage them (nurses, principals, nuns, teachers, lay brothers, building staff, etc.) routinely abused them – emotionally,

\(^4\) According to Justice Murray Sinclair, who headed the TRC, the federal government stopped recording the deaths of Indigenous students around 1920. Additionally, many of the records, he states, have been destroyed. Hence, the exact number of those who died is not yet known. Sinclair estimates the number to be around 6,000 (Puxley 2015). For information on how he arrived at this estimation, refer to TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth” pp: 90ff or TRC 2015 “Missing Children” pp:13ff.
physically, sexually. Many sadistic stories of torture, rape and unfathomable violence have been documented (see, for example, TRC 2015 “Survivors Speak”). These were not isolated incidents, but the norm. For example, on the issue of sexual abuse, Rix Rogers, Special Advisor to the Minister of National Health and Welfare on Child Sexual Abuse commented that what was known of the rampant abuse in these schools was “just the tip of the iceberg” and that “closer scrutiny of past treatment of Native children at Indian residential schools would show 100% of children at some schools were sexually abused” (in Milloy 1999: 298; see also chapter 7 in Monchalin 2016).

How can such violence and cruelty be systematically meted out against children – a segment of the population whom the settler society knew as vulnerable, impressionable, and helpless (see chapter two)? And how could this take place during a point in time in which ‘cruelty’ and ‘neglect’ emerged as social problems (see chapter two), and when these problems were to be combatted and made punishable crimes (see chapter four)? In this social context, the mere existence of these schools, let alone the violence inflicted on generations of children within them, may seem contradictory. Yet they are not. Cruelty and neglect only emerged as ‘problems’ in relation to settler children. To the colonizer, these considerations did not apply to Indigenous children. For the white child, welfare reform meant an education in those qualities and characteristics said to be intrinsic to them – the elevation of the downtrodden white child/the neglected waif to a citizens-subject. For the Indian child, reform meant incarceration, erasure and death – to be saved from themselves, or the ‘problem’ that their Indianness seemed to pose (to white society). The concurrent existence of white child-saving initiatives and the systematic annihilation of Indigenous children serves to remind us that social welfare reform is racially marked, that settler colonialism is effected through violence and the differentiated management of child populations, and that to the colonizer the Indigenous child is no child but an Indian. As
we have seen in Anatanwin’s story, Indigenous children were not ‘normal’ children, they were
‘Indian’ children. As such, they were known through abjection. To the colonizer, the normal
child was morally and physically sound, and the normal child was white. And as both quotations
in the beginning of the chapter indicate, these schools were not made for ‘normal’ children.
These schools were made for the abject.

**Zones of Abjection**

I suggest that Indian Residential Schools were created around the figure of the Indian child/the
abject, to capture, incarcerate, punish, and erase the children’s ‘Indianness’, or to put it
differently, to take hold of and manage the unbearable difference that such a child signified to
colonial society. For, if the abject/the Indian is *intolerably* significant (see Kristeva 1982:11),
then the abject demands attention. The abject cannot be ignored but *must* be dealt with. The
significance of its difference, its intolerable and unbearable quality, means that the abject/Indian
must be expunged. Yet, given that the abject cannot fully be expunged (see Kristeva 1980 in
Oliver 2002:374), that the settler cannot fully rid themselves of ‘it’, the Indian haunting them at
every turn, they are left with only one option: The abject/the Indian needs to be carefully and
forcefully managed. And given also that there is *nothing insignificant* about the abject/the Indian
(see Kristeva 1982:2), the sort of management that is required will have to be rigorous and
absolute. Expressed differently, it is not enough to merely seek to expunge and leave the abject
on the margins of white society, for the abject keeps coming back. The abject keeps being. And
everything about its being is meaningful. Hence, every detail of their lives need to be known,
intervened in, and systematically managed.

Translating this reasoning into colonial policy means that the Indian needs to be excluded
and kept apart, while rigorously managed in his/her segregation. Hence, the Indian was contained
on a reserve, subjected to a web of surveillance, and forced to comply with strict modes of behavior as set out by the colonizer (e.g. prior forms of governance, diplomacy, law, political and economic alliances, kinship relations, spirituality, expressions of gender and identity were to cease to exist), and if the abject failed to be so contained, then s/he was punished. To accomplish this in a systematic manner, separate laws were established that could cordon off Indian space and life from that of white settlers (see Edmonds 2010, Mawani 2009), while regulating the Indian with excessive attention to detail – in Canada this was exemplified in the creation of the Department of Indian Affairs (1880), and accomplished through the Indian Act. As we know from scholars (see, for example, Cannon 2011; Lawrence 2003, 2004; see also Monchalin 2016; Leslie 2002; Henry et al. 1998; RCAP 1996 “The Indian Act”) who have studied the Indian Act, this legal framework sought (and still seeks) to regulate, manage, and control virtually every aspect of Indigenous life. Everything needed to be known about the Indian, and all that was ‘known’ had to be managed (who counts as an Indian and who does not, when does an Indian cease to be an Indian, is an Indian entitled to land and if so, how much do we have to give them, what Indian lives where and with whom, who leaves the reserve and for how long, what practices do Indians engage in and should we allow them to do so, etc.).

I suggest that the Indian Residential Schools system emerged as another method/‘solution’ of colonial governance with which this was to be accomplished. If this is so, then we may benefit from thinking of Indian Residential Schools as ‘zones of abjection.’ In Imperial Leather, McClintock (1995) explains that “[c]ertain threshold zones become abject zones”, racial/spatial configuration that contain the expunged and isolated abject, that are then “policed with vigor” (72). The Arab Casbah, the Jewish ghetto, the Israeli Occupied Territories, prisons, the mental asylum, battered women’s shelters, are some of the examples the author references. Framed as zones of abjection, Indian Residential Schools manifest as carceral and necropolitical
spaces of erasure, punishment, and death-making – zones specifically designed to take hold of and contain the abject, and zones in which the then contained abject can be excessively managed through ‘localized and targeted violence’ (Mbembe 2003) – to accomplish on a large scale what was done to Anatanwin when her Indianness was to be wiped off/out. These are then demarcated spaces for racial boundary control, spaces built to contain, manage, control, and eradicate the intolerable significance that Indianness signified. In these spaces teachers, principals, nurses, nuns – those dominant subjectivities who make the zone of abjection/Indian Residential School function – serve as agents of colonization/managers of abjection. And they would manage the children ruthlessly.

**Carcerality and Erasure**

The management within such zones of abjection then comes with certain features, rigorous policing as McClintock (1995) indicates, being a central one. The carceral nature of Indian Residential Schools is exemplified by the fact that students/inmates were rounded up and brought to these spaces against their will and the will of their parents. Fournier and Crey (2011) speak of children being “herded … onto buckboard trucks or trains like cattle” (176), that they were kept in these spaces for months or years at a time, prohibited from leaving, and punished if they tried to escape. When we hear of the sorts of punishments that were used for children – the whippings, beatings, the use of chains and other restraints,\(^5\) enforced isolation and segregation,\(^6\)

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\(^5\) For example, students were chained together in an Anglican school in Brocket, Alberta as punishment for trying to escape (TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth”: 105)

\(^6\) Some schools, such as the Mohawk Institute in Brantford, Ontario even had dedicated “punishment rooms” – rooms or cells used for solitary confinement (TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth”: 103, 105). The TRC reports that in 1914, the principal of the Mohawk Institute was successfully sued by a father whose daughter was locked “in a cell for three days on what was described as a ‘water diet’” (2015 “Honouring the Truth”: 103).
the withholding of rations, even the use of electric chairs (TRC 2015 “Survivors Speak”:143; Young 2015:67) – ‘school’ is not the first institution that comes to mind. And indeed, survivors of the Kuper Island Indian Residential School\(^7\) referred to this school as their “Alcatraz” (in Fournier and Crey 2011:173).

As the schools’ maxim ‘to kill the Indian in the child’ irrevocably proclaimed, the erasure of Indianness was a central defining feature. Once children were captured and contained in these carceral spaces, the colonizers’ primary aim would be centered on eliminating the abject, or to eliminate that which makes the abject abject: Indianness. This meant, first, forcefully breaking ties between Indigenous children and their parents, families, communities, and their land, and second, re-making Indigenous children as something other than an Indian. The erasure of Indianness was a two-pronged approach. Through an education in the “white man’s way” (in Commissioner of Indian Affairs Annual Report 1891:392) concurrent with an enforced denigration and erosion of the student’s own sense of self, the children were to be altered/“assimilated”. Examining this process of erasure/resocialization, Chrisjohn and Young (2006) draw on Erving Goffman’s (1961) notion of a ‘total institution’\(^8\) to which the process of ‘resocialization’ is central. Resocialization, Goffman (1961) explains, is a two-part process: Part one involves the attempted erosion of the person’s independence and sense of self, and part two constitutes an attempt to have that person re-build and adopt a different personality or sense of

\(^7\) Kuper Island Indian Residential School was a Roman Catholic school, operational between ca. 1890-1975 in British Columbia, across the channel off the east coast of Vancouver Island. The school took hold of children of the Cowichan Indian Agency and nearby Coast Salish groups.

\(^8\) Goffman (1961) describes a total institution as one that takes hold of a particular segment of the population. In such an institution, virtually all aspects of the inmates/members/residents’ lives are controlled, there exists a stark power differential between the inmates/members/residents and their keepers/managers/administrators, and inmates/members/residents are there to be re-made through a process of resocialization.
self per the criteria presented to them. Most effectively, this is accomplished in a space from which that person cannot escape – ‘totalizing’ or ‘complete and austere’ carceral spaces in which power seeks to discipline, regulate and remake those it has captured to ensure the perpetuation of colonial power (Million 2000). The project of forced assimilation/resocialization/erasure as was directed at Indigenous children involved the transfer of a captured people to a space from which they could not escape, the attempt to have them denounce their former associations, to have them reject their system of beliefs, and thus render them devoid of their former self. Prevented from and punished for speaking their languages, practicing their cultures, and adhering to their spiritual beliefs, these institutions sought to re-make the children’s very being, breaking their epistemic and ontological understandings of the world and themselves in it. Children were taught who they were, where they came from, and what they thought and believed in was inherently wrong, evil, and inferior. It was a form of coercive persuasion effected over prolonged periods of time that could be simultaneously insidious and subtle, while also open and brutal.

The brutality of this process is underscored by its deadly consequences. Children were excessively disciplined and died in exorbitant numbers in these spaces – a fact that was known to Indian Affairs bureaucrats already at the turn of the twentieth century (Fournier and Crey 2011:174). In 1907, Dr. P.H. Bryce, then Medical Inspector to the Department of Indian Affairs, conducted a study prompted by what seemed to be high death rates and found that approximately a quarter of children died in these schools, or 42% if those children were counted who were sent home because they fell critically ill (and then died there). He submitted this report to the churches and members of parliament (Milloy 1999: 90), it was discussed in the House of Commons (Fournier and Crey 2011:174), and newspapers (such as the *Montreal Star*, *Saturday Night*, and the *Ottawa Citizen*) reported on the high number of Indigenous child deaths in these schools (ibid:90-91; Fournier and Crey 2011:174; see also RCAP 1996 “Residential
Schools”:331). Bryce recommended that the schools be turned into sanatoria (TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth”:99), but his recommendation was dismissed. Duncan Campbell Scott, Treaty Commissioner and Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1913 until 1932, expressed his indifference in the following way:

> It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habitating so closely in these schools, and that they die at a much higher rate than in their villages. But this alone does not justify a change in the policy of this Department, which is being geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem. (in Monkman 2017:19)

As discussed in relation to Anatanwin, and as exemplified through the massacre at Wounded Knee, the abject’s ontological difference renders them inherently disposable and expendable in settler colonialism. As Razack (2015) explains, drawing on Ferreira da Silva, “to be excluded from the universal is to be placed at a social and moral distance from the European. Violence can be directed with impunity at those outside the domain of justice” (61; see also Razack 2016). Moreover, the settlers’ drive to expunge the abject not only means that the abject is disposable, but that the abject must be disposed of. Expressed differently, the Indian’s ontological difference translated into a white indifference towards their death and suffering. Hence, since erasure was the prime objective of these schools, and given the imagined non-humanity of Indian children, if these children died during their tenure at a school it was of little consequence to colonial society. Children were made or left to die. In other words, while the prime objective of these schools was ‘killing the Indian in the child’, they were also quite simply about killing the Indian child. Or letting them perish in the process.
To draw on just one example let us return to the Kuper Island Indian Residential School (also known as ‘Alcatraz’). In this school, approximately a third of the students died of tuberculosis. Medical experiments were conducted on students that resulted in further deaths, and students also died in their efforts to escape from this place (student, for example, drowned in their attempts to swim across to Vancouver Island). Within its first 25 years of operation, 40% of pupils died at this facility (RCAP 1996 “Residential Schools”:342). Physical abuse and sexual violence were rampant at this institution as well. Further, not only the high death rates, but the physical and sexual violence the students had to endure from their caretakers at Kuper Island was also known to Indian Affairs. In at least one instance, Indian Affairs even collaborated with the school administration to hamper a police investigation into abuse allegations (TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth”:105-106). In this case (which took place in 1939), British Columbia Provincial Police officers came across boys who had run away from the school. The officers believed that the boys had run away because of sexual abuse and launched an investigation, refusing to return them to the school. Indian Affairs admitted that the allegations had merit and recommended that the implicated Kuper Island school staff leave the province to avoid prosecution. Nothing was done for the students (TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth”:105-106). This case is exceptional only insofar as these students were believed by the police. Generally,

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11 One survivor, Emily Rice, spoke of her repeated abuse and sexual assaults by Father Jackson, three other priests, and a nun, Sister Mary Margaret – all before she had turned 11 years old (in Fournier and Crey 2011:173). Another perpetrator, Roman Catholic Oblate Brother Glen William Doughty who had worked at this school as a child-care worker and instructor was sentenced to jail for sexual assault (he faced more than three dozen charges involving children ranging between the ages of 6 – 18) (Armstrong 2000).
reports of abuse by students or eyewitness accounts were dismissed, the churches did not report such cases to Indian Affairs, and/or Indian Affairs did not report the children’s abuse to their families. In case they were acknowledged, investigations were usually improperly carried out (e.g. by members of the same school staff) (TRC 2015 “Honouring the Truth”:105-106).

Indian Residential Schools bring together features of carcerality and necropolitics. What we find is a rigorous attention to and disciplining of Indigenous life, with an indifference towards their death. To highlight the deadly violence within these carceral spaces, Indian Residential Schools have been likened to internment and/or concentration camps (Churchill 2004; Grant 1996), theorized (drawing on Foucault) as spaces of “genocidal carcerality” (Woolford and Gacek 2016), and camp-like spaces à la Giorgio Agamben – “factories of modern colonialism, whose walls bounded an atopos, a non-place… both outside yet implicated in the juridical order of the state and the sociocultural bounds of Indigenous communities” (Carr 2009:112). While coming from different theoretical viewpoints, these accounts share in an understanding that Indian Residential Schools certainly were more than simply schools. Yet, neither were these spaces simply Industrial Schools, work houses, prisons, nor simply death camps. Indian Residential Schools shared qualities with all these spaces, being at once pedagogical/punitive/carceral/genocidal. As such, Indian Residential Schools employed both, figurative and literal processes of erasure, existing as both spaces of assimilation and spaces of death-making, spaces in which the colonizer could take hold of the body of an Indigenous child and unleash violence against them. Not only is violence acceptable in the zone of abjection, but the imagined disposability of the abject is enacted/acted out. These are then spaces, as I have written elsewhere on the prison (Landertinger 2015:66) drawing on Razack (2002:143 “Gendered Racial Violence”, 2011 “Space of Difference”), in which violence routinely occurs, in which violence done to those considered less than human is not recognized as violence as
such, and in which the colonizer who inflicts this violence can do so with impunity (see also Park 2015; Razack 2015). As the schools’ many unmarked graves (see TRC 2015 “Missing Children”) remind us, anything can be done to the abject.

Indian Institutionalization versus White Foster Care

However we frame our attempts to understand the horror that was authorized, systematically implemented, and sustained through these institutions (whether we think of these institutions as ‘total’ or ‘totalizing institutions’, ‘camps’, ‘spaces of genocidal carcerality’, ‘white terror’, ‘zones of abjection’), let us also keep in mind that these institutions emerged alongside child-protection and child-saving initiatives for settler children. And that ‘normal’ children, i.e. white children, would not have been, and indeed were not, managed in such a manner.

It is during the same time period, that we witness, on the one hand, the creation and expansion of a system of large and deadly carceral institutions specifically designed to take hold of Indigenous children for prolonged periods of time. On the other hand, for settler children, we saw the creation of a web of foster families based on the notion that children should not be kept in large impersonal institutional settings. As discussed in chapter four, institutional care for settler children was falling out of fashion. At the turn of the twentieth century, institutions came to be considered an outdated and archaic solution for child-populations. Indeed, this is one of the central arguments in Rooke and Schnell’s (1983) seminal book, aptly entitled *Discarding the Asylum*. Children were to be managed differently. Orphanages were to be done away with, Industrial Schools were to be done away with, and asylums were to be closed – issues that were already on the forefront during the first conference on child-saving work in Canada in 1895.\(^\text{12}\)

\(^{12}\) City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
“An institution is not the proper place to bring up children”, Kelso vehemently argued in 1896.”\(^\text{13}\) He further contended that “[c]hild saving efforts should never be directed to institutional life, but to that normal arrangement which keeps the child in the family relation”, \(^\text{14}\) and that “[i]nstitutions are to be dreaded, since their constant tendency is towards enlargement, and, in the case of children, towards retaining them for unnatural periods.” \(^\text{15}\) Similarly, in 1895, Hon. J. M. Gibson (then Secretary of Ontario) explicitly spoke out against institutional care for settler children, making the point that:

it is rapidly becoming the prevailing belief – who think that to detain children between the ages of three and fourteen in these institutions is to deprive them of what is most valuable and salutary in the life of all – the advantages of parental control and family experience. Not only that, but … children who are confined in one particular institution, where they see nothing from day to day or week to week or year to year but the particular rooms and routine they have become accustomed to, are deprived of the advantages of the experience of family life and outside


\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.
every-day life, none the less beneficial perhaps because of its difficulties and hardships.\textsuperscript{16}

In a similar fashion, Hon. G. W. Allan (then member of the Dominion Senate) remarked that, even if an institution was an exceptionally warm and loving place, carefully looking after each child, even \textit{then}, institutions were inappropriate places for the children of the nation: “I have always thought with regard to the children” he proclaimed,

that no matter how lovingly they may be dealt with, or how carefully they are brought up and instructed and cared for, yet they are each of them only one of so many other young children. That is not in the best sense of the term a home, and I think nothing can be of more value or more desirable than all the sweet influences of home life upon a young child.\textsuperscript{17}

Kelso shared this sentiment, insisting that “[a]n institution is not a home, and never can be made such, though it may be useful as a temporary abode … No child should be kept permanently in an institution, however good, and this is something that cannot be too frequently pointed out…” (Kelso 1894: 214). He further stated that one of the many “[d]rawbacks to institutional life for growing children” was that “[t]here is not sufficient scope and opportunity for the display of the social and family affections, with the resultant relaxation of some of the most precious ties which


bind human beings to each other.”

Hence, as Gorst put it in 1907, “[t]he place in which little children are cared for should be modelled on the idea of a nursery, and not of a school.” – Words repeated and quoted by Kelso in his role as the Superintended for the Department of Neglected and Dependent Children.

In sum, the inappropriateness of institutions for settler children had been established as a ‘truism’ in the early decades of the twentieth century. By 1916, Percy Paget, secretary of the Winnipeg Civic Charities Bureau and later Director of Child Welfare of the Canadian Council of Child Welfare (CCCW), could authoritatively declare that “the herding together of children in an institution under one roof is considered criminal by advanced studies of child welfare” (in Rooke and Schnell 1981:489; see also Finkel 2006:71; Rutman 1987:72,73). Only those settler children who were considered ‘incorrigible’ or beyond reformation were to be placed in an institution, an assessment based on individual conduct and a solution only for exceptional and extreme cases. None of this applied to Indigenous children. On the contrary, it was at the same time, in 1931, that we saw the highest number (80 concurrently-run facilities) of Indian Residential Schools in operation. Institutions for Indigenous children were built and expanded at the same time as institutions were to be avoided for settler children.

Further, the removal of settler children from their families was considered one option among many, home-restoration and short-term admission to a CAS shelter being preferable.

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solutions. For example, in 1894 Kelso explained that “[t]he greatest attention is devoted… to improve the home rather than remove the children”\textsuperscript{20}, in 1906 he wrote that “the object in forming a Society was not to take children away, but to encourage and persuade negligent parents to love, protect, and provide for their children, so that removal would not be necessary”\textsuperscript{21}, and in 1908 he expressed this in the following words: “our aim has not been to pile up the number of dependent children but rather by education and kindly intervention to so improve the home conditions of the poor and the unfortunate as to avoid the necessity of taking away the children.”\textsuperscript{22} Lesser-white mothers could prove their ‘worthiness’/ability to mother by, for example, attending instructional classes (regarding homemaking or mothercraft), enduring weekly or even daily visits by social workers or lady superintendents, and implementing changes ordered during these inspections. Only if these women were found to be ‘unworthy’ of raising the next generation of citizens, did they lose their children to the settler state. Yet, not only was child removal one option among many, it was also considered the last option. Taking children from their parents was considered a drastic course of action, not to be utilized except “[i]n extreme cases … where all other means have failed”\textsuperscript{23} according to P.H. Bartlett, Secretary of


\textsuperscript{23} City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
the Children’s Aid Society, London (Ontario), and only if “it was found that nothing short of that course would be effective” according to G.W. Allan. 24 How well this rhetoric translated into practice is debatable since vast numbers of settler children were removed from their families, often on the slightest of pretext. Yet, that these discourses were predominant in relation to settler children and their families, and not only absent — but reversed — for Indigenous children is significant.

Indigenous children were to be removed and institutionalized, not due to decisions made on an individual case basis as was the case for white children, but as a whole. All Indigenous children were to be captured. As the Department of Indian Affairs had put it in 1890, it was their desire “to obtain entire possession of all Indian children after they attain to the age of seven or eight years, and keep them at schools” (in RCAP 1996 “Residential Schools”:314). While lesser-white homes were to be ‘restored’, the settler society was not (yet) concerned with ‘improving’ the parenting conduct of Indigenous parents or relatives.25 Improving an ‘Indian home’ was not yet a desirable course of action. Indigenous peoples did not fit into this social/moral reform framework. Indigenous adults were written off as “the old unimprovable people of the passing generation”, considered beyond redemption, to be managed until they would eventually “die off”, in the words of E.F. Wilson, founder of the Shingwauk Residential School (in Nock


25 I do not wish to suggest that this would be a desirable alternative, but merely stress the dominant discourse and policy directive at that time.
1988:74; see also RCAP 1996 “Residential Schools”:314). The only acceptable solution was to remove their children and have them institutionalized as far away from their relations as possible. As John A. Macdonald, later Prime Minister then Superintendent General of Indian Affairs explained in 1883:

When the school is on the reserve, the child lives with its parents, who are savages, and though he may learn to read and write, his habits and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write. It has been strongly impressed upon myself, as head of the Department, that Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men. (in Olfert and Lobach 2015:121-122)

The notion that settler children should not be removed from their homes unless absolutely necessary was based on the recognition that severing familial relations would be harmful to everyone involved – the children and their relatives. In 1895, J. K. MacDonald, then President of the Children’s Aid Society of Toronto explained this in the following way: “parents love their children, and it is one of the last things the Society desires, to take away children from their parents, for we recognize that the parents are the natural, God-given guardians of them, and should not be lightly separated from them...”

anything else on earth,” writes Kelso in 1903, “and if it is denied this in its early years, the man
or woman will carry the scars of a warped character all through life.” 27 – A statement, perhaps
not accurate and certainly patriarchal, yet one that nonetheless operated as a truism in relation to
settler children at the turn of the twentieth century. “In philanthropic work, then,”, he goes on to
say, “the aim should ever be to keep the home intact, removing as far as possible the causes that
make for separation.”28 As such, it was already in the late 1890s that the notion of kinship care
was discussed as an option for settler children. In those exceptional cases in which a settler child
was to be removed and a foster family was to be found, placing the child with a relative would be
a beneficial course of action. In this vein, Kelso shares the following excerpt from the Children’s
Aid Society of Paris (Ontario):

When a child is removed from its parents every possible effort should be
made to place it in the care of a respectable relative. The old saying still
holds true that ‘blood is thicker than water,’ and as a rule a child will be
far happier with a relative, even if very poor, then it would be with a
stranger, and in the enjoyment of luxuries. Family ties are the strongest
upon earth, and we should not ignore the tremendous influence of
affection in the up-building of character.29

27 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s
Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
10. Date 1903. Box 146483, Folio 10.

28 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s
Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
10. Date 1903. Box 146483, Folio 10.

29 City of Toronto Archives. Children’s Aid Society of Toronto. Fonds 1001, Series 533. Fonds Title: Children’s
Aid Society of Toronto, reports of the Superintendent of Neglected and Dependent Children of Ontario. Dates of
These early attempts at kinship care, a solution that seeks to keep the child within the familial circle, would not be considered a viable option for Indigenous children for almost another century (see chapter nine).

Relatedly, it mattered to child-savers how white parents felt about their children, whether, for example, they seemed cruel, indifferent, or loving. Settler children were considered neglected or cruelly treated based on the conduct of their parents. In contrast, what Indigenous peoples thought about their children, or how they treated them, was of little consequence. As we saw with Anatanwin’s story, to colonial authorities the conduct or feelings of Indigenous caregivers towards their children did not necessarily matter. If settler mothers were considered neglectful when they were not present (for example, when at work or out of the house), then the great fault of Indigenous parents was that they were present-while-Indian, that their children were growing up in that presence, and that they did not want their children to be taken away.30

Managing Children/Managing Race

It is by contrasting the forms of management between Indigenous and settler children that one of the core arguments of this thesis comes to the forefront, namely that the management of child populations is primarily a method for managing racial and colonial relations (see also Paisley 2004:241; Jacobs 2009; Carrington 2011). The imperial management of childhood as part of a
project of white settler colonial nation-building translates into vastly different things for those child populations who are considered members of the national collective and those who are considered obstacles to its proliferation. It entails an obsessive control over and erasure of Indianness with a simultaneous improvement of the white race, both to be effected by taking hold of the next generations. Both of these forms of child management – child-saving/home-restoration/foster care and Indian Residential Schools are manifestations of techniques or modalities of colonial power that render some subjects as worthy of saving/protection/reform while constituting others as fundamentally different – a difference that places them outside of the fold of protection, a difference that renders them extraneous to the white body politic, a difference that renders them abject – as something to be expunged and segregated, while rigorously managed in their segregation.

Imagined as a hindrance to, rather than regenerators of, the Canadian body politic, Indigenous children were managed through institutions that were already considered archaic and detrimental to children’s lives at the time of their implementation. Deliberate decisions were made that, as a whole, settler children were not to be placed in institutions. And deliberate decisions were made that all Indigenous children were to be managed in just such a manner. For Indigenous children, institutions were an appropriate and preferable solution to the problem that their Indianness posed. These spaces were designed by a colonial society to capture, incarcerate, punish, and re-program members of nations deemed inferior, institutions in which physical, emotional, and sexual violence was routinely used, institutions in which its inmates would routinely perish, and in which the inmates were children. As we saw in Anatanwin’s story, the thought that a white child could be found in such an environment elicited sheer panic among the colonizers, a situation considered so dire that both settler societies and colonial authorities (Canada and the United States) had to intervene to rectify this ‘wrong’. At the very same time,
the removal, transfer, and enclosure of hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children in colonial institutions was considered a self-evident and desirable course of action, a course of action that needed no further justification than the self-referential racial logic upon which it is was built.

At the very same time as cruelty and neglect towards settler children were to be combatted and made punishable crimes, Indigenous children were subjected to unfathomable violence and cruelty by the settler society. Expressed differently, Indigenous children were brutally managed by the very society that was committed to saving and protecting its own offspring. Settler children were said to be neglected when they were found in dirty clothes, when their hair unkempt, when their parents were said to curse at them, when they were punished corporeally, while Indigenous children were being beaten, whipped, and worse. Settler children were considered neglected when their parents did not provide them with proper nutrition, while Indigenous children were malnourished and starved, while they were locked in a cell and fed a “water diet” (2015 “Honouring the Truth”: 103). What was done to Indigenous children by their white keepers was beyond the forms of cruelty child-savers combatted or even imagined to take place in neglectful settler homes. It was violence born of racial hatred and imagined white supremacy and enacted on an incredibly large scale: In over 130 institutions, for over 150 years, involving approximately 150,000 children.

What we come to learn from this discussion is that Indigenous children found themselves in institutions not because Canadian officials were unaware that institutional life would be harmful, they were not kept in these necropolitical spaces because Canadians were unaware that they were dying, they were not separated from their relations because colonial society knew nothing about familial bonds and psychological damage, it was not, in other words, because we did not know better. We knew. And it was intentional. The fact that social-moral reformers understood and knew children as a signifier of a people’s future (chapter two) suggests that the
colonial effort to remove, institutionalize and reprogram Indigenous children was a calculated attempt to eradicate Indigenous peoples of the present and the future. As it was said at the first conference on child-saving, “We all know that the youth of a country are its hope for the future.” I return once more to the quote with which this chapter began, yet this time to its opening statement: “There are classes which have no future”, writes Kelso. Those who have no future, the future-less, they belong in institutions. A range of authors (Razack 2015; Tuck and Yang 2012; Doxtator 2011; King 2011; Bergland 2000; Crosby 1991) have reminded us that colonizers envision ‘Indians’ as a dying race, disappearing, death-bound, futureless – wishful colonial thinking that appeases imperial anxieties over ownership of land and resources, comforting those who conquered that that which undermines settler sovereignty and legitimacy will just go away. Indian Residential Schools were to help this myth become reality. Turning towards the Indigenous child was similarly a turn towards the future, or a foreclosing of such, for Indigenous peoples. Taking the Indigenous child was synonymous with the (attempted) taking of Indigenous futurity.

Chapter 8
Integration and Child Welfare for the Indian, 1940s-1960s

Introduction

If the turn of the twentieth century and the period of Indian Residential School expansion was characterized as one of outright and explicit erasure, death-making, and colonial violence, a period in which the Indian/abject needed to be expunged, rigorously managed, or literally disappear, then Canada post-WWII could be characterized as a period of inclusion, human rights, and liberal equality.\(^1\) Newly appalled by racial discrimination and committed to the principles of liberal equality, white society began to focus on Indian integration (Stevenson 2015; Shewell 2004; Leslie 1999). This was a period ripe with legislative and socio-political changes that were imagined to signal the end of an era of overt state racism and racial exclusion. It is during this time that we witness the beginning of a slow phasing out of Indian Residential Schools and an extension of ‘care’ and concern of former-child-savers-now-social workers towards Indigenous children.

The impetus behind integration and its accompanying legislative changes was the absorption of Indigenous peoples into the Canadian settler nation. Hence, this ‘new’ emphasis on Indian integration remained structurally oriented towards the same colonial goal the settler colony sought prior to WWII, namely the disposssession and erasure of Indigenous peoples. Premised on the disavowal of Indigenous peoples as distinct and sovereign nations, the settler

\(^1\) In describing a shift towards liberal equality, I do not want to imply a break from colonialism, but point out that relations of coloniality were extended through a discursive framework that adapted. The liberal Canadian state remains a colonial state.
society’s aim to fold the Indian into existing Canadian state structures was but another elimination/assimilation scheme (see Turner 2008; Shewell 2004; Stevenson 2015) and the removal of Indigenous children was central to this endeavour. Hence, for Indigenous peoples, the post-war shift towards integration, equality, and fairness proved devastating. For Indigenous peoples, integration meant further erasure and colonial violence. It meant coming under the purview of social workers and the extension of child welfare services onto reserves, which, in turn, meant the continued theft and transfer of thousands of Indigenous children to the settler society.

While the strategy of Indigenous elimination effected through Indigenous child removal was a continuation of what had come before, the accompanying language and the mechanisms though which this was to be accomplished were decisively different. Indigenous peoples were presented as damaged, deprived, and mistreated – framed as a result, not of colonialism, but of past and present racial exclusion. To this, integration was presented as a just and equitable solution and liberal gestures of inclusion were extended to the Indian. Drawing on the theoretical insights of Denise Ferreira da Silva, Joanne Barker, Jodi Byrd and others, I explicate how the turn towards integration/inclusion – as a response and solution to the logic of racial exclusion – furthered the settler colonial project. I will show that this colonial turn towards inclusion/ the project of Indian integration was effected via the premise that Indigenous peoples be treated like an ‘ethnic minority’ who was ‘allowed’ to hold on to some of their cultural expressions as long as these expressions did not significantly interfere with the Canadian nation state. Imagining Indigenous peoples as an ethnic minority rested on a conflation of colonization with racialization, and thus the erasure of Indigenous peoples’ as distinct and sovereign nations. Indigenous peoples were not imagined as independent nations the Canadian settler colony had formed around, but rather a backwards ethnic group that belonged to and was the responsibility
of the settler state. Integration emerged as a colonial strategy to subsume the colonized into the very framework that is premised on their erasure, furthering the settler’s project towards Indigenous dispossession and elimination.

Indigenous children were drawn into this project of erasure through similar narrative routes. Having previously been ‘excluded’ from the ‘benefits’ of child protection services that were available to white children, a form of racial discrimination it was held, Indigenous children were to now receive an ‘equal’ form of ‘care’. This meant that Indigenous children should no longer be merely transferred to large carceral institutions – not because Indian Residential Schools were recognized for their brutality, but, as it was argued, they were segregationist and hence not conducive to full Indian assimilation/integration. In addition, (and preferably instead) Indigenous children were now also to be handed over to white foster and adoptive families. Here, the colonial modality of Indigenous child removal was advanced and justified through the language of equitable service provision.

The colonial violence that underpins liberal gestures for inclusion is exemplified by its outcomes. In 1959, less than 1% of children in the child welfare system across Canada were Indigenous children (Fournier and Crey 1997). By the end of this period (late 1960s), approximately 30-40% of children in the Canadian child welfare system were status-Indian children (Fournier and Crey 1997), while constituting only 3.5% of the overall child population (Jacobs 2014). This number was higher in the western and Prairie provinces, with Indigenous

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2 Perhaps it should be noted at the onset that this chapter examines the discourses and structural adjustments that such narratives necessitated. In examining the drive towards and rhetoric of inclusion, racial equality, and equal rights, I do not mean to leave the impression that these goals were ever actualized. Neither racial Others nor Indigenous peoples were treated equally to white settlers. Particularly as it pertains to child welfare, despite the insistence of equitable service provision, Indigenous children did not and still do not receive the same services available to non-Indigenous children – a fact confirmed by the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal in 2016.
children, for example, constituting 60 percent in Manitoba’s child welfare system (Hepworth 1980:111–15) and, by 1983, up to 70% in Saskatchewan (Fournier and Crey 1997). Non-status Indian and Métis children were not counted in these statistics (Armitage, 1995; Fournier & Crey, 1997) and hence the total number of Indigenous children in settler ‘care’ was even higher. Once removed, colonial society sent these children to white settler families, far from their birth places, to provinces across Canada, to the United States, Great Britain, and other countries around the world (Jacobs 2014; Bennett and Blackstock 2002; Balcom 2011). For example, a snapshot for the year 1981 revealed that 55% of Indigenous children who had been taken into the system in Manitoba had been sent out of the Province for adoption (Bennett and Blackstock 2002). Generally, the birth parents and communities were not told where their children had been sent, nor given the opportunity to retrieve them. As Pamela Palmater (2017) put it, “[t]he 60s Scoop became a market for the advertising, buying and selling of Indigenous children – an act that many of the victims consider to be human trafficking” (n.p.). Most of these children did not find their way home (Bennett and Blackstock 2002).

My purpose in writing this chapter is two-fold. First, I seek to add to our historical understanding of how the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Canadian Council on Social Development, and the Department of Indian Affairs collaborated in the management of Indigenous peoples, the role social reformers and child welfare workers took in advocating for the assimilation/integration of Indigenous peoples, and how this was effected through the liberal discourse of inclusion and racial equality. Second, I provide the beginnings of an overarching argument here and it is one that extends into the next chapter. This chapter focuses on the settler desire to ‘integrate’ the Indian into the Canadian nation – a project that was to be furthered through social welfare schemes, child welfare being a central one of them. The next chapter discusses the ways in which the settler society sought to integrate Indigenous peoples into the
Canadian child welfare system in the colonial present. Both integrationist schemes drew on the smooth narratives of equality and inclusion, and both furthered the colonial project through such proclamations. As Byrd (2011) reminds us, “[w]hen the remediation of the colonization of American Indians is framed through discourses of racialization that can be redressed by further inclusion into the nation-state, there is a significant failure to grapple with the fact that such discourses further reinscribe the original colonial injury” (xxiii). What we witness is a shift in discourses and management techniques of colonial governance, a turn away from explicit annihilative language to colonial gestures of inclusion – a shift apt for the socio-political context of the time and one through which Indigenous annihilation, dispossession, and child removal could continue without interruption.

The End of Racial Exclusion (and Other Myths)

In the Western imagination, David Theo Goldberg (2009) asserts, the Second World War is commonly taken as a pivotal moment that revealed the dangers of racial thinking. The horrors of the violence of racist commitments and the solutions (or, in this case, the Third Reich’s ‘final solution’) such commitments may bring about became apparent to the Western world (330). Western societies began to question race as a scientifically sound category, and by the late 1940s, to reject racism, in principle, as morally repugnant and politically dangerous (ibid). The formation of the United Nations (1945), the affirmation of universal human rights through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), and the adoption of the International Convention

3 Curiously, the previous centuries of imperial aggression and racial violence that socio-politically and economically ‘made’ the West evidently did not lead to the same insights. It is also worth mentioning that the terminology “final solution”, while commonly associated with the atrocities of the Jewish Holocaust, was similarly used by Duncan Campbell Scott to describe the Indian Residential Schools system as a remedy to Canada’s “Indian Problem” (in Monkman 2017:19).
on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965), are perhaps some of the most obvious materializations of these politico-symbolic rearrangements.

Canada, as a founding member of the United Nations, showed its newly embraced commitment to equality and human dignity in several ways. In 1944, for example, Ontario passed the Racial Discrimination Act prohibiting publications, signs, or notices expressing religious or ethnic discrimination. Saskatchewan passed the country’s first bill of rights in 1947 (it would be another 13 years until the passing of the Canadian Bill of Rights), and by the end of the 1950s most provinces had introduced similar legislation prohibiting discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and religion (particularly in the areas of housing and employment).

This also meant that after the war, Japanese internment camps were closed – albeit not immediately, those Japanese Canadians who had not been disenfranchised and deported were permitted to remain in the country – albeit to the East of the Rocky Mountains, and in 1949 Japanese Canadians were re-enfranchised and granted the right to vote in federal and provincial elections. Similarly, the 1923 Chinese Exclusion Act (the successor of the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 and the head tax system), which had virtually banned Chinese immigrants was revoked in 1947 – albeit independent Chinese immigration, like immigration for most racialized people, was permitted only after the introduction of the points system in 1967 (see Fischlin and Nandorfy 2007:229). In 1957 we also saw the election of the first Chinese Canadian, Douglas Jung, as a Member of Parliament.  

4 Not only was Jung the first Chinese Canadian to run and win in a federal election, but he did so in Vancouver Centre – an area in which anti-Chinese racism had run high, the Asiatic Exclusion League was prominent, and where the ‘Anti-Oriental riots’ took place between September 7-9, 1907 (see Kwak 2016:84. For further information regarding Anti-Asian racism in British Columbia see, for example, Roy 1989, 2004 and Price 2011).
This, of course, did not mean that the social, economic, and political context ceased to be profoundly racist.\(^5\) Indeed, contra the dominant narrative of steady social progress, the late 1950s and early 60s in particular saw a racially-charged backlash manifesting in a resurgence in white supremacist and right-wing organizing (Ross 1992).\(^6\) Nonetheless, these legislative and socio-political changes, as Kwak (2016) argues (particularly regarding Jung’s election), were imagined as symbolisms that signaled “the end of an era of racial exclusion” (85). Canada was to move away from explicit and unconcealed state racism, entering a new era in which (most) non-white Others were granted legal/formal equality and were ‘included’ in aspects of the nation from which they were previously ‘excluded.’

The logic of racial exclusion – and its remedy, integration/inclusion – has been successfully challenged by Denise Ferreira da Silva (2001; 2007) and others (Mills 1999; Goldberg 2009, 1993; Lowe 2015; Foucault 2003; Stoler 2006; Anderson 2007) who have demonstrated that race is a foundational pillar of liberalism and modernity. Ferreira da Silva

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\(^5\) For example, in Dresden, Ontario, black residents were not welcomed in ‘white’ churches, and testimonies from black customers being refused service in restaurants and barbershops were reported well into the 1950s (Lamberton 2001:61). In 1951, a group of white settlers in an Ontario neighbourhood signed the following restrictive covenant:

“The ownership of no lot on plan 269 and no part of the low-water beach aforesaid shall be transferred by sale, inheritance, gift or otherwise, nor rented, licensed to or occupied by any person wholly or partly of negro, Asiatic, coloured or Semitic blood, nor to any person less than four generations removed from that part of Europe lying south of latitude 55 degrees and east of longitude 15 degrees east. Relationship, however slight, to any class forbidden as aforesaid shall be deemed sufficient to prevent transfer to or occupancy by such persons of northern and western European descent, other than Jews. Such restrictions, however, shall not apply to bona fide domestic servants of actual occupants during the period of such occupancy. The land and premises herein described shall never be sold, assigned, transferred, leased, rented or in any manner whatsoever alienated to and shall never be occupied or used in any manner whatsoever by any person of the Jewish, Hebrew, Semitic, negro or coloured race or blood, it being the intention and purpose of the Grantor, to restrict the ownership, use, occupation and enjoyment of the said recreational development, including the lands and premises herein described to persons of the white or Caucasian race not excluded by this clause. No building shall be erected on these premises except by a person who is a white Gentile, nor by any limited company whose shareholders are not entirely Gentile” (in Clément 2014).

\(^6\) Such organizations included the John Birch Society, the Canadian Nazi Party, the Canadian National Socialist Party, Western Guard, Nationalist Party of Canada, Social Credit Party of Ontario, among others. Particularly the activities of the Ku Klux Klan increased, which included a cross-burning in Amherstburg, Ontario in 1965 (Ross 1992:79).
explicitly shows this by debunking “the view that race is only politically and socially significant when race identification is explicitly or implicitly used to justify discrimination” (2001:421). The author reminds us that racial injustice often becomes recognized as such only when race is drawn upon to “justify exclusionary practices (e.g. when the racial Other is prevented from crossing the border/excluded from the nation; prevented from renting or buying housing/excluded from the neighbourhood; not hired for a job/excluded from the labour market). This is not to say that these examples are not racist, nor that race thinking or racism do not function through and manifest as exclusionary practices (see Goldberg 1993:90-116; Brand 2008). White superiority, status, power, and privilege are premised on dominance, cannot exist without the suppression and subjugation of those deemed inferior – it involves the introduction of a break between those who belong and the rest, to which exclusion is central. However, the salient point is that if racial injustice is viewed only as discrimination, then racism appears to be a deviation from principles that are thought to be neutral and universal. Yet, this is not so. As discussed in chapter six in relation to the Indian/abject, racial power is premised on epistemological imaginings in which the racial Other is made partially through an exclusion from the category of the human and the being of personhood (Goldberg 1993: 150-151). But this is not just an eviction or exclusion from humanity (understood as an abstract, universal category that exists independently from us), rather the notion of ‘the human’ itself was racially constructed. As Ferreira da Silva (2001) explains, “racist ideas are not extraneous to modern imagination but instead circumscribe the zone of operation of universality” (424), or expressed differently, “the primary effect of the power of race has been to produce universality itself” (ibd:427). Modernity, humanity, universality are notions intimately tied to the racial. The racial produces the realm of universality itself. In Race and the Crisis of Humanism, Kay Anderson (2007) argues that European colonial encounters with Aboriginal Australia provoked a crisis in Enlightenment ideas in what defined humanity.
Like many others, Anderson demonstrates that humanist discourses justified colonialism in drawing on binary constructions of culture/nature, human/animal, by locating humanity on a scale of development on which Indigenous peoples were rendered closer to nature/the animalistic. Yet, Anderson further points out that actual encounters with Indigenous peoples led the colonizers to question whether humanity truly was a universal category, and whether any race truly was improvable/located on the scale of the human. What emerged was a scientifically grounded, biologically deterministic conception of race and humanity, rendering Aborigines as inherently different, unable to progress or improve (see 2007:143). Anderson’s insights remind us of the instability of the category of the human, that ideas of humanity are racial construction, and that the eviction of Indigenous peoples from humanity is fundamentally linked to European self-making (as truly human, modern, and civilized). As Razack (2015) explains, drawing on the Anderson’s insights, “the European-Indigenous encounter was not simply about racism (a belief in the inferiority of others) but also about a process of evicting racial Others outside of civilization, an eviction that formed the basis of European identity” (60). Not everyone was/is considered modern, not everyone was/is considered human, justice (and injustice – e.g. recall Anatanwin’s theft that never happened) does not apply to everyone. It was “the white body and the social (geographic, economic and symbolic) spaces associated with whiteness [that] have been produced to signify the principles of universal equality and freedom informing our conceptions of the Just, the Legal, and the Good” (Ferreira da Silva 2001:423; see also Mohanram 1999 for a similar argument). Or, as Lisa Lowe (2015) so precisely puts it, “the modern distinction between definitions of the human and those to whom such definitions do not extend is the condition of possibility for Western liberalism, and not its particular exception” (3).

If racism is not merely a problem of ‘exclusion’ because race structurally orders, then racial injustice cannot be solved through ‘inclusion’. Race is constitutive of modernity, of
liberalism, of the very nation that seeks to include. Because ‘universality’ (or ‘humanity’),
Justice, the Good) is made by excluding others permanently from it, it is impossible to simply
include those into the very category that was made through their eviction. Hence, racism, as
Stoler (2006) so eloquently put it, is not an effect, “does not merely arise in moments of crisis”,
but is internal to the liberal state, inscribed within its modes of governance, “woven into the weft
of the social body, threaded through its fabric (69).

While Canada began to present integration and inclusion as mechanisms to correct
historical and contemporary injustices by offering racialized groups liminal entry into the
dominant order, this liberal turn constitutes a form of racial management that disavows the
violence and coloniality that underpins liberal universalism, and ignores the fact that racial
Others are constituted and known through power, history, and whiteness (Baldwin, Cameron and
Kobayashi 2011). As such, as Rinaldo Walcott (2006) reminds us, integrative nation-state
policies “belie the ways in which those marked as different are imagined and not imagined in the
nation… rather than solving or adequately addressing the problem of belonging to the nation,
[these policies] exacerbate the problem of belonging” (89) for those who do not or cannot ascribe
to the nation’s inherent whiteness and coloniality. Hence, in proclaiming an end to an era of
racial exclusion, Canada did not end racial injustice but entered an era of racial liberalism (Kwak
2016) – a framework of the colonial present in which (most) non-white Others were granted
legal/formal equality, while the racial order continued to be preserved (see, for example, Walker
2010, 2008; Brand 2008; Galabuzi 2008; Stasiulis and Bakan 2008).

In this context, the discursive landscape of formal equality, fairness, and inclusion also
provides the mechanisms through which racial injustice can be furthered. A case in point was the
razing of Africville in Halifax, one of Nova Scotia’s oldest black communities between 1964-
1970. In this instance, white society began to denounce Africville as an “American-style Ghetto”
that, according to Gordon Stephenson (the designer of the ‘development’ plans), “stands as an indictment of society” and needed to be done away with (in Loo 2010). Presented as a progressive post-war welfare scheme contra racial segregation and towards the integration of black residents (rather than an expression of Anti-black racism), the Halifax City Planning Commission ignored the community’s opposition and resistance, expropriated the land, bulldozed the homes, and forcefully relocated its residents (see Nelson 2008). And it is also through this language and gestures of inclusion that Indigenous peoples were to be eliminated.

Indian Integration

In the turn towards racial integration/inclusion post-WWII, we witness a shift towards ethnic pluralism and the beginnings of a Canadian multiculturalism (later to become the state’s official mandate) that so neatly aligned itself with settler colonialism. It is a framework in which racial others are invited to participate in some aspects of Canadian nation-building and access certain rights within a liberal democracy that could only take shape though colonialism/at the expense of Indigenous peoples.

Yet, not only were racial Others to be included in the settler nation, ‘Indians’ too were to fit into this liberal framework. Hence, a number of historians (Stevenson 2015; Shewell 2004; Leslie 1999) refer to Canada’s post-war period as one of ‘Indian integration’. It was during this time, that “integration” became the official policy goal of the Department of Indian Affairs (Leslie 1999; Stevenson 2015:104). Shewell (2004) explains that Indigenous peoples were to be folded into the body politic and enjoy the ‘benefits’ of equal rights and Canadian citizenship. This was presented as a different policy directive than what had come before. This was no longer forced assimilation the settler society claimed, for rather than explicitly and outspokenly bent on eliminating every Indian and every aspect of Indianness (‘kill the Indian in the child’), Indians
would now be ‘allowed’ to retain some aspects of their culture – while expected to embrace the social, legal, political, and economic values of Canadian society. Expressed differently, Indigenous peoples’ own claims to sovereignty were disavowed, while expected to assimilate/integrate by accepting Canadian sovereignty and becoming a part of its framework.

Integrating colonized peoples into the very framework that dispossesses them is no simple task and, not surprisingly, required some re-imaginings on part of the settler society. Indian integration was to be accomplished through several moves. First, through a disavowal of colonial conquest, settlement, and the attendant violence necessary to secure and normalize Canadian sovereignty, the present ‘lot of the Indian’ was framed as an unfortunate result of past racial exclusion. This past mistreatment, it was claimed, had resulted in an unjust situation in the present, a situation that had no place in a liberal society such as theirs – to this, integration was presented as the most ‘enlightened’ and progressive solution. Second, this move was accompanied by a re-signification of the Indian who came to be imagined as a racial/ethnic minority group – that is, as a group that could indeed be integrated and managed within the body politic. Third, these discursive moves materialized through welfare schemes, including the extension of child welfare services to Indians, and changes to the Indian Act as the primary routes for Indian integration.

“Killed by Kindness”

Post WWII, Canadian society awoke to a ‘disgraceful’ situation. Indians, they recognized, found themselves in a rather ‘unequal’ context compared to white settlers. It was a “situation”, as one newspaper article put it in 1946, “so deplorable that a mass public opinion should rise in
indignation against it.””

This situation, according to the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) (now the Canadian Council on Social Development) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) was one of profound social inequality. The CWC and the CASW found that in terms of “housing, tuberculosis mortality, and the infant death rate”, “the situation of the Indians compares most unfavourably with that of the white population.”

In regards to housing, “in terms of the extent of dilapidation, sanitary arrangements, household equipment, living accessories, and overcrowding, not only appears to be less adequate than that of our Canadian population generally, but in many instances very appreciably worse than that of adjacent white communities.”

In fact, (and reminiscent of a discourse that was once reserved for lesser-white settlers as discussed in chapter three), “[o]ur Indian people, insofar as they live in settled communities, are a race of slum-dwellers.”

Further, “[i]n 1944 the death rate for all children under one year of age was 54 per 1,000 live births. Among Indians, the rate was 180.3 per 1,000 live births”. And “the death rate from tuberculosis” they point out was “almost 14 times as high among the Indians as it is among other groups in Canada, and 16 times as great if half-breeds are included.”

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9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.
tuberculosis” they state, yet nonetheless “[i]t is a disease of poverty, spread by ignorance. Even allowing for the possibility of racial susceptibility”, this statistic “is a shocking commentary on the extent of poverty and ignorance which we have permitted to exist among the Indian people.”

Others yet, perceived the unequal relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers in slightly different terms. The ‘Indian Citizenship Committee’ of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union (Vancouver Branch), a settler group of self-proclaimed advocates for the advancement of the Indian through full integration/assimilation, explained the problem as follows:

The contrast that exists in Canada today between the dominant population and the Indians is not merely disgraceful. It is unreasonable and almost incredible. The dominant society is among the most intelligent, humane and just in the world. It is governed by a system of laws that is as democratic as any in the world, and in which it sincerely believes. Yet, within this society there is an Indian population of approximately 140,000 which is as backward as the other is advanced.

Some blamed (or partially blamed) white society for having caused this unequal situation. For instance, the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada explained that Indians had, “suffered

13 Ibid.
14 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-110, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.
15 The Indian-Eskimo Association (1950s-1970s) was a national citizen’s organization that promoted the ‘well-being’ of Canadian Indians through their full integration into the body politic. The organization had its origins in the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) when the CAAE appointed a committee to study the problems of ‘urban Indians’. This committee became known as the National Commission on the Indian Canadian. In 1960 the
centuries of neglect and exploitation at the hands of his White brothers.” 16 The newspaper article cited before proclaimed: “It has been said before – and it bears repeating – that our Indians have been treated disgracefully, allowed to die of neglect.” 17 Like this article, many framed it in more passive terms and blamed Canadians for having ‘allowed’ such an unequal situation to develop or “permitted to exist” as the CWC and CASW had put it. In general, the situation was imagined to be the result of Canadian negligence or misinformed benevolence, not due to ill-intent or malice on part of the settler society.

Not surprising, given their understanding of ‘the situation’, the Canadian Civil Liberties Union produced its own white supremacist historical narrative to explain its cause. Here, Canada’s history of conquest and genocide was given the following spin: “The arrival of white men with a new civilization might have led either to extinction of the Indians or to the higher development of good qualities they possessed. Actually – and by accident – it led to neither.” There was a “worthy intention” behind “the original treaties and agreement, and, at Confederation by the formulation of the Indian Act”, which was “(1) to protect the Indians from injustice or exploitation by the members of a more powerful and more sophisticated race; (2) to provide them with the experience and knowledge required to make them capable of taking their Commission was incorporated as the Indian-Eskimo Association and expanded its range to both on and off-reserve Indians as well as ‘Eskimos’ (Inuit). Membership was made up of some Indigenous peoples and mostly settlers. In the 1970s, the association moved its headquarters (from Toronto to Ottawa) and came to be known as the Canadian Association in Support of Native Peoples.


place on equal terms in the new social structure.” Yet, the result was not as the benevolent settler society intended:

In effect what has happened is this: In terms of civilized society, the white man driving in his fine carriage and team found the Indian walking. He gave him, eighty years ago, a horse and buggy and said ‘when you learn to keep up with me we will drive side by side.’ Then the white man was compelled by force of circumstances to get himself an automobile and left the Indian in his Indian-Act buggy still struggling to catch up, but consistently falling farther and farther behind. It is not new wheels, grease for his axles, another horse or a better road that the Indian needs. These things might make him more comfortable, but they would not make him catch up. He, too, needs an automobile, a vehicle that operates on a new principle – and act that will enable him to catch up, not with society of 1868, but with that of 1951.

As to be expected per this version of history, Canadian society was not to blame. As the Civil Liberties Union repeatedly insisted, “[t]his situation is … the result not of purpose but of accident”, created “without ill-will or intention to do harm, but rather, with a vague and uninformed intention to do good.”

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18 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.
deliberately sought to create the disgracefully backward situation that now exists.” 21 For “Canadians as a whole bear no malice toward the Indians”. Rather, “[t]hey were, in effect, killed by kindness – even though it was a parsimonious kindness.” 22

Regardless of whether Canadians were at fault, partially to blame, or whether this situation was simply an unintended by-product of white peoples’ racial superiority and grandeur that non-white Others simply could not keep up with, Canadians of the day had to do something about it, since the ‘situation’ of the Indian came to be understood as “disgraceful”, “unreasonable”, “unjust”, and so on. In other words, it was a situation that did not easily fit into the image Canada began to craft of itself as a liberal, egalitarian, and pluralistic society. As the Indian-Eskimo Association put it, the Indians, having been neglected and exploited in the past, must now “become the equal of their fellow-citizens” for “nothing less is compatible with the ideals of a free democratic society.” 23 Or as the Canadian Civil Liberties Union explained, Canadian thought and the thought of the western world have advanced so far in the direction of recognizing the human rights of depressed aboriginal races that arguments in its favor seem superfluous. If the conscience of the Canadian people did not enforce the making of these sweeping reforms [reference is made to full integration], the Canadian

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

government’s endorsement of the United Nations’ ‘Universal Declaration of Human Rights’ would morally require it.24

“The Future of the Indians as an Ethnic Group in Canada” 25

“Has the time not come to stop treating the Indian as something out of a T.V. Western and accept him as a fellow member of our ‘modern’ society.”26

The new Canadian turn towards egalitarianism and liberalism required a different colonial management of Indigenous peoples than the state had employed in the past. This also meant that the narrative landscape had to change. Gone were the days in which one could openly advocate for the genocide of Indigenous peoples without inviting widespread criticism. At the same time, however, the realities of being a settler society meant that the Indian still had to be managed and disappear. Yet, how was this to be accomplished? What was required was a reconciliation between liberal rhetoric and annihilative colonial politics.

For this purpose, the perception of the Indian began to change. The Indian was no longer simply the abject. As we saw in chapter six, as the abject, the Indian was imagined as inherently debased, lazy, dirty, shiftless, and so on – the Indian was imagined as some-‘thing’ abhorrent and

24 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada.


repulsive that needed to be expunged. Now, post WWII, the Indian/abject was to be given some recognizable human features. For example, the Civil Liberties Union explained that the Indian problem was a “human problem, involving men and women and children with aims and feelings like our own” (emphasis added). However, after having insisted on the inhumanity and savage nature of the Indian for a very long time, recognizing the human in the Indian took some effort. As the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada put it, “we must admit that the public is badly confused about Indians and it is not without reason. So little has been done to present the Indians as people with human needs and problems, human hopes and aspirations.” “They are not Indians, they are just people” (Chupik-Hall in Stevenson 2015:30), the settlers kept reminding each other. At the very least, they are “people of Indian descent.”

Some believed it, others were not quite convinced. Hence, a debate was to be had over the accuracy of the settlers’ earlier depictions of the Indian/abject. Some suggested that the Indian was, in fact, none of these things. Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, claimed that believing the Indian to be “shiftless” and “unreliable” were inaccurate “[s]tereotypes” that “are breaking down under the impact of facts.” As Herbert Dawson,

27 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.].


director of the Children’s Aid Society in Port Arthur, put it: “Too often he is judged to be lazy, alcoholic and indifferent to responsibility. … No man who can handle a trap-line is lazy.” The vast majority of social reformers/social workers believed the Indian to be backwards, lazy and shiftless, but perhaps, they suggested, these were not inherent characteristics. Maysie Roger from the Manitoba School of Social Work, re-iterating the position of the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) on this matter, proposed that “[i]t is not unlikely that many characteristics, such as shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia, so long regarded as inherent or hereditary traits in the Indian race, may, at the root, be really the manifestations of malnutrition.” Perhaps, social and environmental factors contributed to their lowly characters: “They are no more ‘naturally’ lazy than the rest of us” writes Mrs. Clipsham, a long-standing volunteer and self-identified ‘friend’ of the ‘Urban Indian’. The problem of their “inertia” was, as Clipsham suggests, due the Indian’s backwardness: “Indians are at the stage of social development of much of our rural population a few generations ago…” Yet, “an Indian has all the potential capacity of a non-Indian” and hence can be brought along. The Canadian Civil Liberties Union provides a similar analysis. Under the title, “Indians not responsible for backwardness”, the Civil Liberties Union explained that

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The Canadian Indians are, as a whole, a backward and a depressed race whose morale is shattered and whose self-confidence is lost.

Educationally they are either illiterate or little better, and economically they are incompetent and dependent. For this condition the Indians are not to blame…The Indians are backward, not because they are unintelligent, unimaginative, or inherently unambitious or incompetent, but because they have been retarded and deprived by Canadian law – specifically, by the Indian Act. If the Indian population is uneducated, and is lacking in independence, initiative, and a sense of responsibility, it lacks these qualities, not because of an original deficiency, but because, through generations, the laws under which the Indians live have eliminated these qualities of citizenship ...

Others yet were on the fence, not sure which side of the nature/nurture debate they fell on: “I do not know what adjective I could use personally to describe the Indian”, writes W. J. P. Thompson, director of the Children’s Aid Society for Sudbury, “[t]he usual attachment is the word ‘lazy’. Whether that aspect has been encouraged by the governmental attitude or not, I am not willing to say.”

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34 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-110, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”

35 Letter from W. J. P. Thompson, Managing Director, The Children’s Aid Society of the District of Sudbury, dated December 31, 1959, to Phyllis Burns, Director of Welfare Services, The Canadian Welfare Council. Library and
What we are witnessing is the active construction of Indigenous peoples as a backwards, archaic and damaged population. If the aim is integration and the Indian is damaged and backwards, then the archaic and dysfunctional Indian emerges as a figure that must be improved and be assisted in their efforts to join civilized Canadian society. As the Civil Liberties Union put it, the Indian had to “catch up”. It is such colonial configurations that Sherene Razack (2015) draws our attention to in *Dying from Improvement*. Razack argues that, in the Canadian settler colony, the relationship between colonizers and Indigenous peoples is “spatially and racially organized as one between modern subjects and those who must be assisted into modernity” (ibid). In this imaginary, Indigenous peoples are constructed as archaic, backwards, and damaged “remnants” of a colonial past (ibid:9), while colonial society retains its claims to civility and modernity. Gestures of inclusion are moments, Razack (2015) writes, “when the settler state announces that it has not forgotten its Indians and means to assist them into modernity” (Razack 2015:62). Razack draws on Gillian Cowlishaw who remarks that in the Australian settler colony, “there exists a widespread narcissistic desire, often muted and pressed into unconsciousness, to improve the Indigenous population” (in Razack 2015:62), a desire that “insists on its moral authority to rule over (to improve) an abject population” (ibid). Combing these insights with those of Kay Anderson’s, Razack describes colonial governance as a game of improvement, a game in which Indigenous peoples are perpetually to be improved while never

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36 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: ‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-110, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”
arriving at an acceptable standard, never being able to fully integrate and arrive in civility, modernity, humanity. It is an aim impossible to achieve since notions of modernity and civility are constituted through their very eviction, by leaving the Indian “off the scale” of humanity (Razack 2015:60, 61). The Indian, thus, must perpetually be assisted into modernity, while continuously conferring notions of civility, benevolence and modernity onto settler subjects. “Improvements in this view functions to reinstall European settlers as having successfully remained within the boundaries of civilization” (ibid:62). This is the continuation of very old colonial story, in which imperial subjects justified their initial colonial imposition and the attendant violence by presenting themselves (to self and others) as the harbingers of civilization, modernity and salvation, while Indigenous peoples were relegated to zones of the inferiority, savagery, and pre-modernity.

Even if colonial society could not agree whether the Indian was naturally inferior, evolutionary at an earlier stage of development, or backwards because of the socio-political environment, they did largely agree that Indians were people too. A backwards people, but a people with recognizable “human” needs, aspirations, and feelings nonetheless. This re-signification of the Indian was of major importance to the settler colonial project, for it paved the way to think of Indigenous peoples as a group that could be folded into the body politic (while the abject could not have been): they were likened to other racial/ethnic groups that had been or were in the process of being granted civil rights and the ‘benefits’ of Canadian citizenship. Expressed differently, through a conflation of colonization and racialization (Byrd 2011:xxiii) Indigenous peoples were to be made into an ethnic minority imagined to exist within Canada. Razack (2015), drawing on Audra Simpson, explains that “the disappearance of the Native is often and paradoxically accomplished through a gesture of inclusion” (62) – it is a gesture that that extends the colony’s annihilative impulse and it does so through a disavowal of Indigenous
sovereignty (Simpson 2011). It is an attempted erasure of Indigenous peoples *as* Indigenous peoples who are members of distinct and sovereign nations who hold title to the land.

We see this in the discourses colonial society employed to talk about and refer to Indigenous peoples. For example, a range of documents (e.g. pamphlets, internal memos, correspondences) produced by the Canadian Welfare Council, the Canadian Association of Social Workers, the Department of Indian Affairs, and various other governmental and non-governmental organization interested in the welfare of Indians, began referring to Indigenous peoples no longer solely as “Indians” but increasingly also as “our Indians”, “Canadian Indians”, “Indian Canadians” or “Canadians of Indian descent”. These were descriptors expressed through a possessive form – a linguistic structure that signals an asymmetric relationship of ownership and belonging of one thing to another. In this case, the possession/dispossession of Indigenous peoples by the Canadian state to which the Indian was to now belong.

More poignantly, several social reformers explicitly made the argument that, for the purpose of integration, Indians *had* to be treated like an ethnic minority. For example, the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada organized a conference and published a pamphlet under the title “The Future of the Indians as an Ethnic Group in Canada”\(^\text{37}\) to discuss this very issue. Under this tagline, the Indian-Eskimo Association advocated for the full integration of Indians into Canadian society. Indians were to become Canadians and should no longer be considered distinct peoples with ‘special’ rights or status – “the time has come to drop the designations ‘White’ and

‘Indian’, and to regard the problem as a Canadian problem to be tackled by all Canadians’ they advocated.

Through such a narrative of erasure, the re-classification of the Indian as not Indian, the settler society sought to conceptually rid itself of the Indian problem – for if the Indian becomes Canadian, and the ‘Indian problem becomes a Canadian problem’, then the Indian, at least in theory, ceases to be. Similarly, calling Indigenous peoples a minority within already does the work of colonization by erasing their status as distinct and separate from the settler colonial nation, a discursive and epistemic erasure of their nationhood. These liberal gestures of inclusion were narrative routes with which to un-think Indigenous presence. And, as such, they constituted merely different versions of the all too familiar story told about Indigenous peoples that seeks to “disappear them from the land” (Tuck and Yang 2012:9).

Given the immediate reality that Indians were still present, even when thought out of existence, the Indian was to become something more manageable – Indians, as the Indian-Eskimo Association argued, should be thought of and treated like another ethnic minority group. Similarly, Robert Quinsey, director of the Children’s Aid Society for the district of Muskoka, expressed this argument it in the following terms:

The Indian Affairs Branch emphasizes their legal status as Indians and the special treatment they must receive because of this status. I personally feel the government’s policy of differential treatment and segregation are wrong. There is no more reason, apart from a national guilt complex, to consider the Indian this way than to do so for any other ethnic group.

This approach is hampering the development and extension of community welfare services to the Indian population.39 Speaking from the position of a social worker, he emphasized, “We consider Indians to be a racial group with social problems related to their culture and community attitudes towards them.”

This narrative fit neatly into the colonial project, for if the Indian was just another ethnic group, then the Indian faced problems similar to other ethnic groups. The issue was not connected to colonization (i.e. conquest, oppression, genocide, land theft), which was brushed off as a national guilt complex – which on the one hand indicates that something-that-need-not-be-named might have happened in the past that led white society to feel guilty in the present (and hence led them to treat Indigenous peoples differently, perhaps it might even require making amends and offering reparations), and on the other hand that this something-that-need-not-be-named happened in the past, that it is no longer happening now, and all white society is left with is its ‘guilt complex’ – an obsession with the thought of having done wrong. Instead, like for other ethnic groups, racial discrimination was the issue – particularly the attitudes of the white community towards them. The CWC and the CASW similarly framed the problem of the Indian a problem of racial discrimination, which was caused by the “attitude of the white population”40 As Quinsey also implied, Indians were not oppressed and colonized, rather they had social problems – for which, conveniently, their own culture was to blame. Hence, as just another


minority group, the Indian did not require any differential/special treatment. Worse, treating them differently because of their race was considered illiberal, it upset the principle of equality. It reeked of racial discrimination and ‘segregation’. What the Indians needed as an ethnic minority, according to white settlers, was “equality of opportunity”\footnote{Laidlaw, Max. “The lot of the Indians – Responsibility for all Canadians.” Regina Leader-Post. Saskatchewan. April 12, 1961. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”} within the body politic.

Some Canadian social reformers-now-social workers took the idea of the ethnic Indian/the minority Indian even a step further, likening Indigenous peoples to immigrants in need of assistance during their \textit{settlement} process. For example, an article in the Regina Leader-Post expresses such an idea in the following way:

\begin{quote}
Within recent times there is a growing desire to assist Indian people moving from reserves to become part of the community in which they settle and, when Indians move from reserves, there is a growing practice on the part of municipal authorities to treat them as any other newcomer and to provide whatever social assistance may be required on a basis of need without regard to their Indian status.\footnote{Laidlaw, Max. “The lot of the Indians – Responsibility for all Canadians.” Regina Leader-Post. Saskatchewan. April 12, 1961. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”}
\end{quote}

This paragraph accomplishes several things required by the impetus of the time. First, the Indian needs to be treated equally (without regard to their Indian status). The Indian leaves the reserve on his/her own accord seeking to integrate/become part of the settler community (it is something that the Indian wants too). In this process, the Indian is treated like any other newcomer. The
cruelly ironic twist that turns the Indian into an immigrant/newcomer who requires assistance to settle, positions white settlers as the original and authentic owners of the land – a narrative so very central to the normalization of settler colonial nation states (Razack 2002 “When Place Becomes Race”:2) – who then open their community to welcome the newcomers – once again, imagining themselves as those who assist, help, and provide (not perpetrators, but benefactors).

The colonial move to imagine Indigenous peoples as an ethnic group for the purpose of integration was not distinctly Canadian, but generally representative of settler colonies that – like Canada – sought to perpetuate their existence by combining colonial administration with the socio-politics of liberalism. Variants of it have shaped Australian settler colonialism (Povinelli 2002) and the colonial present of the United States (Byrd 2011:xxiii-xxvi; Bruyneel 2004; Barker 2002; 2005). For example, speaking of the U.S. context, Joanne Barker (2002) explains that “the making ethnic or ethnicization of indigenous peoples has been a political strategy of the nation-state to erase the sovereign from the indigenous” (Barker 2005:16; emphasis in original). For, “[t]o the extent that Indians have been counted as ‘minorities, ‘under-represented,’ and/or as making up an ‘ethnic group’ within the larger U.S. polity, the notion that they are citizens of their own unique nations has been undermined, displaced.” (2002:324). Through this colonial strategy, “the very notion that indigenous peoples are members of sovereign political collectivities is made incomprehensible. This incomprehensibility works to collapse indigenous peoples into minority groups that make up the social rainbow of multicultural difference…” (2005:16-17). In discussing the end-point of integration, the Indian-Eskimo Association shared its aspiration as just that:

If we have an end in view, it must be an open end – an end that recedes as we advance because, as we achieve today’s goal, our vision widens, our expectations rise, and we see – still in the future – a nobler, more

The colonial impetus behind this liberal discourse is further evidenced by the fact that, at the same time, all three of these settler nations also sought to eliminate or curtail Indigenous peoples’ distinctive legal designation as Indians and extinguish land claims (Miller 2000: 325–35; Jacobs 2014; Fixico 1990; Haebich 2008).

**Minority Culture**

So conceptualized, ‘Canada’s Indian minority’ would then not disrupt settler normalcy but add vibrancy and strength to its framework, or in other words, add “richness” to Canada’s cultural “mosaic”. This then also meant that, as an ethnic minority, the Indian could (and perhaps even should) retain some aspects of their ethnicity/culture – as long as these aspects did not interfere with or interrupt the settler nation in any substantial manner. “[I]n Canada, the tendency is to vary and enrich the social texture of the country by encouraging each different racial or national group to retain as much of its heritage, or tradition as is compatible with the existing, but constantly growing and changing national culture”, \footnote{4}{The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “Help the Indians Help Themselves.” A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”} explains the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. “[O]ur national culture”, they further explain, “might be likened to the ‘coat of many
colours’ in which the differences are enhanced by belonging to a pattern in which the whole is enriched by the special contribution of each part, and in which all are held together by function and structure, to make the unified garment that is our national culture.” 45 Hence, as they go on to say, “[t]here is no reason why those Indians who wish to do so, should not retain whatever elements of their Indian heritage they wish.”46 The Indian-Eskimo Association put forth a similar argument. However, to them, this ideally meant that Indians would not simply bring their ‘old’ traditions into ‘modern’ society, but update them accordingly – i.e. make them fit for a ‘modern’, ‘free’, and ‘democratic’ Canada: In the process of integration, Indians are to “shoulder unaccustomed responsibilities”, “move from an old to a new way of life” and “create a new culture that is different from anything in the past and yet as truly Indian in essence as a Totem pole or a canoe…”47

Framed differently, as an ethnic group, Indians had their own culture, traditions, and heritage (some of which they could, at least in theory, practice). As an ethnic group, Indians were not distinct, sovereign peoples who – besides culture – also had a land base, territories, resources, their own political, economic, or legal systems – for these latter elements were certainly not compatible with the settler colonial project. Hence, Barker’s succinct assertion that “[t]he erasure of the sovereign is the racialization of the ‘Indian’” (Barker 2005:17), or as Bonita

45 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-110, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.

46 Ibid.

Lawrence (2003) similarly put it, “for indigenous people, to be defined as a race is synonymous with having our Nations dismembered” (2003:5).

**Assimilation**

It was also this inclusion of ‘culture’ that allowed the settler society to claim that ‘integration’ was *not* the same as ‘assimilation’. Aware that Indigenous peoples rejected assimilation, the settler society insisted that integration was different. ‘Evidence’ for this assertion was that Indians would be allowed to retain some of their ethnic/cultural expressions. Hence, while Indians were to be – and had to be – integrated, they would do so “without losing their identity”.48 This was not an easy sell and Shewell (2004) speaks of Indigenous peoples’ ambivalence (at best) or outright rejection of the state’s new policy direction (336). “They appear to distrust the White man”, W. J. P. Thompson, Director of the Children’s Aid Society in Sudbury, indignantly observed. 49

There was, of course, good reason to distrust the settler colony. In fact, the settler society did not seem to believe its own rhetoric. That, to many, integration was also assimilation under another name is apparent in the settler society’s discursive slips and elisions. For example, some social workers/social reformers referred to integration as assimilation and subsequently corrected themselves, some used the terms interchangeably, some stuck with the ‘old’ terminology (such as the CWC and the CASW), and some were simply not aware that integration was supposed to

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be different – or at the very least was supposed to sound differently. Hence, many simply exchanged one term for another while espousing the same assimilatory logic. Therefore, W. J. P. Thompson could also lament that, “as far as a plan for integration is concerned, I think that it will be a long uphill struggle – whether it is through pride or stubbornness that the Indians want to maintain their identity, again I do not know.”

One of the plainest examples (once again) comes from the Civil Liberties Union, who simply replaced the term ‘assimilation’ with ‘integration’ in its publications without making qualitative changes to the content or its meaning. In 1947 the Civil Liberties Union submitted a report to the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons tasked to revise the Indian Act in which it advocated for the full assimilation of the Indian. After realizing that Indigenous peoples resisted assimilation, and after being made aware that this terminology did not fit with the parlance of the time, the Civil Liberties Union simply exchanged the terms in their second submission. In its ‘updated’ version, the Civil Liberties Union openly explained its editing decisions:

In our brief of 1947 the word ‘assimilation’ was used in the sense that ‘integration’ is used in this one. The word ‘assimilation’ has been dropped because to some Indians it conveyed an idea that was not intended, and that was repugnant to them, namely, the loss of their identity as Indians. The word ‘integration’… has been substituted

because it expresses what we mean and has no undesirable connotations.\textsuperscript{51}

What they meant was that “in the final analysis, the Indians really have no choice. They must become integrated … if they are to survive. History shows what will be their own historical fate. Unless, individually, they are able to adapt themselves to the society in which they exist, they are doomed to eventual racial submergence.”\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{1946 Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons Appointed to Consider and Examine the Indian Act}

A commitment to Indian integration meant that the mechanisms with which to manage Indigenous peoples had to be rethought and several structural changes had to take place. The Indian Affairs Branch sought to develop a plan for Indian integration and it was held that the most promising route towards this goal was via the politics of care/the field of social welfare (Shewell 2004:331). Since social welfare services fell under provincial jurisdiction and Indians were legally ‘wards of the state’ (i.e. a ‘responsibility’ of the Dominion Government), the \textit{Indian Act} needed to be adjusted.

What comes to the forefront here is the centrality of law for effective colonial governance. As Razack (2015) and Monture (1989) remind us, law manages the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Law authorizes and legitimizes the dominance of the colonial

\textsuperscript{51} The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “’Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
state, normalizes the colonizer’s subject position as those who control, and attempts\textsuperscript{53} to strip Indigenous peoples of their sovereignty while rendering them as something to be managed. The Indian Act had to be adjusted to sustain this relationship while amending it in such a way that would allow for the field of social welfare/the politics of care to act as a conduit for integration/elimination.

To this end, the government formed a special joint committee whose purpose it was to examine and propose recommendations for revisions to the Indian Act. It consisted of twenty-six members (nineteen Members of Parliament and seven senators), was chaired by D.F. Brown, and hearings took place over three phases (between 1946 – 1948) (Shewell 2004:173-174). The committee was prepared to hear proposals, suggestions, testimony, and opinions from organizations and individuals, including suggestions and grievances from Indians.

Marlee Kline (1992) observed that the committee only reluctantly began to hear from First Nations communities, in its second and third phase, and only after the committee’s credibility was challenged over the issue of Indigenous representation (383). It is also interesting to note that, according to Shewell (2004), this committee was established “after considerable public and Indian agitation for a Royal Commission into Indian matters” (173). Instead of a Royal Commission, this committee was established. Some did not deem a Royal Commission necessary and lauded the governments’ efforts in having established such a commission instead. For example, such a position was assumed by the Canadian Civil Liberties Union who expressed their “deeply-felt approval of the foresight, statesmanship and regard for human rights, and the dignity of man that prompted the Government and the Senate to set up the Special Joint

\textsuperscript{53} I say “attempts” to strip Indigenous peoples of their sovereignty, for sovereignty is something already and inherently possessed (Alfred 2009). Indigenous sovereignty can be ignored, but it cannot be granted or taken by the colonial state.
Committee on the Indian Act … and that impelled all members of the House and Senate to endorse and assist this invaluable investigation of the status of Indians in Canada." Others were less enthusiastic. On June 27, 1946, Chief Andrew Paull (then President of the North American Indian Brotherhood) appeared before the committee stating the following in his testimony: “But this is not the kind of committee we asked for. Now while we are prepared to speak to you and present our grievances to you I want this to go on the record; we asked for a Royal Commission to investigate ‘you’ and ‘me’” (in Shewell 2004:173).

The committee received hundreds of submissions. Several submissions came from Indigenous peoples who sought to provide their input on the Indian Act. One of these submission, a 120-page document, was personally delivered to the committee by a delegation of ten chiefs from Alberta. The press reported that one of the delegates, “Chief Teddy Yellow Fly of the Blackfeet reserve at Gleichen, Alta., said the committee’s task was to revise the Indian Act in such a way that ‘our descendents [sic] 100 years from now will not be shaking their fists at you the way we do at the people who drew up our treaties a century ago.’” And yet, according to Shewell (2004), “Indian submissions – especially those concerned with historical grievances – were considered least relevant or not relevant at all” while “those from established Euro-Canadian organizations were given greater weight and were incorporated into the committee’s four reports” (174).

54 The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: “‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.

Submission by the Mohawk Nation: “we reject the premise that the Canadian Parliament can make laws over us”

One of the ‘Indian submissions’ that had to be ignored – lest the settler colony consider its own legitimacy and unilateral claim of sovereignty – came from the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne (St-Regis Reserve). In this submission, they state the following:

We, the Chiefs of the Mohawk Nation who swear allegiance to the Six Nations Confederacy, as the only true government of our people, having assembled in council, have decided to call the attention of the Joint Committee … to the following facts. (1) We occupy our territory, not by your grace, but by the right beyond your control. (2) We hold original title. (3) We have never voluntarily submitted to the domination of the Canadian government, and have never been conquered by it in a just war. (4) According to International Law, no nation can legislate over another without first acquiring title to the land. (5) Canada considers itself a democratic country. The basis of democracy is the rule of the people governed by the law. We submit that we, the people of the Mohawk Nation can find no bona-fide evidence that we had a voice in preparing the original Indian Act or in its revision. Since we reject the premise that the Canadian Parliament can make laws over us, it is only justice that said Parliament should denote the legal basis for enforcing its laws on the reserves. (6) The burden of proof must be borne by you, for we wish to
hold to the status quo which was established in the first encounter of red
man with white.\textsuperscript{56}

As Razack reminds us, the Canadian legal framework seeks the dispossession and erasure
of Indigenous peoples through a disavowal and undermining of Indigenous sovereignty (10).
Law actively produces this disappearance through a denial that Indigenous peoples are
comprised of independent, sovereign nations who hold title to land. The settler colony must
strive to reject such counternarratives for accepting them would provide detrimental to the
existence of the colony as such. Indeed, accepting such narratives would require a fundamental
reimaging of Canada.

\textbf{Joint-Submission by the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian
Association of Social Workers: Assimilation via Equal Services for
Indian Children}

In stark contrast to the submission by the Mohawk Nation stands the joint submission by the
Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW).
This submission was arguably the most influential submission (Shewell 2004:187, 190;
Stevenson 2015), for it was one that considerably shaped the committee’s recommendations and
is reflected in the changes to the \textit{Indian Act}. This joint submission both influenced and
dovetailed with the federal government’s new direction in Indian matters – to use the extension
and promotion of welfare services as a method for integration (Shewell 2004:331).

In their submission, the CWC and the CASW forcefully advocated for the assimilation of
Indigenous peoples, urging the government to put this plan into action. In their words, “we

\textsuperscript{56} Canada, Special Joint Committee on the Indian Act, Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence, Appendix ID, Written
statement to the Joint Committee to Investigate the Indian Act, from the Mohawk Nation, St-Regis Reserve, 11 May
should like to emphasize the primary necessity of formulating the long term goal toward which our national effort is to be directed… In our judgement, the only defensible goal for a national program must be the full assimilation of Indians into Canadian life.”  

The “goal of ultimate assimilation”, they urged, had to become the overall “goal of the Government’s Indian programme.” This task, they suggested was “not a large problem, since its total scope is limited by the actual number of Indians, which in spite of recent population increases, is comparatively small. If the specific recommendations here submitted are to be achieved and the ultimate goal set forth realized, vision in planning must be combined with energy and patience in execution.”

In fact, if enough energy was to be put into this plan, the CWC and the CASW held, the Indian problem could be eliminated very swiftly: “If this goal is accepted wholeheartedly by government authorities it should not be impossible to reach it within a generation.”  

This goal would be impossible to achieve, however, if Indians “were to be treated in such matters as health, education and welfare differently from other Canadians living alongside them.” Indians would have to be treated similarly, and thus far, they had unequal access to social services: “The


58 Ibid.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

central weakness of the existing system of care for Indians is that it has failed to provide the
native population with services comparable to those developed for other groups in Canada.” 62

**Indian Children**

This also applied to Indigenous children, for if Indigenous peoples were to be integrated then
their children had to be managed differently as well. What we see emerging now in the joint-
submission of the CWC and the CASW, is a narrative that begins to focus on ‘Indian children’ as
a group that had to be integrated and, for this purpose, be treated ‘equally’ compared to other
child populations. If assimilation/integration was to be successful, Indian children needed to be
managed along similar routes available to white children. As such, Indian children had to have
access to the same services provided to white children. Yet, a legal structure stood in the way:
“Owing to the fact that wards of the Dominion Government are not eligible for benefits under
provincial legislation, Indian children who are neglected lack the protection afforded under
social legislation available to white children in the community.” 63

Because Indian children were not ‘protected’ by child welfare legislation, Indian children
who were said to be neglected by their parents were currently ‘cared for’ in Indian Residential
Schools. The CWC and CASW considered this solution inadequate for child-welfare related
purposes:

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With reference to the child welfare aspects of residential schools, such as the care of neglected or handicapped children, orphans and children from broken homes, we feel that the existing program falls short of social adequacy in that it fails to provide Indian children with standards of care comparable to those developed by the more advanced child care services in the country. 64

As was recommended for white children fifty-years prior, the CWC and CASW argued that “no institution is an adequate substitute for normal family life” and hence the “foster home service should be developed within the Indian setting.” 65 This did not mean, however, that Indigenous children should stay within their own communities. In fact, the CWC and CASW found the practice of kinship care and informal adoption of Indigenous children by Indigenous adults unacceptable: “The practice of adopting Indian children is loosely conceived and executed and is usually devoid of the careful legal and social protection afforded to white children. Frequently children are simply absorbed into the homes of relatives or neighbours without any legal status.” 66

Hence, in order to treat Indian children equally, adoption practices too needed to be made the same. Equal treatment meant that Indigenous children were to go through the same administrative channels as white children. This also meant that Indigenous peoples who would want to adopt an Indigenous child would be treated ‘equally’ in the vetting process. Further,


65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.
Indigenous children should equally enjoy the benefits of growing up in a ‘good’ home. Given the profoundly raced, classed and gendered notions that constituted the settler society’s understanding of what a ‘good home’ entailed (chapters four and five), and given also that Indians were considered a ‘backwards race’ who was furthermore marred by all kinds of social ills (exemplified by the horrid statistics in regards to tuberculosis, infant mortality, similarly provided by the CWC and CASW), indeed, having become a “race of slum dwellers” as the CWC and the CASW also put it (a powerful description for Canadian society, as we saw in chapter three), a ‘good’ home was certainly not to be found among the Indians. The criteria of what a ‘good’ home, ‘family’, or ‘childhood’ entailed were steeped in heteropatriarchal notions of white bourgeois respectability and civility – criteria that were created through and against the Indian-as-Other who was judged to be savage and inferior. The imagined universal validity of these concepts was not questioned but readily assumed. Hence, ‘caring’ for Indian children and ‘including’ them in the nation’s child welfare schemes, meant applying and judging Indigenous peoples’ kinship relations according to the very criteria that were premised on their denigration. Indeed, Léandre Lacombe, Director of the Adoption Society in Montreal explained that he had never placed an Indian child for adoption in an Indian home. As he put it, “With other races, we have had no difficulties. We have placed Chinese children with Chinese families and Negro children with Negro families. But as far as Indian children are concerned, we have nothing in our files, although we have completed up to date 6,500 legal adoptions.”\(^\text{67}\) Reason for this being, he explains, that “[t]he few contacts that we have had with Indians have made us realize that these

people are unstable and irresponsible.”

A ‘good’ home would be a white foster or adoptive home. There, and as was likewise said of Anatanwin half a century earlier, the Indian child would be much better off and enjoy the benefits of a good upbringing and a happy home life. That Indian children could, in theory, be adopted or fostered by Indians themselves was a topic of discussion, but not a solution that was deemed realistic, nor practical to the colonial project of assimilation. As such, Indigenous child removal and their transfer to white society was justified through the language of equitable service provision.

What we are further witnessing here is a utilization of the figure of Indian child for the purpose of colonial governance. Having rendered Indigenous peoples archaic, backwards, and damaged, an imagery that the CASW and CWC substantiates through their damning statistics, relations of coloniality are extended via discourses of ‘care’: Care for the well-being of the colonized and, in particular, care for their children. Yet, while colonial narratives advance the position that care needs to be extended and provided to Indigenous children, the object of concern is not the child per se. The Indigenous child only occasionally emerges in the colonial imagery as a child whose well-being is considered. Expressed differently, the ‘game of improvement’ (Razack 2015) does not primarily focus on the child, in that the child needs to be improved or assisted into modernity. The child functions as a bridge for the settler society to manage and comment on the child’s environment – it is the child’s parents, the relatives, the community, the home, etc. who are perpetually considered to fall short. It is these aspects that need to be improved. This is not about caring for the child, but using the discourse of care via the figure of the child to extend and enact colonial relations. The child is used for power application targeting Indigenous peoples. This is an instance in which the racial and colonial management of

68 Ibid.
Indigenous peoples is advanced through the figure of the Indigenous child. Thus, while we are presented with a display of concern over Indigenous children, and a proliferation of discourses that cite the well-being of Indian children as grounds for policy adjustments, the well-being of the child, or indeed the child as a child, is not a concern as such. While social workers and state official begin to cite Indigenous children as targets for intervention, protection, and objects that deserve the application of ‘care’, the figure of the child is used to enable narrative constructions of Indigenous peoples as dysfunctional, neglectful, incapable to care for themselves or their offspring. ‘Care’ for the Indian child means protecting them/removing them from their own. The ‘game of improvement’ insists that Indigenous peoples must improve themselves if they indeed want to parent their own children.

Indeed, particularly concerning ‘parenting skills, Indigenous peoples were described as having a lot to learn and having to make considerable improvements. Indian Residential Schools, it was said, had thus far done this work for them. Indian Residential Schools were presented as if they had done Indigenous peoples a favour by taking care of their offspring. Now, Indians had to learn how to be parents to their children and the settler society was there to provide direction. For example, as Clipsham put it, “Because of the introduction of day schools on reserves this is the first generation of Indians expected to assume the difficult role of parenthood. They need the example of good parents and the persuasion and pressure that comes with decent contacts.”

We are witnessing a scenario in which the colonizer had stolen generations of Indigenous children from their parents, institutionalized them, and then points out that those – whose children were

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stolen – never parented their children, a fact that was then taken as evidence that Indigenous parents do not know how to properly provide care for their own offspring. These ‘failed parents’ thus had to be taught and learn ‘hot to care’ from the colonizer. The joint submission of the CWC and CASW similarly points to the need for such instruction: “[L]imited service” in this regard was now being provided by “homemakers clubs in operation among the Indians”.  

“Some of them have done splendid work in improving family management among Indians. But standards are not uniformly high, and large numbers of Indians are still outside the scope of their service.” The director of the CAS of Sarnia lauded their own efforts in this regard: “I am told that there is a change in responsibility toward children on the part of some of our Indian families, and this is felt to be the result of the Services of the Indian Superintendent, the Nurse and ourselves on the community. Even some movement towards a better situation is hopeful.”

Thus, by seeking to ‘improve’ and ‘assist’ the Indian, and by proclaiming to ‘care’ for Indian children, including them in child welfare services so that they too may be ‘protected’, even ‘teaching’ Indigenous peoples how to parent, we are, once more, witnessing a narrative construction of the colonizer as caring and benevolent, while willfully ignoring the fact that they are the cause of the violence and destruction.


71 Ibid.

The CWC and CASW made several more recommendations related to education, health and welfare provision. They also suggested that Indian Residential Schools should be relied on less for Indian education. While they did not have a problem with the schools per se, they believed integrated schooling to be more advantageous for the ultimate goal of assimilation: “While we … are convinced that educational standards in a number of these institutions leave something to be desired, we do not regard the actual existence of residential schools as undesirable. We feel that they have their place in a well-rounded system of Indian education.”

However, they did “not like Indian children to be cut off from other Canadian children during their school years.” Hence, “where possible”, they recommended for “Indian children to attend the same schools as other children in the province.” According to the CWC and the CASW, “Residential schools should be reserved for children of nomadic tribes, or for carrying out special programs.”

This position emerged alongside similar arguments in favour of phasing out Indian Residential Schools. These arguments were not based on the recognition that Indian Residential Schools were carceral genocidal spaces, harmful to the children and Indigenous communities, but mostly because settlers believed that these schools were an impediment to the goal of full integration. Indian Residential Schools were starting to be referred to as ‘segregated schools’

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75 Ibid.

76 Another argument in favour of phasing out Indian Residential Schools was based on the recognition that these schools provided an education that was inferior than the education provided to non-Indigenous children.
who needed to make way for ‘integrated schooling’. For the purpose of integration, it was argued, Indian children were best educated alongside or, at the very least, in the vicinity of the children of the nation. As the Indian-Eskimo Association put it, “[e]ducation should not be just ‘retreading’ the Indian child in the skills and habits of the larger non-Indian community, but must be an integrated effort of the whole community (on-Reserve and off-Reserve) to develop better qualified and happier young Canadians who are also at the same time young Indians.”

The *Indian Act* of 1951

On June 22, 1948, the special joint committee of the Senate and House of Commons submitted its final report on the *Indian Act*. Shortly prior, a draft bill (Bill 267, *An Act to Amend the Indian Act*) was prepared by the committee and the Indian Affairs Branch to revise the Act. Bill 267 was not well received. It resulted in stark political opposition in Parliament and was covered unfavourably in the media (Leslie 1999). Former members of the special joint committee charged that it fell short of their expectations, “Indian leaders charged their views had been ignored”, and some organizations “characterized the legislation as draconian” (Leslie 1999:184-185). Bill 267 was withdrawn. Indian leaders were hastily ‘consulted’ during a conference (the Indian Act Conference of 1951), and a new bill was introduced (Bill 79). On June 20, 1951 Bill 79 was passed by the House of Commons and proclaimed on September 4, 1951. This time, the *Indian Act* was praised by government officials, the media favourably referred to it as the


78 For details of the proposed changes contained in Bill 267 and the subsequent sections that were amended see Leslie (1999:184-243).
“Canadian Indian’s ‘Bill of Rights’” and others hailed it as a new and better Magna Carta for Indian people (Leslie 1999:185, 237).

Of course, the resulting Indian Act of 1951 was draconian still (see Cannon 2008, 2011; Lawrence 2003, 2004; Milloy 2008). Specifically, to further integration/assimilation and deny Indigenous peoples even liminal control over their own affairs, “Indian attempts to gain control of band membership and end compulsory enfranchise ment were denied”, “discounted was the legitimacy of Indian land claims and treaty grievances”, and claims by Six Nations “that their reserves should be accorded the political status of sovereign nations were ignored” (Leslie 1999:239). Indigenous peoples were also still denied the federal vote, and Indigenous women lost their status if they married a non-Indian man – severing them from their land titles and community membership.

Per the recommendations of the CWC and the CASW, Section 8779 had been added to the Indian Act, which prepared the ground to extend provincial social and welfare services to Indians on reserves. This meant that Indigenous children could now be included in child welfare systems. It also meant that Indigenous communities would now be managed by both, the federal and provincial government. As Milloy (2008) explains, “provincial authority and a vast burden of provincial legislation and regulation, from traffic to child care, tacked on to the Indian Act moved across reserve boundaries, without the agreement of the community.” This meant that Indians were to be treated like “federal wards” and “provincial citizens” (Leslie 1999:262; see

79 Section 87, Indian Act (1951): “Subject to the terms of any treaty and any other Act of Parliament, all laws of general application from time to time in force in any province are applicable to and in respect of Indians in the province, except to the extent that such laws are inconsistent with this Act or any order, rule, regulation or by-law made thereunder, and except to the extent that such laws are inconsistent with this Act or any order, rule, regulation or by-law made thereunder, and except to the extent that such laws make provision for any matter for which provision is made by or under this Act.”
also Milloy 2008; Bennett 2004): “Shared responsibility meant shared colonialism, province by province” (Milloy 2008).

In sum, through these post-war amendments to the *Indian Act*, relations of coloniality were extended, the practice of Indigenous child removal was once more normalized, colonial society reasserted its self-proclaimed authority to judge the well-being of Indigenous children, and the path was prepared for the child welfare system to replace Indian Residential Schools as the primary method for Indian child removal. Once again, colonial society could claim benevolence by assuming the role of the protector – a highly ironic and cruel subject position to inhabit given the violence that was meted out against Indigenous children through their own institutions. Many times, Toni Morrison (1998,1992) has asked us to consider how we can come to ‘know’ those who inflict violence nonetheless as caring or benevolent? How is it possible to come to see plantation and slave-owners, people who capture, exploit, torture, mutilate other people for their own benefit and pleasure, nonetheless as civilized or enterprising white gentleman? Similarly, I want us to consider how it is possible that colonial society is able to proclaim to extend care and protection to Indigenous children while simultaneously terrorizing them through Indian Residential Schools. How is it possible that the colonizer can cite damning statistics on the misery prevalent on reserves and hence gesture towards the need to care for the Indian – while ignoring that this very misery is the product of their own colonial endeavours, and how is the colonizer able to lament the fact that Indigenous peoples never parented their children after having stolen their children? We are presented with a story that lies at the heart of the colonial politics of care. This is a story in which the colonizer positions themselves as benevolent and caring by turning to alleviate some of the pain and suffering that they have themselves caused, all the while disavowing this foundational colonial relationship.
“We get no referrals directly from the Indians”

It was up to each province to work out funding agreements with the federal government on how this extension of welfare services was to be accomplished. The extension of child welfare services to Indigenous children on reserves was not immediately forthcoming and many provincial child welfare agencies were reluctant to do so (Kline 1992:386). This system was set up for settler children after all. Ontario, having been a ‘pioneer’ in early child-saving efforts, was once again at the forefront of child welfare matters for Indian children. In 1956, the province introduced the first agreement (essentially a funding agreement) that extended child welfare services onto First Nation reserves (Shewell 2004:262), enacted through its extensive network of local Children’s Aid Societies. Child welfare workers could now enter First Nations reserves and ‘protect’/remove Indian children as they saw fit. By 1964, only Nova Scotia, the Yukon, and a number of Children’s Aid Society’s in Manitoba had followed the Ontario model and entered into official funding agreements with the federal government (Kline 1992).

In the interim, before formal funding agreements were in place, the settler society already began their child removal efforts. For example, D.H. Johnson, Director of Child Welfare in Nova Scotia, explained their course of action as follows: “We are still attempting to come to some agreement with the Indian Affairs Branch and our own Children’s Aid Societies whereby it will be possible to provide these services to Indians.”80 Thus far, only “[o]ne or two of our Children’s Aid Societies have provided probation services to Indians and the main problem in this connection was securing payment for the services rendered, from the Indian Affairs Branch.”

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Yet, given that his “Department and the Children’s Aid Societies are concerned with these people” they took it upon themselves to render these services: “Our own Department has cooperated recently with the Indian Affairs Branch in apprehending several children who were considered to be neglected. These children were brought before the Court, were judged neglected and placement for them was arranged with the complete cooperation of representatives of the Indian Affairs Branch.”  

Similarly, in Alberta, prior to a formal agreement with the federal government, the province received ad hoc reimbursements through Indian Affairs for ‘services rendered’ to Indian children. Ray G. Hagen, Deputy Minister of the Department of Public Welfare explained their arrangement as follows:

In cases where children are neglected on reserves the Indian Affairs Social Worker makes arrangements for apprehension on behalf of the provincial Superintendent of Child Welfare. The case is heard in Court and the Judge decides the disposition of the case. If the children are made wards they are under the supervision and guardianship of the provincial Superintendent of Child Welfare. … Maintenance is paid by this Department and is reimbursed by the federal authorities.  

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Despite the uneven extension of child welfare services across Canada, in 1966, a federal commission praised these efforts as “one of the most significant achievements in the elimination of discriminatory treatment between Indians and non-Indians in the field of welfare” (Kline 1992:386-387). In Ontario, “the extension of child welfare services by Children’s Aid Societies” was similarly hailed as “a step in the right direction in meeting the needs of Indian children.”

Once social workers entered the reserves they were presented with a number of difficulties. A major problem was the resistance they encountered by Indigenous peoples. Various Children’s Aid Societies in Ontario complained that the Indians seemingly did not want them on the reserves, that they did not want to cooperate with the child welfare workers, and that, curiously, they were met with “distrust”. In regards to the St. Regis Reservation, the very reservation whose residents had submitted their unsettling statement to the 1946 Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons, the Children’s Aid Society complained of having encountered “several” “difficulties”, the lack of “Initial acceptance by the Indian population” being a major one.

To most child-welfare workers, the lack of trust or acceptance meant that Indigenous peoples simply did not understand that child welfare workers were there to ‘help’ and ensure that

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their children were being properly ‘cared for’. Instead, the Indians seemed “content with their own way of life” as the managing director for the Children’s Aid Society in Sudbury complained.\(^{86}\) In order to make the Indian understand that social workers were on site for their benefit, someone, he suggested, had to explain it to them: “There is a need for Indian social workers to interpret to their own race what needs welfare agencies are trying to help them meet.”\(^{87}\) Others believed the fact that Indians were not appreciative of their ‘help’ was not caused by a lack of knowledge, but rather caused by the Indians’ imagined laziness or lack of ambition. For example, Barnard Lewis, Director of the Children’s Aid Society of Oshawa, explains this as follows: “Most of our referrals about Indians come to us from the Federal Civil Servant who have to do with the Reserves in one capacity or another. We get no referrals directly from the Indians themselves. From what little experience I have had with them, it appears to be unfortunate that the Indians are not more involved in administering their own affairs.”\(^{88}\)

Another major problem arose after Indigenous children had been removed. While these children, like white children, would ideally be placed into foster or adoptive homes (as suggested by the CWC and the CASW), this proved to be difficult. Many Children’s Aid Societies, such as the CAS of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry complained of the “difficulties in finding foster

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\(^{87}\) Ibid.

homes for Indian children.”\textsuperscript{89} The CAS of Sudbury similarly referred to this as “one of the greatest problems”, both, “for Indian and part-Indian children.”\textsuperscript{90} This not only concerned foster care, but also adoptive homes. While finding “Non-Indian homes” for “Indian infants” was less problematic, “once beyond the baby state”, that is once they have “lost their cuteness”, their placement proved very difficult.\textsuperscript{91} This problem was not limited to Ontario, but was prevalent in other provinces as well. For example, William Nicholls, director of the Edmonton Council of Community Services reported that “[w]e have noted proportionately a large number of Metis and Indian children who grow up in the many institutions for children in this Province. There is great difficulty in placing these children for adoption.”\textsuperscript{92} A report in Saskatchewan noted that “[t]he 32.3 per cent of children in care who are of Métis or Indian extraction have proven they are no different from the other 67.7 per cent, except for the colour of their skin. All children have one common denominator, they need secure homes” (in Strong-Boag 2006: 152–53). And yet, “[t]hese children are being denied that basic human right” (ibid). There were some exceptions however. For example, the Children’s Aid Society in Oshawa proudly declared that “[w]e do have in our County … two Reserves with about 400 Band Indians on them. We have almost no


\textsuperscript{91} Ibid.

problems with Indian children in care that we are unable to place. We have no Indian permanent wards that we have not been successful in placing for adoption.”

Finding white foster families and adoptive families for Indigenous children was a difficult task, because, initially, white settlers simply did not want them. This, it was believed, was a form of racial discrimination and the Indian-Eskimo Association, for example, suggested that white settlers needed to be re-educated in that regard. During its conference on “The Future of the Indians as an Ethnic Group in Canada” a discussion and working group was set up on the topic of “Adoptive Children of Indian Background.” During its discussion, members of the group lamented the lack of settler families who were willing to adopt an Indian child. They noted that “1,000 children of Metis background are wards of the Province of Alberta. Most of these children are permanently institutionalized with little hope of adoption or foster home care. These children will grow up without any experience of home life.” Drawing from insights on how other ‘undesirable’ children were promoted for adoption, the group recommended to “have more publicity of the type given by Weekend Magazine, in their recent article ‘We adopted a Negro Baby.’” To this end, adoption programs emerged that specifically promoted and advertised Indian children for adoption to settlers. Examples of such campaigns were the Indian Adoption Project (IAP) in the United States – a campaign through which many Indigenous children from Canada


95 Ibid.
were sent to American settler homes (see Jacobs 2014:198) – and the Adopt Indian and Métis program by the Saskatchewan Department of Social Services, that curiously chose to work under the acronym AIM (the acronym of the American Indian Movement) (ibid; see also Stevenson 2015; Strong-Boag 2006). As Stevenson has observed (2005), such adoption programs and particularly Saskatchewan’s AIM campaign “drew ‘normal’ everyday white families into the business of integration through appeals to their sense of civic duty” (17-18), seeking to enact “the process of integration, one child at a time.” (12)

Not only were ‘normal’ white settlers supposed to adopt an Indian child, but the overall project of Indian assimilation/integration was presented as a wide-spread national effort that all Canadians were expected to join. Canadian settlers were asked to do their part in the name of equality and justice and help assimilate the Indian. As the title of an article in the Regina Leader-Post matter-of-factly put it, “The lot of the Indians – Responsibility for all Canadians.” 96 Not advocating for integration/assimilation, and passing up an Indian child in favour of a white one, were presented as forms of racial discrimination. The public needed to act differently. As Maysie Roger put it, “legislation alone will never solve the Indian problem.” 97 It was the responsibility of every citizen to help integrate/assimilate the Indian: “We have also a responsibility to work in our own communities for a ‘fair deal’ for the Indians. We may not want assimilation; let us see that in our own area we are less guilty than at present of discrimination.” 98


98 Ibid.
Discussions were being had on how best to ‘assist’ the Indian in their efforts to integrate and join ‘civility’. It was held that integration needed close supervision, care, and guidance – as noted by the Canadian Council on Social Development, “Indians are easy to lead, hard to push.”\footnote{Content of handwritten note taken during a session of The National Commission on the Indian Canadian (precursor to the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada) conference. Library and Archives Canada, Canadian Council on Social Development fonds. MG28-I10. Volume 118, File: “Indian Affairs 1947-57.”}

It was further noted that, while it was the responsibility of white settlers to assist Indigenous peoples in this process, Indians also had to do their part and indeed follow this lead. As Clipsham put it, “We have competent social workers, we have millions of dollars being spent on Indian Affairs, we have the goodwill of most of the citizens; but we must have the cooperation of the Indians themselves. Great effort is needed on their part.”\footnote{Muriel A. Clipsham, “The Volunteer and the Urban Indian”, paper sent to Miss Phyllis Burns, Director of Welfare Services, Canadian Welfare Council on January 18, 1960 by Sylvia A. Cambpell, Executive Secretary of the Regina Welfare Council. The Canadian Welfare Council. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds. MG28-I10. Volume 118, File: “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”}

The director of the CAS in Port Arthur assessed the situation as follows:

The number one problem faced by all is integration and the responsibility for the solution is the job of the white man as well as the Indian. … The Indian himself finds it difficult to accept the ways of the white man. There have been instances where they have been fully accepted, but they themselves could not fit into the community. Time means nothing to them and there is little planning for the future by themselves.\footnote{Letter from J. Herbert Dawson, Local Director, The Children’s Aid Society, Electoral District of Port Arthur, to Phyllis Burns, Director of Welfare Services, Canadian Welfare Council, dated December 23, 1959. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.”}
Those Indians who were imagined as trying to integrate were favoured compared to those who refused. For example, the Indian who left the reserve – usually framed as the Indian’s attempt to integrate – was considered ‘more advanced’ for it was said that they at least desired and attempted to join civilization, modernity, and liberal society. The ones who stayed behind were considered even more backwards and even less civilized than those who made the attempt to improve themselves. As the director of the CAS of London has observed, “[w]e find that while these problems [“common-law marriages, illegitimacy, alcoholism, and child neglect”] have a high proportion among the Indians on the reserve, this is not applicable to those Indians who are enfranchised and living within the White Community.”

Public education, adoption initiatives, and the growing desire of a settler society to be imagined as ‘racially inclusive’, meant that Indian integration/assimilation was embraced more broadly. By the 1960s, social reformers and integration-advocates reported a heightened commitment of Canadians to Indian integration. “There is now a surge of public sympathy for, and anxiety about, the fate of the Canadian Indian”, for example, writes Muriel Clipsham. Similarly, the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada referred to a “great upsurge of public interest” in the situation of Canadian Indians, an “unending stream of news releases, magazine articles, radio and TV broadcasts” on this matter and an “almost startling change that has taken


place in public thinking and attitudes." 104 The surge in public interest, the association rejoiced, was “being translated into action”, in “a variety of ways” and “on so extensive a scale” that they could only mention a general trend: “a new force is appearing on the Canadian scene …it represents the combined efforts of all groups – Indian and non-Indian, governmental and non-governmental – that are working to promote the cause of the Indian people.” 105

Among social reformers and/or self-proclaimed ‘advocates’ for Canadian Indians, Indian integration was considered a progressive and ‘enlightened’ course of action. The less the Indian was treated like an Indian, and the more s/he was treated like a Canadian, the better – ideally this would eventually mean no ‘special’ or differential treatment for Indians, no reservations, no special laws – i.e. the rhetoric that, a decade later, would manifest in Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s disastrous White Paper. As the statistics at the beginning of this chapter indicate, this post-war turn towards equality and ‘Indian integration’ was devastating for Indigenous peoples. For Canadian society, on the other hand, it was beneficial on multiple levels. For one, it furthered the colonial project through a disavowal of Indigenous peoples’ status as distinct and autonomous nations, legitimizing and normalizing instead the settler colony’s unilateral assertion of sovereignty. Furthermore, through this liberal colonial turn, it was now possible to proclaim that ‘equal opportunities’ were being provided to the Indians. For example, Ellen Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, explained that “Every Indian child has the opportunity, not only to attend school, but to progress as far as he is able. This year there are more than 40


105 Ibid.
young Indians at university receiving financial assistance from the government.”

This meant that it was up to the Indian to seize the opportunities offered to them by the colonial state. If the Indian ‘fell short’, e.g. if they kept dying, kept living in poverty, no one was to blame but the Indian themselves. Being able to blame the Indian for their social situation means that, once again, there was no oppressor, no perpetrator, and the colonial present could be disavowed. Simultaneously, superiority, civility and innocence remain the domains of the colonizer: “the settler assists ‘Indians’ into modernity, a thankless and futile task in the settler’s eyes, but one that confers upon the settler legitimacy as a modern subject” (Razack 2015:193). This could be accomplished via the smooth liberal discourses of inclusion and equality, which would reflect positively on Canada nationally and internationally. For, if successfully integrated, the figure of the ethnic Indian, would allow Canada to position itself not as normatively white, racist, and colonial, but pluralistic, racially diverse, and in the future, perhaps even multicultural. Such a course of action, as the Civil Liberties Union matter-of-factly put it, was the “approach most closely to the ideals of justice and humanity asserted by the United Nations”, and, hence, the one that would “bring the greatest credit to the Canadian government.”

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Chapter 9
Cultural Sensitivity, Devolution of Power, and Indigenous Child Theft in the Colonial Present

Introduction

With the extension of provincial child welfare services to reserves, the settler society continued their practice of Indigenous child removal. This modality of power was now effected through social workers who would enter reserves and remove the children “by the busloads” (Fournier and Crey 1997; Palmater 2007). Indigenous peoples increasingly and effectively organized against this colonial practice. During the 1970s, Indigenous peoples’ demands that the colonial state put a halt to its oppressive policies, and mobilizations for self-determination were mounting and became harder to ignore. This resistance forced the colonial state to seek adjustments and modifications to its modality of power. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, we observe several new developments in the operation of the Canadian child welfare system. For one, we witness the introduction of culturally-sensitive child welfare policies and protocols. Second, we witness the inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the operation of child welfare itself. Through the process of devolution, promoted by the state as a more just and equitable policy directive in that it ‘granted’ liminal powers of self-governance, Aboriginal child welfare agencies were established. These agencies were to be managed by Indigenous peoples (predominately First Nations) and ‘allowed’ to provide child welfare services to their own communities.

These changes did not halt nor even reduce the number of Indigenous children taken into state custody, but ensured the continuation of this modality of power. For some time now, an often-cited statistic has informed us that, in early 2000, there were more Indigenous children in child welfare custody than were institutionalized during the height of the Indian Residential
School era (see Blackstock 2003). Since then, the number of Indigenous children in colonial custody has increased further. Moreover, then as now, many Indigenous children still do not leave the system alive. Through suicide, ‘accidental deaths’, and murder, the number of Indigenous children who die while in custody of the settler state is enormous. Even the practice of shipping Indigenous children far away from their birth places once taken into state custody continues to this day. A recent press release from the Innu Nation states that currently “61 Innu children in the child welfare system are placed outside the two Labrador Innu communities [Natuashish and Sheshatshiu]” (in Brake 2017). Many Innu children are then sent to foster homes in Northern Newfoundland, rehabilitation facilities in other parts of Newfoundland, or shipped to other provinces. Innu Nation Deputy Grand Chief Simeon Tshakapesh’s own son was taken into custody, moved to Central Newfoundland, and eventually to Saskatchewan. Anastasia

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1 In 2011, despite constituting only 7% of the overall child population, almost half (48.1%) of the children under the age of 14 in foster care across Canada were Indigenous children (StatCan 2013:5).

2 According to ‘Fatal Care’, an investigative series by journalists Karen Kleiss (Edmonton Journal) and Darcy Henton (Calgary Herald), between January 1999 and June 2013, 145 children have died in Alberta’s foster care system alone. At least three out of four of those deaths involve Indigenous children (Kleiss and Henton 2013) (The provincial government recorded the ethnic/racial background for only 94 of the 145 children; 74 of them were Indigenous children).

3 For example, in 2008, a 14-year-old girl from the Blood First Nation disappeared on her way home from school. She was found intoxicated by the Blood Tribal Police at 10:30 p.m. and taken to the hospital. There she was pronounced dead, the cause of which was listed as alcohol poisoning (Edmonton Journal 2013b). In the winter of 2009, a 14-year-old Bigstone Cree disappeared from his grandparent’s home. RCMP found his frozen body in the snow a week later. According to the police he had been to a party the night before and died of hypothermia (Edmonton Journal 2013b).

4 For example, in 1999, a two-year-old Indigenous girl died in her foster placement from a severe head injury after being pushed while tying her shoes. Nine times previously, cases of bruising on the girl were dismissed because the girl was said to be “clumsy” (Edmonton Journal 2013). In 2009, a 13-month-old girl from the Samson Cree First Nation died from untreated pneumonia in her foster placement. Her foster parents did not provide the girl with a crib, simply put her on the floor instead, and left her to die there (Southam and Jackson 2013).

5 The province of Manitoba provides us with a similar picture. Between 2011 and 2014, 34 children were killed or committed suicide while in the custody or receiving services by child welfare authorities in Manitoba. Almost exclusively, these children were of Indigenous ancestry (Rabson 2014).
Qupee, Innu Nation Grand Chief, powerfully asks, “How can we keep our language? How can we protect our future when they are so far away from us? How can they practice their culture?” Qupee asserts that “Our kids are being removed away from our communities, our kids are not speaking the language when they come home” (in ibid). Importantly, many do not make the journey home. Tshakapesh’s son took his own life. It is such harsh realities that serve to remind us that colonialism structures the present, that its endurance and continuation is inherently violent, and that taking hold of Indigenous children remains a central modality of colonial governance.

In what is to follow I examine the discourses and accompanying legislative mechanisms through which colonial governance through child welfare was sustained, justified, and how it continues to be normalized in the present. We will see that, from the 1970s to the present, colonial governance was and continues to be effected via ‘socially progressive’ discourses around ‘cultural sensitivity’ and a turn towards further inclusion via the creation of Aboriginal child welfare agencies. These discourses and their attendant social policy directives have done little in promoting positive social change. Through a rejection of demands for self-determination, Indigenous peoples were to be integrated and offered a role within the operation of child welfare as it pertained to their communities. These ‘solutions’ did not challenge or alter the practice of Indigenous child removal as such, they did not halt the imposition of colonial power and control, and they did not denaturalize the settler state’s unilateral claim to legitimacy and sovereignty. Instead, these adjustments in colonial governance functioned to perpetuate relations of coloniality, while proclaiming to do the opposite, hence once again, reserving a benevolent subject position for the colonizer.
White Paper Equality

In the post-war period, Canada began to focus their efforts on Indian integration. The Indian was to become Canadian and, in theory, be treated ‘equal’ to white settlers in terms of health, education and social welfare. Indian children too were to enjoy the ‘benefits’ of child welfare services available to white children. This meant any ‘special treatment’ for Indians was to be eliminated. Beginning in the mid-40s, the Canadian Welfare Council (CWC) and the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) repeatedly asserted the argument that “as assimilation proceeded … special services for the Indians should become progressively less necessary.”  

This move was hailed as ‘progressive’ and ‘enlightened’ and it was one that self-proclaimed colonial ‘friends of the Indian’ actively lobbied for. The CWC and CASW were hopeful that complete assimilation could be achieved within one generation, but also heeded that “we need to ‘make haste slowly’ and plan a carefully worked out program of training, integration and acceptance. To abandon the Government wardship too hastily would seem unwise and place our Indian population in a dangerous position.”

Fast forward twenty years and the time had apparently come. The colonial desire for Indian elimination via integration was brought to a head with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s attempt to implement the now infamous “White Paper” of 1969 (*Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*). Based on the liberal/stripped-down version of racial equality and

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justice that had taken hold of Canadian society post WWII, the White Paper proposed to formally integrate/assimilate Indigenous peoples into mainstream Canadian society, granting Indians the ‘benefits’ of being treated like equal Canadian citizens. This extension of equality meant eliminating the ‘special’ political and legal status of Indians that differentiated them from the settler society, hence, eliminating the state’s fiduciary responsibilities towards Indians, the termination of reserve lands, and indeed, ‘Indians’ themselves by unilaterally legislating Indigenous peoples out of existence (Turner 2006:6; 12).

“we will sink it if need be”

‘Indians’, however, disagreed and the settler society’s coercive and forced assimilation/integration scheme was met with wide-spread resistance. During the late 1960s and early 70s Indigenous peoples’ resistance to colonization and movements for self-determination were mounting. From Indigenous rights activism to militant Red Power nationalism, Indigenous anti-colonial movements posed a considerable challenge to the settler societies of Canada and the United States. For example, during a speech in Montreal in 1970, Vine Deloria, Jr. (Standing Rock Sioux), who had just released his book *Custer Died for Your Sins*, called for “a mutual defense pact between U.S. and Canadian Indians against the white man” (in Fidler 1970:n.p.). Similarly, in 1969, the Winnipeg Free Press quoted “Miss Corbiere”, identified as an “advocate of red power” who gave them the following statement: “We will not only rock the boat, we will sink it if need be” (Winnipeg Free Press 1969 “Violent Revolt”; also in Lannon 2013).
Anti-colonial resistance came in the form of several direct actions, such as highway and bridge blockades, petitions, sit ins/‘occupations’, land reclamations, and armed conflict. For example, in 1970, the Akwesasne Mohawk Warrior Society, with assistance from members of the Kahnawake Mohawk Warrior Society, reclaimed two islands (Stanley Island and Loon Island) in the St. Lawrence River that had been expropriated by the settler colony (Pertusati 1997:68). Similarly, Six Nations of Grand River reminded the Canadian government of the fact that they were illegally occupying their lands, demanding they pay rent — including back rent still owed (in Fidler 1970). In the summer of 1973, Indigenous peoples ‘occupied’ the office of the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, as well as the office of the Minister of Indian Affairs in Kenora (Lannon 2013). In 1974, the Ojibway Warriors Society organized a reclamation of Anicinabe (a municipal) Park in Kenora, Ontario. The warriors were armed and held the space for 39 days (ibid). The same year, Mohawk warriors attempted to reclaim 612 acres of Mohawk territory (Moss Lake) in the Adirondack mountains in New York state. The result was an armed stand-off between the Mohawk, local settlers and the New York State Police. After three years of negotiations, the Mohawk exchanged Moss Lake for a 698-acre site in Clinton County. The site was named Ganienkeh – Land of the Flint (Pertusati 1997:69; “Mohawks Kick Cops Off Rez” 2004).

In the realm of child welfare, resistance to colonial imposition and calls for self-determination were similarly impossible to ignore. While Children’s Aid Societies were resisted

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8 I place ‘occupation’ in quotation marks for I do not think it is possible for Indigenous peoples to occupy land or spaces that are already theirs.

9 Per the 1784 Haldimand Treaty, 950,000 acres along the Grand River belong to the Six Nations. Canada appropriated all but 5% of it. The treaty still has not been honoured (see Six Nations Lands and Resource Department 2015).
as soon as they entered reserves, once the CAS began removing Indigenous children en masse, resistance to this practice grew. Angered by the devastating impact and interference of child welfare systems in their communities, Indigenous peoples increasingly organized against the mass removal and out-adoption of their children (Waterfall 2005:59; see also Assembly of First Nations 1989; Native Council of Canada 1989; Ontario Native Women’s Association 1982). Much of the activism came from Indigenous women who had been impacted by child welfare policies and who struggled to provide social services to their own communities (Jacobs 2014:202). Sinclair (2007) suggests that lobbying efforts in the field of education and the publication of the influential position paper “Indian Control of Indian Education” by the National Indian Brotherhood in 1972 directly influenced resistance and lobbying efforts in child welfare (67-68). As such, several First Nations demanded jurisdictional control over child welfare matters. Some even took it upon themselves to set up their own ad hoc child welfare agencies as early as the 1960s (Sinha and Kozlowski 2013:4; Auditor General 2008:7).

“Colonial Politics of Recognition”
Across the colony, demands for and practices of self-determination became impossible to ignore and anticolonial Red Power activism constituted a significant challenge to the Canadian settler state. The enormous force of resistance and activism not only meant that the government had to abandon the White Paper, but it also meant that the settler nations’ approach to colonial governance had to be rethought and adjusted.

It is during this time that Coulthard (2014) traces the emergence of a new form of colonial management, which he refers to as the “colonial politics of recognition”. Here we witness a “shift from a more or less unconcealed structure of domination to a form of colonial governance that works through the medium of state recognition and accommodation” (25),
seeking “to ‘reconcile’ Indigenous assertions of nationhood with settler-state sovereignty via the accommodation of Indigenous identity claims” (3). Throughout this shift and adaptation, as Coulthard points out, “the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the state has remained colonial to its foundation” (6; emphasis in original). Then and now, colonial rule “remains structurally oriented around achieving the same power effect” it has always sought: “the dispossession of Indigenous peoples of their lands and self-determining authority” (ibid 25; see also Tuck and Yang 2012:9). Yet, this is a time in which colonial relations are advanced via gestures of inclusion, national apologies, and displays of celebrations of Indigenous cultural practices. Elizabeth Povinelli (2002) importantly points out that these techniques of colonial governance sustain relations of coloniality through an adherence to a ‘conditional’. As Povinelli puts it, “national pageants of shameful repentance and celebrations of a new recognition of subaltern worth remain inflected by the conditional” – “as long as they are not repugnant; that is, as long as they are not, at heart, not-us and as long as real economic resources are not at stake” (17; emphasis added). Leanne Simpson has expressed this in a similar manner: “The very active system of settler colonialism maintains that dispossession and erases us from the consciousness of settler Canadians except in ways that is deemed acceptable and non-threatening to the state” (in Razack 2015:9).

The Cultural Conditional

I believe that one such conditional revolves around culture, that this cultural conditional is often drawn upon to further relations of coloniality in the present, and that we must pay attention to this if we want to think critically about gestures of inclusion that come in the form of ‘culturally-sensitive’ protocols and policies in child welfare (and beyond).
I have previously demonstrated that debates surrounding Indian integration and the resulting amendment to the Indian Act in the 1950s attempted to render Indigenous peoples an ‘ethnic/cultural minority within’, a construction that, via a disavowal of Indigenous sovereignties, rendered Indigenous peoples an includable population who must be ‘assisted into modernity’ (Razack 2015). Directives in the White Paper continued to be based on this vision and sought to force this relationship into reality. While the White Paper was not successful, its focus on integration via the mobilization of culture shows up and was implemented in a variety of other areas. Indeed, Weaver (1990) has identified ‘culture’ as a core idea that has informed the direction of “Canadian Indian Policy” in the 1990s (12). Coulthard points out that, since the dismal failure of the White Paper, there has been an “unprecedented degree of recognition for Aboriginal ‘cultural’ rights” within Canada’s legal and political framework (2014:2; see also chapter three in Turner 2006; Murphy 2001: “Culture and the Courts”, “The Limits of Culture”). We have similarly witnessed an unprecedented degree of efforts to include and mobilize Aboriginal culture in the field of education (St. Denis 2009, 2005). Importantly, the mobilization of ‘Aboriginal culture’ also shaped and continues to structure present-day dynamics in child welfare. In other words, I am returning to these debates for while the White Paper was shelved, its vision was not.

While assimilation is a rather obvious colonial move in that it undermines and seeks to erase Indigenous sovereignty and thus title to land (Byrd 2011; Barker 2005; Coulthard 2014; Turner 2006), liberal gestures of inclusion that mobilize the concept of ‘culture’ are more cunning. Such moves allowed the colonial state to insist that this form of integration – one in which Indians could retain their culture – was not a form of elimination, but a direction that “offers great hope for the Indian people” (Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian
Policy 1969, Section 2). Section 2 of the White Paper, entitled “The Indian Cultural Heritage” advances the following gesture:

Canada has changed greatly since the first Indian Act was passed. Today it is made up of many people with many cultures. Each has its own manner of relation to the other; each makes its own adjustments to the larger society…. For many years Canadians believed the Indian people had but two choices: they could be assimilated and lose their Indian identity. Today Canada has more to offer. There is a third choice – a full role in Canadian society and in the economy while retaining, strengthening and developing an Indian identity which preserves the good things of the past and helps Indian people to prosper and thrive…

(Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy 1969)

Yet, those cultural elements that were allowable or includable were those that did not fundamentally challenge the colonial state, or as the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s Indian Citizenship Committee had put it, the Indian could retain their culture as long as the Indian’s culture was “compatible with the existing … national culture” \(^{10}\) of the Canadian colony. In the Canadian settler colony, a nation that seeks to define its exceptionalism through pluralistic values, ‘ethnic culture’ is not something inherently repulsive, but instead can be tolerated or superficially celebrated if compatible with prevailing national narratives (of being tolerant,  

\(^{10}\) The second submission by the Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union’s “Indian Citizenship Committee”: ‘‘Help the Indians Help Themselves.’ A Brief Concerning an Act to Replace the Indian Act. Submitted to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet and particularly to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.” [n.d.]. Vancouver Branch of the Canadian Civil Liberties Union. Library and Archives Canada. Canadian Council on Social Development Fonds, MG28-I10, Volume 118, File “Indians, Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs – CWC Brief. 1959-64.
liberal, multicultural, accommodating, less racist than the United States. Of course, one only needs to be reminded of the Islamophobic anxieties that engulf discussions on Sharia law, ‘barbaric cultural practices’, ‘honour killings’, and notably the introduction of Bill S-7 the “Zero Tolerance for Barbaric Cultural Practices Act”, which received Royal Assent in June 2015, to see the boundaries of the acceptable). It is in the colonial fine-print that we encounter the cultural conditional – as long as non-threatening, if and only if compatible.

Here, the Canadian settler colony shifts its emphasis from colonial modes of absolute demarcation and eradication to the conditional. The conditional signifies an adjustment in colonial boundary control. It constitutes a colonial technique that is mobilized when gestures of inclusion and participation are extended to Indigenous peoples. Insofar as colonial inclusion/integration is a tactic of erasure and dispossession, the conditional is meant to function as its failsafe. The conditional sets out the rules of engagement, dictating that in order to be included Indigenous peoples must leave their sovereignty behind (normalizing settler sovereignty and legitimacy instead), demanding that those aspects that can be included are not threatening, destabilizing or unsettling to the colony’s existence.

By rendering Indigenous peoples ethnic Indians who had their own cultures and thus could be included as part of the (mythical) Canadian mosaic, the Canadian state works from and mobilizes an understanding of culture that is narrowly imagined and importantly disassociated form Indigenous sovereignty. For, while it was recognized that Indians had their own cultural traditions and practices (some of which they were theoretically permitted to retain), they were not considered distinct, sovereign nations who – besides culture – also had their own social, political, economic and legal structures, and most importantly, land. In other words, culture becomes divorced from Indigenous sovereignty once the settler colony casts Indigenous peoples
through the lens of race and ethnicity while disavowing colonization (as ethnic groups who are being discriminated against rather than independent nations who live under colonial duress).

Contrary to the colonial state’s mobilization of culture, several Indigenous thinkers work from an understanding of culture that is inseparable from self-determination (see Alfred 2005; 2009; 1995). In these texts, practicing one’s culture means living a self-determined life. As Leanne Simpson (2011) put it, it means doing things “on our own terms” (17). It means turning to “culturally inherent philosophical contexts for governance, education, healthcare, and economy” (ibid). It refers to “our Elders, our languages, and our lands” (ibid). It constitutes “the ultimate antidote to colonialism” (ibid). Coulthard (2014) refers to Dene culture “as the interconnected social totality of [a] distinct *mode of life* encompassing the economic, political, spiritual, and social”, based on “values and concepts rooted in the relational conception of land” (65; emphasis in original).

This is not the ‘culture’ of the ‘ethnic Indian’ that the colonial state sought to ‘allow’ post WWII and seeks to recognize and make room for through child welfare legislation (and its other recognition-based modalities) in the present. Sara Ahmed (2004, n.p.) reminds us that the “politics of recognition is also about definition: if we recognize something such as racism, then we also offer a definition of that which we recognize. In this sense, recognition produces rather than simply finds its object” (n.p.). In recognizing and permitting Indian culture, the colonial state imagines and produces a definition of culture that is indeed includable. Indian culture as imagined by the settler colony is package-able, marketable, consumable – a form of culture that can be imagined as a part of the Canadian multicultural mosaic.

Yet, I do not want to leave the impression that this is about ‘misrecognition’, that the colonial state simply does not realize that sovereignty cannot be disconnected from a peoples’ way of life/culture. What I want us to pay attention to is what the mobilization of culture *does* for
the colonizer. This is about a colonial move that utilizes and operationalizes ‘culture’ as part of a colonial governmentality that seeks to further the annihilative and accumulative settler colonial project. This turn towards culture, as Verna St. Denis (2009) has demonstrated, is grounded in a long-standing imperialist anthropological fascination with ‘primitive’ and ‘romanticized’ Native cultures based on a desire to document, study, and preserve some of its aspects as the bearers of these cultures were being eradicated (see also King 2011). It allowed for a mourning while killing, it allowed for the construction of civilized culture via primitive culture. Through the mobilization of culture post WWII, colonial society was able to claim that integration differed from assimilation. This allowed the settler state to position itself as doing ‘better’, it was to signify a departure from a more violent time, while continuing the colonial project.

Coulthard (2014) provides us with an insightful example in which this cultural move is explicitly utilized by the settler colony for the continuation of land theft. The author points out that “Canada and the NWT insisted on negotiating a land settlement based on the following two principles: first, that a Dene political claim to self-determination was invalid; and second, that any settlement reached must attain ‘finality’ through the extinguishment of what remained of Dene rights and title in exchange for the institutional recognition and protection of certain aspects of Dene ‘culture’” (66). Recognition of Dene culture did not mean “the recognition of alternative Indigenous economies and forms of political authority”, what it meant instead was an insistence that “any institutionalized accommodation of Indigenous cultural difference be reconciled with one political formation – namely, colonial sovereignty – and one mode of production – namely, capitalism” (66).
“Cultural Colonialism”

Importantly, this cultural move informs current relations in child welfare and allows for the continuation of colonial relations. In response to Indigenous activists who demanded a halt to the removal of their children, the settler colony mobilized the concept of culture to narrowly define and explain the problem of Indigenous child removal, and likewise drew on culture to offer a direction for its ‘solution’ – not self-determination, but a recognition of culture through culturally-sensitive protocols and culturally-relevant education for white social workers – solutions that allowed this colonial modality to continue.

Beginning in the late 70s, in response to Indigenous activism, the settler society acknowledged that Aboriginal children had been taken into the system at exceptionally high rates. Colonial society admitted that the present state of affairs was unjust and that there was indeed a problem with how Aboriginal child removal had thus far taken place. Several settler institutions began commenting on the high number of Aboriginal children in the child welfare system. For example, the Canadian Council on Social Development (previously the Canadian Welfare Council) released damning statistics on the high number of Indigenous children in child welfare (see Hepworth 1980). Building on this study, Patrick Johnston (1983) (former Program Director at the Canadian Council on Social Development) published a report in which he coined the now famous but historically misleading term “Sixties Scoop” to refer to the mass-removal of Indigenous children by social workers, a term based on the recognition that child welfare workers “scooped” Indigenous children “as a matter of course” (ibid).

11 “Sixties Scoop” is a misleading term for it implies that the colonial state’s accelerated and large-scale Indigenous child-removal initiative is contained to this particular decade, which is evidently false. It is a term that in and of itself disavows the continuation of this practice. A more accurate description as Raven Sinclair (2007) suggests, drawing on Lauri Gilchrist, would be to call it the “Millennium Scoop” (67).
Disavowing the coloniality of this practice as such, colonial society limited their recognition of this injustice to the aspect of ‘culture’. It was acknowledged that Indigenous children were removed ‘as a matter of course’, that, if not held in CAS institutions, these children were predominately sent to white foster and adoptive families far from their birthplaces, that records had not been properly kept and that these children often vanished without a trace. This, it was acknowledged, had detrimental effects on the children’s access to their culture. What was not acknowledged was that this practice constituted a continuation of Indigenous child removal initiatives that came before, that this sustained practice was colonial in and of itself (as an enactment of power and control over members of other nations), nor that it proved detrimental on a scale larger than what the colonizer defined as culture. Disregarding other colonial implications and effects (such as the disconnection and removal of children from their land, histories, nationhood, and relations), the settler society acknowledged that removing Aboriginal children from their culture was wrong. Hence, Manitoba Judge Edwin Kimelman (1985) concluded that through this practice, “cultural genocide has been taken place in a systematic routine manner” (328; emphasis added).

The settler society linked the reason for the mass-apprehension of Indigenous children to white society’s lack of understanding (at best) of Aboriginal culture, or (at worst) lack of respect for and Eurocentric dismissal of Aboriginal culture. Joyce Timpson (1995) who conducted a review of the social work literature published during the 1970s and 80s notes that the literature increasingly began to cite “the dismissal of Native culture” or “non-Native ignorance of their culture” as an explanation for the high number of Indigenous children in the child welfare
system. Even the high-profile suicide of 17-year-old Métis youth Richard Stanley Cardinal\textsuperscript{12} in 1984 was linked to “cultural insensitivity” (see Bagley 1985) on part of the Canadian child welfare system (in Timpson 1995). Hudson and McKenzie (see 1981) even went so far as to call the relationship between the child welfare system and Indigenous peoples one of “cultural colonialism” (Timpson 1995; emphasis added). Few explanations emerged, Timpson (1995) asserts, that connected Indigenous child removal with colonialism as such – apart from its detrimental impact on culture. The problem was not Canadian control over and the management of the children of the colonized. The problem was not Indigenous child removal as such. The ‘problem’ instead was how this control and management had been carried out. Thus far, it was argued, it simply had not been done adequately. Expressed differently, what was admitted was that the settler society simply did not (yet) know how to provide its care in appropriate ways.

Education in Cultural Competency

A lack of understanding of Aboriginal culture meant that white society needed to be educated to ‘better’ care for Aboriginal children. The solution that was imagined was to educate and teach white social workers about Aboriginal culture, which (beginning in the late 1980s) led to numerous curriculum and policy changes in Canadian Schools of Social Work. Now, many schools of social work provide students with training in Aboriginal “cultural competency” (see, for example, the account of Vinkle 2012). Verna St. Denis (2009) has powerfully critiqued this impetus in the field of education and beyond. As St. Denis explains, “when racialized conflict between Aboriginal and white Canadians erupts in a way that makes it clear that collective action

\textsuperscript{12} Cardinal hanged himself from a crossbar that he had mounted between two trees. He had been placed in 28 different foster homes during his 14 years in the custody of the Canadian child welfare system (see Obomsawin 1986).
is required” – as it did in the 1970s – “more often than not what is recommended is … cross-cultural awareness or race relations training for the primarily ‘white’ service providers, including police officers, social workers, and teachers” (163). Expressed differently, the mobilization of culture – or what St. Denis terms “the culture concept” – creates a need for “service providers’ [to] be ‘culturally competent’ in their delivery” (ibid:174), without challenging the coloniality inherent in this service provision as such. In Canada’s colonial context, a “cultural framework of analysis is partial and inadequate on its own” (164), St. Denis further argues, and its mobilization does much of the work in perpetuating white settler colonial relations. For, while “culturally relevant education” has become a “common-sense solution” (ibid:170), it trivializes “the impact of colonial oppression” or disavows coloniality altogether “by attributing the effects and the conditions of oppression” to the idea of cultural incommensurability (ibid:168).

It is further important to take heed of St. Denis’s warning that “culturally-based solutions can inadvertently contribute to further problems” (ibid:163-164; see also Park 2005). One of these problems is the normalization of the social work professions’ power and control over Indigenous peoples, as well as the potential of ‘cultural competency education’ to increase, rather than decenter, the power of white social workers. Important critical work on such effects has been advanced by scholars in the social work profession who employ a critical race perspective. Noting that schools of social work have increasingly addressed issues of race and racism (Jeffery 2005), these authors remind us that critical education in social work (such as anti-racism education, or its liberal variants of multiculturalism and cross-cultural awareness) can be used to re-affirm the power of the profession by teaching students ways to ‘manage diversity’, or expressed differently, ‘govern racialized populations’ (N. Razack and Jeffery 2002:263; Jeffery 2002, 2005, 2007; Margolin 1997; William 1999; Dominelli 1988). Even when social work bodies officially endorse and promote (what could be considered radical notions, such as) anti-
oppression principles (see Sakamoto et al. 2008:41) or critical whiteness frameworks (see Young and Zubrzycki 2011), these principles have not (yet) decentered the institutional apparatus as such, but are often turned into subject specific skills an ‘educated’ social worker ought to have. Once ‘learned’ as better ways to manage clients, these frameworks reinforce rather than decenter the dominant status of the social worker (Jeffery 2007:430; Yee 2005; Badwall and N. Razack 2012). Thus, despite these changes, “the role of the profession itself in sustaining racial hierarchies remains undisturbed” (Jeffery 2002); “the day-to-day practices on which the profession rests, and which sustain the profession, reproduce whiteness” (Jeffery 2005:411).13

The turn to cultural competency training was not a new one, having been identified as useful for the purpose of effective colonial governance decades prior. Beginning in the 1950s, white settler organizations increasingly spoke of the need to know more about the people they sought to manage, ‘help’, and assimilate. For example, in 1959, one such settler organization, the B.C. Indian Arts and Welfare Society, submitted a brief for presentation to the Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs, suggesting that for the purpose of integration/assimilation, the white community had to learn about Indian culture. To this end, the Society proposed the development of “Courses in Indian Culture” to be taught across “all provinces”.14 As they put it, “all people working professionally with Indians should take special courses in Indian culture, history, etc.” because “[t]he professional worker cannot deal successfully with the Indian people

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13 Within recent years, there has even been an emergence of discourses of ‘anti-colonialism’ in social work. Books and articles have been written on the subject matter, and courses are being taught utilizing this language. Let us pay critical attention to this development and be wary of the ways in which white coloniality will seek to coopt this direction and attempt to reinvent itself.

unless he knows something of their history and cultural background. This is particularly true of superintendents, teachers of Indian children, and social workers.”

The Regina Welfare Council provided a similar suggestion. In preparation for the Regina Welfare Council’s Conference (October 30-November 1, 1958), which was to focus on “problems of people of Indian descent residing in the city of Regina”, the welfare council recommended the establishment of “Study Groups on Indian Culture.”

To further the absorption of Indians in Regina, it was found that “[m]ore knowledge is needed by non-Indians of life on the Reservations and of Indian culture” to “create a better informed community in which people of Indian descent would find acceptance and understanding.”

Maysie Roger from the Manitoba School of Social Work, who also advocated for the complete assimilation of Indigenous peoples, similarly explained that “[p]art of the reason why the Indian, and the Metis, have not become more completely a part of Canadian life is because of the lack of acceptance and understanding of him and his ways and his culture”.

Roger recommended that “social workers entering the Department of Indians Affairs be given a course in social anthropology to understand better the background and customs of


17 Ibid.

people with whom they would be working.”¹⁹ To facilitate the assimilation/integration of the Indian, she suggested that this educative component could be extended to all Canadians:

Perhaps we should spend a little money to familiarize people with Indian values, Indian culture and the contribution the Indian makes to Canadian life and the Canadian economy. I would like to see the Department of Citizenship and Immigration accept responsibility for developing an active and far-reaching program of interpretation, working with the National Film Board, Boards of Education, museums, and many other public and private bodies.²⁰

Culturally-Sensitive Policies and Aboriginal Child Welfare Agencies

Besides educating non-Indigenous social workers in Aboriginal culture, child welfare was to also become more culturally relevant. This lead to legislative changes in the provinces and territories, including the introduction of culturally-sensitive protocols and polices. For example, after having diagnosed the problem as ‘cultural’ genocide, judge Kimelman (1985) recommended vast changes to Manitoba’s child welfare system aimed at the incorporation of cultural considerations into all decision-making concerning Indian and Métis children. It was a solution already put forth by others, for when Kimelman published the report, the first Indigenous-run child welfare agencies had already been established.

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¹⁹ Ibid.
²⁰ Ibid.
Most provincial child welfare Acts now cite cultural considerations in some form or another (see Sinha and Kozlowski 2013), including provisions that an Indigenous child – once removed – be (preferably) placed with extended family or with an Indigenous foster family rather than with a white foster home. Alberta’s Child, Youth and Family Enhancement Act (2010), for example, makes room for the practice of ‘kinship care’, which seeks to preserve the ties between Indigenous children and their communities. Similarly, the Ontario Child and Family Services Act (1984) was amended drawing on the Indigenous concept of ‘customary care’ enabling social workers to place Indigenous children with extended family (Waterfall 2005:59).

It should be noted here that some of these developments, in particular those provisions (such as customary care) that seek to keep Indigenous children within their communities and interrupt the settler practice of taking a hold of them instead, are certainly positive adjustments within the system. However, the introduction of culturally-sensitive policies in child welfare is informed by the conditional – allowable are culturally-informed practices as long as these practices do not significantly interfere or hinder the operation of the system as such. Hence, as Waterfall (2005) reminds us, even if improvements, these provisions do not question the inherently violent and Eurocentric practice of child apprehension as such. Speaking of the Ontario context, the author writes, “[e]ven though it was now called ‘customary care’ Native children were forcibly removed from their homes and placed in other settings” (59). Drawing on the work of Lee Maracle, Waterfall asks: “where in our Native traditions, laws, or values was the terrorizing or kidnapping of children acceptable” (59-60)?

These provisions emerged in tandem with Aboriginal child welfare agencies, created in response to Indigenous peoples’ demands to have control over their own children. In an effort to appease and counteract demands for self-determination, colonial society offered, instead, a form of ‘devolution’ of power and control in aspects of child welfare work as it pertained to their
communities. Indigenous peoples were to be consulted, included, and given liminal control
within the functioning of the child welfare system. Expressed differently, the settler society
‘allowed’ Indigenous peoples to take up a role in the colonial bureaucracy and participate in
certain aspects of colonial governance.

In the late 1970s, the first tripartite agreement was signed between the Province of
Manitoba, the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood, and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC),
which formally established First Nations child welfare agencies in this province – it was agreed
that these agencies would be managed by First Nations, mandated by the province, and funded
by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) (INAC 2007:1). Their role was (and continues to
be) to oversee and carry out the provision of child welfare services to Indigenous children and
families. Other provinces swiftly followed suit (see FNCFCS 2010). In as little as five years
(1981-1986), the number of First Nations child welfare agencies grew from 4 to 30 (Armitage
agencies provide child welfare services to 75% of First Nations (ibid). As of 2011, there were
121 Métis, urban Aboriginal, and First Nations child welfare agencies in operation or in
provincially and federally recognized planning processes (Sinha and Kozlowski 2013:5). There
are no Aboriginal child and family services agencies in the Yukon, Northwest Territories,
Nunavut, and Newfoundland and Labrador (INAC 2007:4).21

21 There are considerable difficulties in obtaining comprehensive information about child welfare legislations,
service delivery models, and organizational structures as they pertain to Aboriginal child welfare agencies across
Canada. These difficulties are partially due to the fact that the Canadian child welfare system is a decentralized
system, with over 300 provincial and territorial child welfare agencies operating under differing provincial and
territorial jurisdictions (Trocmé et al. 2010), as well as limited academic literature on the subject matter, and a lack
of publicly available documents generated by the Department of Indian Affairs (Sinha and Kozlowski 2013:2). A
recent article by Vandna Sinha and Anne Kozlowski (2013) fills some of these gaps. Building on the Canadian
Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS-2008), which collected some data on Indigenous
children in the Canadian child welfare system (see Trocmé et al. 2010), Sinha and Kozlowski synthesizes the
Colonial Governance and INAC’s “First Nations Child and Family Services Program”

The inclusion of Indigenous peoples in the operation of child welfare, or the devolution of power to Indigenous-run organizations, took place in a highly controlled manner, implemented in such a way that did not fundamentally alter the operation of the system. This was accomplished through certain core policies that ensured that Indigenous family services, while managed by Indigenous peoples, cannot function autonomously/outside of the control of the settler colony.

In 1986, after we witnessed the jump from 4 Aboriginal agencies to 30 within just a few years, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) put a halt on this trend and moved to regulate the growth and operation of these agencies. INAC imposed a moratorium on the establishment of any further First Nations agency until a federal child welfare policy for First Nations children was adopted – i.e. a policy that could govern all Aboriginal agencies. The moratorium was lifted in 1990, after INAC introduced its national policy: The First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program (see INAC 2007, 2005; Auditor General 2008).

The First Nations Child and Family Services (FNCFS) Program objective was (and continues to be) to “support culturally appropriate child and family services for Indian children and families resident on reserve or ordinarily resident on reserve, in the best interest of the child, in accordance with the legislation and standards of the relevance province” (INAC 2005:5; see also Currie and Sinha 2015:1), formally cementing ‘culture’ as a core organizing principle in Aboriginal child welfare. Through this policy, Aboriginal agencies became FNCFS agencies. This meant that First Nations child welfare agencies cannot operate independently, but have to

currently available information about the structure of Aboriginal child welfare across the provinces and territories (such as service delivery models, legislation and standards, and organizational funding models) (see 2013:5-14).
comply with provincial child welfare laws and statutes, and by extension, do the work alongside or in lieu of provincial social workers. To ensure that agencies are compliant, the FNCFS sets out the role of the province or territory as follows: “to mandate Recipients [i.e. FNCFS agencies] in accordance with provincial or territorial legislation and standards; to regulate Recipients in their activities as they relate to the legislation and standards” and “to provide ongoing oversight to Recipients and to take action if the requirements are not being met.” (INAC 2005:9). Funding for this undertaking is provided by Indian Affairs, whose role is “to manage the program and funding on behalf of Canada and to ensure that authorities are followed.” (ibid) According to the FNCFS, the role of an Aboriginal/FNCFS agency is “to deliver the FNCFS program in accordance with provincial legislation and standards while adhering to the terms and conditions of their funding agreements” (INAC 2005:9). Thus, power and control over every-day activities lie with the provincial governments, while supervisory power and funding control lie with the federal government. The inclusion of Indigenous peoples in child welfare along these lines was based on the premise that practices of self-determination cease, while instead ‘allowing’ Indigenous peoples to practice some forms of self-governance within parameters set out by the colonizer. This structure remains firmly in place to this day (see Sinha and Kozlowski 2013; CECW 2011).

Not only did such an inclusion normalize colonial relations, but it furthered the colonial modality of Indigenous child removal. The funding model the FNCFS introduced\(^{22}\) (Directive 20-1), and that agencies must comply with, contributes to the accelerated removal of First Nations children – a link that INAC itself acknowledged (2007:ii). This is for the reason that

\[^{22}\] Up until the moratorium, Aboriginal agencies received funding from INAC on an ad hoc basis.
Directive 20-1 provides funding via two streams: ‘Operations funding’, which covers the administrative costs of running a FNCFS agency, and ‘maintenance funding’, which covers costs associated with children once placed in ‘out of home care’ (i.e. foster homes, groups homes, and institutional ‘care’) (Currie and Sinha 2015). In other words, funding is made available for First Nations children who have been removed. Funding is not directed towards ‘preventative’ measures that seek to keep children in their homes with their parents or guardians. Instead, funding is directed towards their removal, as money is made available for covering the costs associated with their placement once they have been taken away. Financial compensation then goes to ‘out-of-home care’: foster families, group homes, and institutions. No other child population is funded according to such a model. Only in relation to Indigenous children are child apprehensions financially rewarded. For other child populations, while certainly underfunded and often inaccessible, preventative services are (at least theoretically) in place. First Nations agencies expressed their concerns over this funding model from the very beginning, highlighting that such a funding formula favoured the apprehension of their children (rather than their retention), but INAC proceeded regardless (FNCFCS 2010).

The Legality of Child Theft

Since the creation of FNCFS agencies the number of Indigenous children taken into child welfare custody has further increased. In 2007, the Audit and Evaluation Branch of the

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23 The fact that virtually no financial assistance is directed to family or community support and/or allocated for solutions other than removal cannot be explained by claiming that money is scarce. The funds INAC makes available for “maintenance costs” – the costs associated with the removal and ‘out-of-home’ placement for Indigenous children – are telling: In 2004-2005, the average costs for one year for one child was: $21,672 in a foster home; $66,187 in a group home; and $93,885 for a child in institutional custody (INAC 2007:18). The costs associated with support services and ‘preventative’ measures would be a fraction of this.
Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada published its “Evaluation of the First Nations Child and Family Services Program.” In this evaluation, INAC notes that since the creation of the FNCFS, “[t]here has been a rapid escalation in the demand for child and family services for on-reserve First Nations populations”, “the number of children in care increased from 5,340 in 1996-1997 to 8,917 in 2005-2006”, “the program expenditure grew from $193 million to $417 million in the same period” and “First Nations children are over-represented at every level of the child welfare decision making continuum, including reports to child welfare authorities, case substantiation rates, and admissions to protective care” (2007:i).

On the one hand, this was achieved by INAC’s funding model that directed funding towards the removal of Indigenous children, which not surprisingly resulted in the removal of more children. Yet, there are other ways in which the creation of FNCFS child welfare agencies may have contributed to the rise of Indigenous children in child welfare. One of these may be connected to the inclusion of Indigenous peoples as social workers. For example, as was the case for Manitoba, since the establishment of further FNCFS agencies in 2005, the number of children in provincial custody has risen by almost a third (in Winnipeg Free Press 2010). There might only be a correlation rather than causation here. Yet, the Office of the Children’s Advocate in Manitoba suggests that these new agencies were more effective in intensifying their reach into First Nations communities (in ibid).

Since these agencies are not able to function autonomously, but rather have to work under provincial child welfare legislations, which means following the protocols that outline every stage of contact between child welfare workers, children, and their families, including the criteria that assess “risk factors”, what constitutes “neglect” and therefore ‘when to remove a child’ (see Gough 2006), and if it is true that an FNCFS agency has a greater reach into a reserve
community, then likely more children who fit the classification of “neglected” will be ‘detected’ and subsequently have to be dealt with according to the rules set out by the province.

These provincial child welfare legislations, as I have demonstrated elsewhere, function through a self-affirming colonial logic. Through this legal framework (including its policies and protocols) the removal of Indigenous children is justified by citing the very conditions and criteria as grounds for removal that the colonial state created in the first place. Child welfare legislation creates the category of the ‘neglected child’ in defining what ‘neglect’ looks like, what counts as a ‘risk factor’, how to assess these risk factors, what housing conditions and family relations should and cannot look like, and so on – while forgetting that such conditions (such as falling apart reserve houses) were manufactured by the very settler colony that then judges these spaces as inadequate environments to raise a child. “It is the very racial-spatial conditions the settler society created for Indigenous peoples that are then used to justify the removal of their ‘neglected’ children” (Landertinger 2016:17).

This not only applies to child removal, but also to the placement of children once removed. Even though provincial protocols now allow for Indigenous children to be placed with relatives or a foster family from the community, such provisions are only enforceable if these placements are deemed acceptable. However, the criteria for such assessments are also laid out by provincial protocols and more often than not, provincial foster care guidelines do not consider homes on a reserve appropriate placement options. Provincial guidelines vary, but generally, assessments include criteria such as housing conditions, employment, and income. Given that many homes on reserves are considered inadequate (a creation of the federal government), and many on-reserve residents live in poverty (similarly an outcome of colonialism past and present),
not many homes make the cut to be considered ‘good’ foster homes. As such, law, as Razack (2015) puts it, pursues ‘the game of improvement’ and it does so by forgetting that it has written the rules of the game in the first place.

The colonizer’s discursive and legal mechanisms thus install a relationship in which power, control, and the exercise of sovereignty firmly rest with the colonial society. The Canadian legal framework establishes that it is right and just for the colony to remove the children of other nations. The self-authorized position of the colonizer to deliberate, judge, evaluate and make decision over the children and parenting conduct of the colonized is a violation and undermining of Indigenous sovereignty. Child welfare legislations sustain and authorize these relations of coloniality. Through post-war amendments to the Indian Act, boundaries between settler and Native were redrawn, and child welfare was authorized to supplement and eventually replace Indian Residential Schools as the primary method of Indigenous child management. Now provincial child welfare legislations provide the terms of engagement and the FNCFS delineates clear boundaries for power application, setting out how colonial relations are to be enacted. It is in these moments that law demands, sanctions, and normalizes the continuation of Indigenous child removal. Marlee Kline (1992) thus urges us to understand “child welfare law … as a new modality of colonialist regulation of First Nations” (388).

24 See, for example, Waterfall (2005) who recounts the difficulty Indigenous social workers faced in having to place Native children with white foster homes, since provincial foster care guidelines would consider them more appropriate than homes on a reserve (59).
The Conduct of Conduct

Insofar as FNCFS agencies have to follow provincial child welfare guidelines and protocols, Indigenous-run agencies will have to carry out child welfare work as dictated by the settler colony, including the removal of Indigenous children. Not surprisingly, many First Nations only reluctantly agreed to work under this framework, hoping that this arrangement would constitute a mere interim solution on the path towards self-determination (Bennett 2004:6-7; Hudson and McKenzie 2003:50). So far, however, this has not happened. An inclusion of Indigenous peoples along those lines did not disrupt settler colonial relations but rather perpetuated them. It did not provide the basis for Indigenous peoples to exercise their autonomy over their own offspring, and on the flipside, it did not call the legitimacy of the federal government’s unilateral claim of sovereignty over Indigenous peoples into question.

Warry (2009) calls such an inclusion of Indigenous peoples an “indigenization of government services.” As he puts it, “[t]hroughout 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 2009:36). Waterfall (2005) makes a similar argument suggesting that “we need to question whether we are merely moving what is an essentially Eurocentric service from a main office model to a decentralized Native context” (60). “While appearing to be moving toward the objectives of Native people’s self-determined agency,” Waterfall argues, “these modern day initiatives are merely reformulations of neo-colonial structures”: “In the case of Native child welfare initiatives the provincial governments still ultimately wield the power. The change merely means decentralizing services. It does not change the nature of the services” (ibid).
This – the decentralization of services without a change in nature or outcome of these services – constitutes a manifestation of colonial governmentality, or an example of how power is focused on and effected through the conduct of conduct. As David Scott (2005) reminds us, “if modern power is concerned with disabling nonmodern forms of life by dismantling their conditions, then its aim in putting in place new and different conditions is above all to produce governing-effects on conduct” (31). The colonial state disseminates some services through a proclamation that it lets go of its position as the ultimate wielder of power and control (expressed through enticing discursive constructs such as ‘devolution’ ‘decentralization’ ‘self-governance’), ‘allowing’ Indigenous peoples to carry out some of these services instead. These services may be altered and made ‘culturally-relevant’ but only in so far (‘if and only if’) as they do not hinder the continuation of the system as such. As Waterfall has further observed, “the explicit focus of these agencies was not about ridding Native peoples of colonial imposition. Nor was the focus concerned with revitalizing our Native languages, laws, systems, and cultural practices. Rather, the inevitability of colonial imposition was assumed.” (59). Hence, as Gilchrist suggests, many Indigenous social workers who were recruited into child welfare services, and who must work under the umbrella of Indian Child and Family Services, are now the ones forced to do the ‘scooping’ (in Sinclair 2007:67). Or as Waterfall (2005) so aptly put it, “[t]he result was that Native peoples were now doing the dirty work of apprehending Native children from their families” (59), carrying out “the child protection mandate of the colonial state” (60).

It is pertinent to note that this manner of incorporating Indigenous peoples into aspects of colonial governance, and the employment of Indigenous social workers in particular, was already discussed as a directive that was discussed before the extension of child welfare services onto reserves had taken effect. Post WWII, it was held that for the purpose of effective colonial management, Indigenous peoples had to be drawn into and participate in the colonial
bureaucracy. For, as W.B. Clipsham put it, “They are more willing to accept leadership from their own people.”

The Canadian Association of Social Workers and the Canadian Welfare Council stressed this point when lobbying for the extension of child welfare services onto reserves. In their joint submission (1947) to the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and the House of Commons appointed to examine and consider the *Indian Act* they explained it as follows:

As part of the staff reorganization required, suitable Indian personnel should be introduced wherever possible. Further, the policy should be adopted of selecting and training Indian workers to take over in due course administrative and service responsibilities both in the agencies and at headquarters. Such a policy would be in line with those successfully carried out elsewhere in work with native populations and would have a decided value in developing a sense of responsibility and self-confidence among members of the Indian community.

To this end, the Indian-Eskimo Association similarly decided to “urge the provinces to train and hire a few social workers of Indian or Metis background.” Others suggested that, ideally,

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Indians should only receive services from Indians. For example, as Ian Sutherland, Director of the Children’s Aid Society of Sault Ste. Marie and Algoma, suggested “We are now wondering if the best interests of the Indians would not be served by having social workers (Indians themselves, if possible) working exclusively with these people.”\textsuperscript{28} To this end, it was also suggested that financial incentives or assistance be provided to Indigenous peoples who would be willing to receive a social work education. For example, B. Beaumont, Director of the Community Welfare Council of Brantford and Brant County announced that “The local Welfare Council was also discussing and considering scholarships for young Indian students to enable them to enter the field of Welfare. Every effort should be made to encourage them to develop their own services to serve their own people.”\textsuperscript{29}

The Discourse of “Overrepresentation”

We now find ourselves in a situation where culturally-sensitive protocols have been put in place, social workers are being trained in cultural competency, and Aboriginal child welfare agencies have been established. And yet, Indigenous children are still taken into the system at exorbitant numbers. Moreover, 30 years have passed since the suicide of Métis youth Richard Stanley Cardinal. Since then, many more Indigenous children were put through a similar ordeal. For example, in 2000, a Métis boy hanged himself at just 13 years of age. Like Cardinal, he too had


been placed into 25 foster homes during his 12 years in the child welfare system. Similarly, a 16-year-old First Nation youth hanged himself in his aunt's home in Regina. He had been moved 30 times (Henton 2013 “Thirty Years”).

Given that the colonial modality of Indigenous child removal is as constant as ever, numerous studies continue the important work of highlighting the fact that Indigenous children still make up the bulk of children in state custody (see, for example, Trocmé, Knoke and Blackstock 2004; Blackstock et al. 2005; Gough et al. 2005; Sinha et al. 2011; Pon, Gosine and Phillips 2011; de Finney et al. 2011; Dumbrill 2003). The terminology commonly used to draw attention to this fact is that of “overrepresentation”: Indigenous children are “overrepresented” in the Canadian child welfare system it is usually stated.

While this research is invaluable, there is a caveat I wish to address – namely our continued reliance on the discourse of “overrepresentation”. “Overrepresentation” is the dominant terminology circulating in Social Work, Sociology, Social Policy Studies, as well as official government documents (as exemplified in INAC’s statement cited above), and it is one that is taken up uncritically from all sides of the political spectrum (including myself previously). And while I recognize the terminology’s utility for statistical and quantitative purposes, it is nonetheless a term I want us to do away with in relation to Indigenous children.

“Over-representation” signifies a host of assumptions. It entails a recognition that the child welfare system takes in Indigenous children at a much higher rate than other child populations – a recognition that is undoubtedly true. It furthermore recognizes that this rate is disproportionately higher compared to the overall Indigenous child population – a recognition that is also correct. This then also entails an implicit critique that the number of Indigenous children in Canadian child welfare institutions is ‘too high’ – a sentiment that I share. However, while the term ‘overrepresentation’ is often drawn upon to illustrate the injustice perpetuated in
and through the child welfare system, this terminology itself holds within it a disavowal and normalization of settler colonialism and an undermining of Indigenous sovereignty or self-determination. This is for the reason that the term implies that there is a certain threshold – a particular level of ‘representation’ or number of Indigenous children in custody – that perhaps would be acceptable. Indeed, a central objective that drove the creation of Aboriginal child welfare agencies was a desire to “reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care” (Sinha and Kozlowski 2013:1; emphasis added). This implies that the current number of Indigenous children in child welfare has merely gone ‘over’ that threshold. What that threshold might be is unclear. Perhaps it is a level that is comparable to white or racialized child populations in child welfare custody, or the threshold would be one that is proportional to the overall Indigenous child population. Yet, it is precisely such thinking that needs to be resisted when confronting the colonial injustices perpetuated by the Canadian child welfare system in relation to Indigenous peoples. Such considerations have us argue over the number of Indigenous children in custody while obfuscating larger processes of settler colonial violence that are enacted through the intake of Indigenous children as such – whether such acts concern thousands of Indigenous children or merely a single child. Simply reducing the number of Indigenous children in the system is not enough. Each and every Indigenous child taken by the settler state is an enactment of colonial relations and an undermining of Indigenous sovereignty. While it is important for us to recognize the disproportionality between the Indigenous child population compared to the number of Indigenous children in the system, these numbers are primarily useful to us in understanding the enormity and scale of the issue – the issue of which is the colonial management of Indigenous peoples through Canadian welfare institutions.
Conclusion

The continuity and permanency of Indigenous child removal suggest that this modality of power is crucial to the settler colonial state. The current number of dead and institutionalized Indigenous children in Canada’s child welfare system is not an unfortunate aberration or sad exception to an otherwise well-intentioned system. These are the brutal effects and manifestations of the colonial arc that I have been tracing throughout this dissertation. I have demonstrated that the Canadian child welfare system emerged as an imperial undertaking. It was created for the proliferation of the white race, made to save the damaged but salvageable children of the nation. Whiteness and settler colonialism formed this system. Its driving values and indeed its raison d’être were built upon the dispossession and elimination of Indigenous peoples. This suggests that trying to make the child welfare system beneficial for Indigenous children is a lost cause. This system was not designed for Indigenous children. Attempts to include Indigenous peoples in this framework by extending its ‘benefits’ to Indigenous children meant the continued removal and death of Indigenous children. Not because the system failed, but because it succeeded.

Kline (1992) and Monture (1989) have reminded us that Indigenous child removal is premised on and directed towards dispossession and the erasure of Indigenous sovereignty. It furthers and enacts the colonization of Indigenous peoples. As Monture (1989) put it, “The effect of the child welfare process is to remove and then seclude First Nations children from their cultural identity and their cultural heritage” (3), damaging “the traditional social structures of family and community” (5). Kline (1992) puts it as follows: “since the 1950s when provincial child welfare schemes were first extended to First Nations people on reserves, the system has had the effect of removing large numbers of children from their natural parents, their extended families and their communities” (388), the result of which has “been to further the colonization
of First Nations and to erode their social and political structures” (ibid). The centrality of land needs to be kept in mind here as well. The purpose of Indian Residential Schools was to remove children from their families, communities, cultures, histories, and land – seeking to sever the children from their ‘Indianness’ – and in doing so, seeking to free up the land for the colonizers. Stripping Indigenous children of their Native titles during the Sixties Scoop (by, for example, obscuring or keeping the children’s ancestry a secret, keeping shoddy or no records of where they would be sent, and having them adopted by white settlers) was directed toward the same end. For without Indians, or at least without Indians who could claim title or knew that they had title, there would be no contestation over land. These were attempts to erase or “disappear” (Razack 2015:10) Indigenous peoples from the landscape, for “if ‘Indians’ are disappearing, the settler can legitimately become the original owner of the land” (ibid:293).

The enormity of this colonial modality, and its strategic utility for colonial governance, is further exemplified by the fact that the removal of Indigenous children has been and continues to be a central feature of other white settler colonies. Alongside Canada, Indigenous child removal has similarly been a central modality in Australia, the United States, and New Zealand (see, for example, Haebich 2000; Jacobs 2009; Armitage 1995; Moses (Ed.) 2004). And in all four settler states, Indigenous child removal continues as a contemporary ‘problematic’ (see Libesman 2004). Through comparative research on the American and Australian settler colonial context, Margaret Jacobs (2009) has similarly argued that “indigenous child removal constituted another crucial way to eliminate indigenous people” (4):

As Australian and American authorities secured the transfer of more land to their governments, and thereafter to settlers, they also engaged in policies of removing indigenous children from their families. Rather than regarding these as distinct and separate policies, we should more properly
view them as policies that worked in tandem to divest Indian peoples of their last remaining lands. As long as indigenous people were identified as part of a distinctive group with a long historical association with a particular area, they could make claims to particular territories and lands. Disconnecting children from both their group identity and traditional land association contributed to this primary aim of settler colonialism. (83-84)

The applicability of child removal across colonial formations suggests a “modular quality of colonial perceptions and policies” that implicitly or explicitly draw on “international standards of empire” (Stoler 2002:78), “a kind of international lexicon of potential strategies for rule that circulated [and importantly continue to circulate] among colonial regimes” (Jacobs 2009:52).

What further needs to be recalled here is that child welfare – as a modality of power that is enacted through the management of children – entails a future directive. This colonial modality not only manages Indigenous peoples in the present, but the outlook of child welfare – by focusing on and taking hold of the rising generations – is directed at future relations. This is about a colonial desire to shape and control the future of Indigenous peoples, and of effecting the extension of colonial relations. In severing children from their relations, child welfare is oriented towards interrupting the proliferation and resurgence of Indigenous peoples. Taking Indigenous children and hence obstructing or interfering with the ability to pass on ways of being to future generations quite evidently is an attempted form of erasure. Monture (1989) writes that “First Nations communities believe that their future and the survival of the traditional ways depends on children” (3). In quoting Jessica Hill, the author points out that “when children of original ancestry are removed from their homes and communities”, then “[t]he traditional circle of life is broken. This leads to a breakdown of the family, the community, and breaks the bonds of love between the parent and the child. To constructively set out to break the Circle of Life is
destructive and is literally destroying Native communities and Native cultures’” (3). Monture underscores this as follows: “Removing children from their homes weakens the entire community. Removing First Nations children from their culture and placing them in a foreign culture is an act of genocide” (ibid). As we saw in Part One of this dissertation, the colonial state was well aware of this connection. Its focus on the child was intentional, and this was precisely the objective.

Embedded as a structure within the colonial politics of care, the child welfare framework is built upon and enacts a fundamental colonial relationship in that it renders Indigenous peoples objects to be ‘cared’ for/managed, while the provision and extension of care and concern rest with the colonizer. While different avenues for the disposition of colonial ‘care’ may be judged inadequate over time (e.g. the selling of Indigenous babies to white families for the supposed benefit of the Indian is no longer a defendable practice), this fundamental relationship, that it is the colonial state who manages and cares for, remains in place.

When it comes to Indigenous adults who die in Canadian custody, Razack (2015) argues, what the settler society comes to learn is that “care is wasted on bodies too damaged to survive” (23). With Indigenous children, the story is slightly different. Here, ‘care’ is not considered wasted on the bodies of Indigenous children, rather ‘care’ needs to be provided and extended to the child by the colonial state, since Indigenous peoples are said to fail in their own duty to care. With the child, ‘care’ is mobilized to separate Indigenous children from their relations. In both instances, the settler colony’s annihilative impulse shines through. In the first instance, we witness a subtraction/denial of care resulting in death, and in the latter, an extension of care that similarly seeks erasure. This is about the mobilization of care as a modality of power that can be provided or withheld, achieving the same power effect.
When the settler society speaks of the need to extend welfare services to Indigenous peoples, it tells a story about the extension of care to people who are considered incapable of caring for themselves. What is reified is a relationship in which Indigenous peoples imagined to fall short of living lives that do not require intervention and assistance by the colonial state, positioning the settler society as superior, benevolent, caring, trying – but oftentimes failing – to do good. Regardless of the fact that the Canadian settler society has played this deadly game via Indigenous children since the nineteenth century, regardless of the fact that the settler colony has removed hundreds of thousands of Indigenous children through Indian Residential Schools and the child welfare system, that its hold on Indigenous children continues to be a permanent feature, despite the fact that the children still die while in their ‘care’/custody – that is, despite the fact that their ‘care’ has consistently been deadly – through this framework, the settler society retains its claim to civility. Hence, as Razack (2015) has pointed out, settlers are positioned as caring, even in those moments when the evidence points to the very opposite. As such, “the most that colonial society can ever be guilty of is not knowing how to care” (22-23).

This relationship – one in which Indigenous peoples are constructed as objects to be managed/cared for while normalizing a superior subject status for those who ‘do’ the managing/caring – is very old colonial one, “one devoted to that most quintessential of colonial activities: the improvement of the colonized, or, in an old phrase, the civilizing mission” (Razack 2015:7). Throughout, authority and control firmly rest with the colonizer, those who must improve and ‘prove’ themselves are those who hold original title to the land. Such narrative formations do the work of settler colonialism, for if Indigenous peoples are considered incapable of caring for themselves, incapable of caring for their children, then self-determination can be dismissed as but a pipe dream.
Avenues of/for Change

If we take all this into account and if we, as I have suggested, conceptualize the child welfare system as a form of colonial governmentality, a modality of power that perpetuates the settler colony’s annihilative impulse, severing Indigenous peoples from each other and the land, then we are left with certain implications. Most importantly, this concerns our visions for change and the avenues we choose to get there. If relations of coloniality are sustained and enacted through child welfare, then advocating for changes to the system that do not fundamentally alter how the system operates will not lead to decolonial justice.

To draw on Povinelli (2002) whose more careful framing I reproduce as an affirmative: “liberalism is harmful not only when it fails to live up to its ideals, but when it approaches them” (13). We have witnessed this in moments when the colonial state proclaimed to have recognized Indigenous demands and sought to rectify injustice via liberal gestures of inclusion and integration, solutions that continued colonial modalities of erasure. A glaring example is the ‘un/equal treatment’ of First Nations children in child welfare. In 2016, the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal confirmed that the federal government provides less funding for child welfare services for First Nations children (who live on reserves and in the Yukon) than are provided for settler children and Indigenous children off reserves. Failing to live up to the ideal of equality, the government was found to racially discriminate against First Nations children. In failing to provide equal funding and hence equal access to services, the argument goes, fewer services are available for family support and hence more Indigenous children end up in the child welfare system. This is true. Yet, as I have demonstrated in chapter eight, it was the very same logic that enabled and justified the wholesale removal of Indigenous children through child welfare services post WWII. Arguments of equal service provision and racial equality were drawn upon to amend the Indian Act and extend child welfare services onto reserves, enabling the colonial
state to retain its focus on Indigenous child removal, manifesting in the colonial phenomenon commonly referred to as the “Sixties Scoop”. As such, when we advance critiques for improvements to the system via discourses of equality and advocate for equal services, let us also remember that it was these arguments and provisions that institutionalized and normalized settler colonial violence in the first place.

Another avenue for change within the system we should approach with caution is the inclusion of culturally-sensitive protocols within child welfare. This approach is also not ill-founded and necessary to reduce some of the harm inflicted by child welfare on Indigenous children and their communities. For, as we learned in Part One of this dissertation, the white heteropatriarchal nuclear family model was configured as the ‘gold standard’ for how to raise children properly and such notions came to be deeply embedded within the structure of child welfare. Thus, as many scholars (see, for example, Young 1996, Atkinson 2010, Blackstock, Brown and Bennett 2007; Monture 1989) have consistently pointed out, Indigenous parenting practices or kinship relations that differ from colonial conceptions of good parenting are therefore judged inadequate or dismissed as inappropriate. As Leanne Simpson (2011) explains, “Nishnaabeg parenting is not a parenting style that is even remotely supported by the settler society” (135). Oftentimes, this results in the removal of Indigenous children. For as Kline (1992) explains, “Canadian child welfare law directs judges to make decisions that are ‘in the best interests of the child’” (389) – decisions based upon colonial idea(l)s whose versions of ‘the good’ are profoundly raced. This constitutes an example of how racism is inherent in the legal system (Monture 1989; see also Fitzpatrick 1987) and hence measures have been taken to make child welfare protocols less racist/more culturally-appropriate. Such reforms reduce some of the harm, may even save lives, and as such, must not and cannot be dismissed.
However, this approach also rests on the assumption that the issue is perhaps one of misunderstanding or cultural incommensurability (St. Denis’ term) and if we could just explain that ‘the best interest of the child’ is a raced (and classed and gendered) concept, perhaps we can extend its parameters, broaden its definitions, allow for alternative conceptualizations, and include other modes of being and knowing. And yet, racism goes beyond mere exclusion; racism structurally orders (Ferreira da Silva 2001). A question we need to think about is whether the inclusion of alternative approaches to child removal fundamentally alters the system (for, whether it is now enacted through the label of customary care or kinship care, this practice has not been dislodged). If it is the child welfare system as such that enacts and sustains colonial relations, seeking the continued dispossession of Indigenous peoples, then reforming the system will not be enough. Worse, it may lead us to believe that we are truly effecting change while this colonial modality is able to sustain itself. Unless the system is drastically altered so that Indigenous peoples have autonomy to decide over the well-being of their own offspring, its annihilative impulse will not cease through an inclusion of cultural practices or Indigenous participation. The colonial and racial management of Indigenous peoples by the Canadian settler state is not, and never merely was, a problem of racial exclusion. And as such, ‘integration’ into the settler state or into the child welfare apparatus was not, and is not a solution that ‘does away’ with racial injustice, least of all colonial relations. If integration/inclusion is a colonial tactic (Byrd 2011; Coulthard 2014; Turner 2006), then colonialism “cannot be ended by further inclusion or more participation” (Byrd 2011:xxvi).

Hence, the colonial modality of child removal was sustained, not stopped, through an inclusion of ‘cultural practices’ into child welfare policies and incorporation of Aboriginal agencies through the FNCFS policy. Not because cultural practices were inadequately included or not sufficiently applied (although that too), but because they must adhere to the conditional.
Indigenous cultural practices – if understood as inherently connected to sovereignty and Indigenous ways of doing and being – cannot be included in the colonial state, cannot be included in the child welfare system or codified in the system’s legislative paradigms for this would not only alter but explode the system as such. Indigenous culture/sovereignty cannot be included and written into child welfare legislation as a sub-section, cannot be treated as an operational variable (e.g. ‘If the child in question is Indigenous, follow the cultural protocol outlined in section xyz’) for it would render these laws null and void. These laws are premised on having control over and exercising authority over Indigenous peoples, who by the very definition of colonial law are rendered people to be managed. Law authorizes and establishes the colonizers dominance over Indigenous peoples. An avowal of Indigenous sovereignty would require the cessation of this legally authorized relationship.

“Stop Stealing our Children”

Monture (1989) argues that “[d]rastic reforms are necessary both within the legal system and child welfare policy regimes as they affect First Nations” (6). Yet, these changes must go beyond the legal, beyond policy reforms. Monture warns us that “to accept and advocate only legislative changes to the laws of child welfare is not the final solution” (ibid). The author explains elsewhere:

…so many people still believe that law is the answer. The reason why Canadian law just does not fully work for resolving Aboriginal claims … is quite simple. Canadian courts owe their origin to British notions of when a nation is sovereign. It is from Canadian sovereignty that Canadian courts owe their existence. Courts, therefore, cannot question the very source of their own existence without fully jeopardizing their own being. Courts cannot be forced to look at issues about the legitimacy
(or, more appropriately, the lack thereof) of Canadian sovereignty as against the claims of Aboriginal sovereignties. (in Razack 2015:93)

Or as Razack (2015) puts it, “the answer to genocide and ongoing occupation cannot be found in the law that authorized it”; “the colonial project is above all legally authorized” (10). Thus, we must heed caution not to think that piecemeal reforms are enough, reminding ourselves that law and policy are the very mechanism through which colonialism is sustained, and if the system continues as it does – if the removal of Indigenous children through the settler state is not stopped – our victories will be short-lived or none at all. As Taiaiake Alfred (2009) put it once,

From the outside, the intensity of the crisis is obscured by the smokescreen of efforts to reduce the most obvious signs of social deprivation and increase the material wealth within Native communities. It is commonly thought that allowing indigenous people a reasonable standard of living will solve all their problems. But there is more to justice than equity. Of course, indigenous people have a right to a standard of living equal to that of others. But to stop there and continue to deny their nationhood is to accept the European genocide of five hundred years. (13)

I do not mean to take away or dismiss the work of scholars, activists and social workers who have worked so tirelessly for decades and under immense colonial duress to carve out spaces, have worked and continue to work against the grain, and are continuing to effect change within the child welfare system. As Natalie Clark (2016) puts it, “the master’s tools may not dismantle the house but will get you in the door” (5). Our efforts to change and halt this modality of power need to be mobilized through a multiplicity of avenues and techniques. However, I also believe that decolonization will not be facilitated by the colonial state, nor its institutions, and
that our engagement with avenues for change that the settler state creates and offers (such as its courts, participation in arguments over policy documents and funding formulas) should only be strategic and approached with caution. As Audra Simpson (2011) has put it,

…statistical, representative forms of justice are never enough and are never going to be enough in the normative order of things, which, I have argued, is structured on disavowal of dispossession, on spectacles that obscure those genocidal origins, and on the deep force that is now structured through law. What is needed is, yes, more people, more Native people in all disciplinary locations, of course, but paired with structures, peoples, and institutions that labor for a radically different historical consciousness, one that is deeply cognizant of the means of its own societal production so that it may afford Indigeneity (and the conditions of many others) a robust present as well as a vigorous, variegated past and future. (212)

So, while we strategically advocate for equal services, for more funding for child protective services, or for culturally-sensitive protocols, let us also recognize that reforms that do not halt and/or supplant the system itself may not lead to the outcomes we hope for. As long as the settler state manages, controls and authorizes, and as long as the settler state removes Indigenous children, colonialism will continue to be enacted through child welfare. It will continue to perpetuate the settler colony’s annihilative and accumulative impulse, seeking the erasure of Indigenous peoples as peoples who belong to sovereign, independent nations who have their own systems of governance and who have land. Its annihilative function will not be erased by making the system ‘better’ or more culturally-relevant. This cultural move allowed for a narrow conception of colonial violence, one that disavowed the coloniality of the violence as
such. Instead, the inclusion of culturally-sensitive protocols allowed the settler society to claim that it is ‘doing’ child welfare in a more ‘appropriate manner’, in a way that is less Euro-centric, less racist, and more attuned to Indigenous cultural practices, hence, once again, facilitating colonizers to assume a subject position that remains within the bounds of civility and beneficence – *while continuing to steal the children and the land*. It cannot be emphasized enough that if the foundational colonial practice – the practice of a settler colony removing the children of those it colonizes – remains in place, then this system will not be anything but colonial and eliminatory. Patricia Monture (1989) provides the following direction for child welfare: “First Nations demands for self-determination (sovereignty) must be realized” (6; see also Monture 2000). This is not a question of reducing numbers or making the system more culturally-sensitive. This is about stopping this practice. This is about the abolition of the system as it now stands. Razack (2007) ends one her essays with an instructive quote by Frederick Douglass. Let me reproduce it here as well: “In old times, when it was asked, ‘How can we abolish slavery?’ the answer was ‘Quit stealing.’” Innu Nation Deputy Grand Chief Simeon Tshakapesh put this in no uncertain terms to Indian Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett: “Stop stealing our children! Stop it!” (in Brake 2017).

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30 While this warning is certainly premature, let us also remember that child welfare constitutes the current iteration of this modality of power. Since it was Indian Residential Schools then who authorized and enacted the removal of Indigenous children and it is the child welfare system now, then it is less about this institutional framework as such. If the settler colony’s focus is on managing Indigenous children (in an effort to manage Indigenous peoples as such), then the picture is bigger than child welfare. Thus, if the child welfare system is merely the current mode through which Indigenous child removal is actualized, and if we also remind ourselves that settler colonial control seeks to reinvent and re-inscribe itself if sufficiently challenged, then we are left with the potentiality that this modality of power will be reconfigured once again.
Postscript: Dis/Avowal

…I was fragile
Conditioned by the world to think my
Culture wasn’t passed down
But I learned the generosity
It’s in my genealogy
So fuck all the bureaucracy
And keep all your apologies

I know you’re sorry but…
You’re more lost than me
Your land’s across the Ocean
And I’m right where I should be.

I reckon this damn nation
Will force reconciliation
Down the throats of our survivors
And the people it’s displacing

I know you’re sorry...

- Leonard Sumner (2017)
Indian Residential Schools: “A Sad Chapter in Our History”

Through the ‘colonial politics of recognition’ the Canadian state has ‘recognized’ a variety of things. Its colonial present has not been one of them. On the contrary, considerable effort is devoted to relegating colonialism to the Canadian past, seeking an active disavowal of its continuation. Lately, avenues for this active disavowal have been the colonial state’s apologies and gestures towards reconciliation. The settler desire for reconciliation in Canada is, at best, well-intentioned but pre-mature, and at worst (and I suggest this to be the case), a new modality of power that seeks to extend settler colonial access to land and resources, the latest method for settler survival and proliferation. One of the most blatant examples is then Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s official 2008 apology to Indian Residential Schools survivors (“Statement of Apology” 2008). Indeed, this clumsy apology provides us with an instruction manual on how to do colonialism in the here and now:

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Step One: Relegate the injustice to the past, establish that it has ended.

“The treatment of children in Indian Residential Schools is a sad chapter in our history” (“Statement of Apology” 2008).

Step Two: Establish that what had happened was wrong, and that you know that what had happened was wrong.

“…the consequences of the Indian Residential Schools policy were profoundly negative…” (ibid).

“…the Government of Canada now recognizes that it was wrong to forcibly remove children from their homes…” (ibid).
“We now recognize that it was wrong to separate children from rich and vibrant cultures and traditions…” (ibid).

“We now recognize that, far too often, these institutions gave rise to abuse or neglect…” (ibid).

**Step Three:** Apologize. Repeat if necessary.

“…on behalf of the Government of Canada and all Canadians, I stand before you, in this Chamber so central to our life as a country, to apologize to Aboriginal peoples for Canada's role in the Indian Residential Schools system” (ibid).

“…we apologize for having done this” (ibid).

“…we apologize for having done this” (ibid).

“…we apologize for having done this” (ibid).

“…we apologize for having done this” (ibid).

“…we are sorry” (ibid).

⚠️ Throughout your performance of remorse, be cautious not to relinquish your position of dominance. Reassert if need be.

“…we apologize for failing to protect you” (ibid).

**Step Four:** Seek absolution. Ask Indigenous Peoples to forgive you (Do not push too hard, remember you are asking them to do something for you.).

“The Government of Canada sincerely apologizes and asks the forgiveness of the Aboriginal peoples of this country for failing them so profoundly” (ibid).
**Step Five:** Build it back up. Recover the nation and its mythologies of goodness and benevolence. Do so by pointing out that such violence is not the Canadian way:

“Today, we recognize that this policy of assimilation was wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country” (ibid).

“There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential Schools system to ever prevail again” (ibid).

**Steph Six:** Move on. Suggest a new way forward that secures the continuation of the nation. Do not offer restitution, do not offer return of land. For example, suggest “a new beginning and an opportunity to move forward together in partnership” (ibid). Point out the necessary steps: “...healing, reconciliation and resolution...” (ibid). End with a reassertion of purpose: “...a stronger Canada for all of us” (ibid).

**Keep in mind:** Do all this without mentioning that colonialism continues in the present. Considering the subject matter, disavow the continuation of Indigenous child removal. Certainly, do not mention land or Indigenous sovereignty.

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What is offered in this apology is a relationship with Indigenous peoples that does not decenter the colonial state, nor unsettle the settler society. What is offered instead is a recuperation and re-branding of Canadian nationalism. Or, in the words of Sara Ahmed (2004), what we are offered is a “narrative of national recovery: *By witnessing what is shameful about the past, the nation can ‘live up to’ the ideals that secure its identity or being in the present*” (n.p.; emphasis in original). This is not about decolonization but about securing legitimacy for the settler state through a renewed proclamation that settlers truly are here to stay (Canada for all
of us). This reconciliation is an attempt to reconcile ongoing dispossession with demands for change.

As Leanne Simpson (2011) puts it, reconciliation constitutes “a process that attempts to absolve Canada of past wrong doings, while they continue to engage with our nations in a less than honourable way” (21). This is a situation in which “the majority of Canadians do not understand the historic or contemporary injustice of dispossession and occupation” and “the state has expressed its unwillingness to make any adjustments to the unjust relationship” (21). The point is that it is impossible to ‘reconcile’ in a situation in which violence is ongoing and expect a just outcome. Simpson provides the following analogy:

It reminds me of an abusive relationship where one person is being abused physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. She wants out of the relationship, but instead of supporting her, we are all gathered around the abuser, because he wants to ‘reconcile.’ But he doesn’t want to take responsibility. He doesn’t want to change. (ibid)

The colonial investment in apologies and reconciliation mechanisms is not only a contemporary Canadian phenomenon, but a prevalent feature in other settler colonies as well (e.g. the 2009 ‘Native American Apology Resolution’ in United States, Australia’s “National Sorry Day” (since 1998), Australia’s 2008 apology to the ‘Stolen Generations’, indeed Australia’s barrage of reconciliation efforts). In commenting on the Australian settler colony’s desire for reconciliation, Gungalidda Elder and Tent Embassy Leader Wadjularbinna Nullyarimma, reminds us of another pedagogical value of such colonial spectacles of benevolence:

The government is trying to conceal what they are doing to us – stealing our lands, harming our people and destroying our culture. …The Federal
government … constantly tries to remove us. Less than 100 metres away they [have built] Reconciliation Place [a literal monument to reconciliation in Canberra] to fool Australians and the rest of the world into believing that we accept reconciliation. But we do not. …There can be no reconciliation without justice. When all of these issues are dealt with, reconciliation will happen automatically and they will not have to build monuments to prove reconciliation. (in Korff 2017:n.p.)

The disavowal of the colonial present in Harper’s apology and similar performances in other settler nations suggests that disavowal is a necessary feature for colonialism to be sustained under liberalism, as another component of the ‘colonial politics of recognition’ – the settler colony recognizes and acknowledges parts of itself as colonial (even if distorted and partial) and subsequently seeks to transcend and recover. It is interesting to note here is that this present disavowal is established via a positive acknowledgement or avowal of the colonial past (or at the very least features thereof). Through its spectacles and performances of regret, the settler colony acknowledges the violence of the past, and it may even refer to it as colonialism, while disavowing present relations of coloniality. This, I think, is colonialism’s latest (and hopefully last) stance.

Let me return here to Bruyneel’s (2016) essay “The American Liberal Colonial Tradition.” In chapter one, I have relayed Bruyneel’s insights of Hartz’s earlier work (The Liberal Tradition in America (1955)), which rests on a disavowal of the United States’ settler-colonial foundation, including the denial that the annihilation of Indigenous peoples was of any real/constitutive significance. Let me now share another major insight. In his later work, The Founding of New Societies (1964), Hartz returns once more to the matter of Indigenous genocide. Here, as Bruyneel explains, we witness a shift towards a positive avowal of the
nations’ violent origins: “Hartz makes an argument that acknowledges that the American founding and development took the shape it did in no small part due to the logic of elimination that resides at the heart of the American liberal tradition” (201). Hartz acknowledges the attempted annihilation of Indigenous peoples, points out that this annihilation has not been successful, and further acknowledges that this violence impacted the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the United States. Hartz, as Bruyneel explains, “does not complete the journey to seeing settler-colonial logic as constitutive of American liberalism” (200).

However, what we are witnessing is an acknowledgment of past colonization and its attendant violence, with a simultaneous disavowal of how these colonial relations have shaped the nation’s modes of governance that constitute the colonial present. Indeed, what is disavowed is that there is such a thing as a colonial present. It is an acknowledgement of the past against which the present can emerge as better, as different, as having moved beyond. This is the sort of disavowal that Harper advanced through the Indian Residential Schools Apology.

The ‘Sixties Scoop’: “A Terrible Blot on Canada’s History”

In the realm of child welfare, a similar narrative is presented by Patrick Johnston. Patrick Johnston’s claim to fame was to have coined the misleading term “Sixties Scoop” (in *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* (1983)) to describe the mass removal of Indigenous children through child welfare services. In 2016, Patrick Johnston published an opinion piece, entitled “Revisiting the ‘Sixties Scoop’ of Indigenous children.”

Johnston published this article in response to current events, namely the winding down of a near decade-long legal battle, a class-action lawsuit brought against the government by Indigenous survivors of Ontario’s Sixties Scoop finally being heard in Ontario’s Superior Court. Superior Court Justice Edward Belobaba ruled in favour of the class members, holding Ottawa
liable to the estimated 16,000 survivors who had been removed from their communities in Ontario and handed over to white adoptive or foster families (Brown 2017).¹

What concerns me here is the narrative Johnston produces in his opinion piece. Johnston begins by retelling a tragic story that ends in the suicide of an Indigenous man who had been removed during the Sixties Scoop. This story, Johnston tells us “still haunts me 35 years later” (2016:n.p.). He then revisits his earlier publication and recounts that he had “interviewed a retired social worker in British Columbia, who said that during the sixties, she and her colleagues “scooped” children from reserves” (ibid). As he did in Native Children and the Child Welfare System, Johnston once again reminds us that this social worker thought that what she was doing was right, and just, and only later realized her grave error, an error she came to deeply regret:

That social worker was in tears when I interviewed her. At the time, she honestly thought that she had been acting in the best interests of the children by removing them from their families. She had come to believe, however, that the wholesale apprehension or “scooping” of Indigenous children in the sixties had been a terrible mistake. (ibid)

Terrible indeed. Then and now, the question that comes to mind is why we need to know about the social worker’s emotive state? Johnston claims to present us with a discussion on the colonial violence meted out against Indigenous children and communities (a discussion in which terms such as ‘colonialism’ or ‘racism’ are nonetheless glaringly absent), during which he deems it important to establish that those who had inflicted the violence were seemingly unaware that they were doing so (seemingly even seeking to do good), that they had come to a more

¹ As I write this, the case of financial compensation is yet to be heard (scheduled for October 2017).
enlightened understanding afterwards, and that they felt terrible about it now. She was in tears after all.

Here, as in Harper’s apology, what we are witnessing is a colonial desire to show that one has moved beyond, evidenced through an admission of having done terrible things in the past, implicitly establishing a contrast to the here and now – presumably as better. Ahmed (2004) refers to this as a “fantasy of transcendence.” (n.p.) As Ahmed explains, “[t]he declarative mode, as a way of doing something, involves a fantasy of transcendence in which ‘what’ is transcended is the very thing ‘admitted to’ in the declaration” (n.p.). In other words, our apologies and declarations of shame or guilt or wrong-doing “assume that the speech act itself can be taken as a sign of transcendence: if we say we are ashamed, if we say we were racist, then ‘this shows’ we are not racist now, we show that we mean well” (n.p. emphasis in original). It is an effort to maintain civility and recuperate settler innocence. Johnston goes even further in this endeavour establishing that even then we meant well. She/We didn’t know! This recuperation of innocence similarly shows up by Johnston seemingly distancing himself from the social worker (She did not know that what she was doing was wrong; I have been haunted by this for 35 years now.) What is reaffirmed once again is that central colonial truth in that the most we are ‘guilty of is not knowing how to care’.

Although, importantly, Johnston (2016) also reminds us that we did not get it all wrong:

As was the case with Indian Residential Schools, not all children apprehended during the Sixties Scoop were adversely affected by the experience. Some were placed with loving and supportive adoptive families and have gone on to lead happy, productive lives. (ibid)

Harper and Johnston’s performances are not undoing colonial relations. Rather, they reaffirm them. This reaffirmation works through an attempted recuperation of the civility and
benevolence of the settler subject: “The very claim to feel bad (about this or that) also involves a self-perception of ‘being good’” (Ahmed 2004:n.p.). Daniel Coleman (2006) similarly reminds us that Canadian settler consciousness entails a mourning and melancholic remembrance of past evil deeds perpetrated against Indigenous nations. Indeed, Coleman suggests, Canadian settlers are invited to “cherish evil memories” (28), for it is against such past wrong-doings that present-day Canadian ‘civility’ and benevolence can be established. Declarations of having done wrong, without acknowledging that relations of colonality continue, imply that we are doing better now. It is a mechanism that normalizes the colonial present. As Ahmed puts it, “[t]he presumption that saying is doing – that being sorry means that we have overcome the very thing we are sorry about – hence works to support racism in the present.” (ibid) This is how disavowal in and of the colonial present can be established and mobilized.

As with Harper, Johnston ends with a recuperation of the nation by implying that colonial violence constitutes an anomaly to the nation’s history, relegates this violence safely to the past (this time, not as a ‘sad chapter’, but a ‘terrible blot’), suggests further acknowledgements (repeat if necessary), and gestures towards reconciliation. The fact that large-scale Indigenous child removal is ongoing remains disavowed:

Like the Indian Residential School system, the Sixties Scoop is a terrible blot on Canada’s history, and it needs to be acknowledged and efforts made toward reconciliation for those who suffered. (ibid)

The colonial hypocrisy is astounding. We can proclaim to be appalled at the system of Indian Residential Schools for no longer do we think it acceptable to forcefully remove Indigenous children and place them in settler institutions. And yet, our child welfare system is full of them. We are aghast at the horrifying stories of violence and emotional, physical, and sexual abuse, of letting the children die while in these schools – and yet, many Indigenous
children still do not leave the Canadian child welfare system alive. The current number of Indigenous children in the child welfare system suggests that the removal of Indigenous children through child welfare during the 1960s, and the removal and institutionalization of Indigenous children through Indian Residential Schools, are not horrific scenes of the past, not ‘sad chapters’ or ‘terrible blots’ that we can relegate to a more violent time in Canadian history. This violence not only informs and shapes our present, but it also is our present. Indigenous children are still being taken and they still die in settler custody. Of course, no longer do mainstream Canadian settlers find it acceptable to do so by proclaiming that the ‘Indian in the child needs to be killed’.

Or as Deborah Doxtator (2011) puts it, no longer do we debate whether Indians are humans or animals, or whether they have a soul or not, now we debate “whether or not ‘Indians’ are competent human beings, capable of running their own affairs” (32).

However, in drawing attention to colonial duress and durability, I do not mean to suggest that colonialism will endure no matter what. On the contrary. One thing I have learned in writing this dissertation is that the settler colonial state is reactive. When faced with opposition and pressure, its ways of engagement morph. In as much as settler colonization is ‘a structure’, it is a structure that reacts, bends, changes and morphs when prodded. In this vein, let us resist the colonial impulse to relegate colonialism to the past. And let us interrupt the colonizers’ redemptive moves.

Moreover, as the work of Audra Simpson, Leanne Simpson, and Kēhaulani Kauanui remind us, Indigenous peoples have always resisted and persisted, not merely in a reactive sense, but that despite all the colonial efforts that sought and seek Indigenous erasure, we have been witnessing resurgences. As Leanne Simpson (2011) put it: “We have been resisting colonial imposition for four centuries. I think our communities know something about organizing, mobilizing and strategizing. I think our communities know quite a lot about living through the
most grievous of circumstances” (16; emphasis in original). “In our greatest period of destruction, our Grandparents resisted by planting the seeds of resurgence” (66): “Scrolls were hidden. Ceremonies were practiced underground with children present. Stories were passed along through the families. Families retreated to the bush whenever possible, as a strategy to avoid Indian Agents, residential schools and child welfare agencies. Some people hung onto the language” (ibid). “For Nishnaabeg thinkers, resistance and resurgence are not only our response to colonialism, they are our only responsibility in the face of colonialism.” – “Resurgence is our original instruction.” (ibid).

The persistence and resurgence of Indigeneity invites a reframing of coloniality: Kēhaulani Kauanui (2016) repositions settler colonialism as a structure that “holds out against” and “endures indigeneity” (n.p.). In reference to Wolfe, the author points out that insofar as settler colonialism is an enduring structure that works according to the logic of elimination, it has not been successful: “the operative logic of settler colonialism may be to “eliminate the native”’, but “indigenous peoples exist, resist, and persist”, suggesting that “indigeneity itself is enduring” (ibid). As Audra Simpson (2011) similarly puts it, “[t]he condition of Indigeneity in North America is to have survived this acquisitive and genocidal process and thus to have called up the failure of the project itself” (205). Indeed, the colonial state has never been successful. Canada’s annihilative impulse – while undoubtedly having wreaked and continuing to wreak havoc – has never been successful. The settler colony has failed at every turn to eliminate and contain Indigeneity. Its claim to legitimate existence has always been tentative, its modes of governance having had to shift and adjust time and time again, never able to rest easy. No matter the re-iteration or re-structuring of colonial modalities, it has never achieved what it meant to achieve. Indian Residential Schools have failed at eradicating Indigeneity. Integration and White Paper liberalism have failed dismally to erase Indigenous sovereignty. Red Power activism forced the
settler state to change its course and techniques of power once again. Despite Harper’s apology and colonial efforts to ‘move on’, Idle No More brought Indigenous assertions to sovereignty and land into Canadian mainstream consciousness. In other words, insofar as ‘the Indian’ is said to never arrive in ‘modernity and civility’, it is in fact the settler colony that never arrives, never able to achieve its ultimate goal of Indigenous erasure and dispossession (“You’re more lost than me/ Your land’s across the Ocean/ And I’m right where I should be”).

I am suggesting that such apologies for and acknowledgements of past colonial violence constitute the latest attempt of the settler colony to survive. This is a departure from other narratives (such as exuberant pride in colonialization, or an insistent denial that anything violent has ever happened – recognizing, of course, that such narratives also persist). Given that colonial modes of governance had to shift and adjust to endure, I believe we are left with a hopeful outlook. For this suggests that the current reiterations of colonial governance, the advancement of colonial relations and the normalization of settler legitimacy through the state’s gestures of inclusion via apologetic projects of recognition and reconciliation will not be successful either. The disavowal of the colonial present will come to an end.

As Audra Simpson (2011) puts it, settler colonialism is a political formation that is not a given – indeed, it is a formation that has been constructed – and is one whose construction is revealed and demystified through the ongoing life and actions of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples did not lay down and die; they persist, and in so doing, they defy all expectations – working resolutely to assert their nationhood and their sovereignty against a settler political formation that would have them disappear or integrate or assimilate. It is that very
desire and that political formation that some may hope will instead die –
or, at the very least, be subject to deep revision. (212)

Perhaps we also need to write histories and theories of colonial failure. For insofar as historical accounts of child-welfare in Canada have always been accounts of white children’s welfare, examinations of the structure/permanency/durability of colonial violence and its annihilative impulse have also always been examinations of the utter failure of the colonial project itself.
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Appendix

List of Archival Sources

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Series 531, Board and Committee Minutes
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Series 535, Complaint Books
Series 542, Photographs
Series 543, Case Records
Series 537, Historical Records
Series 539, Papers and Theses

Fonds 1404: Infants’ Homes of Toronto
Series 857, Annual Reports

Fonds 200: Toronto Department of Public Health
Series 365, Reports

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MG28-I10: Canadian Council on Social Development fonds
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R216-118-1-E, Central Registry Files (volume 269)
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MG28-I441: Canadian Association of Social Workers fonds
- Subject files (volumes 38, 39)
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- Administrative files (volume 5)
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