

Finding Community:
The Story of Stolen Children

A Thesis Submitted to the Committee on Graduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in
the Faculty of Arts and Science

TRENT UNIVERSITY
Peterborough, Ontario, Canada
by Thamer Linklater 2021
Sustainability Studies M.A. Graduate Program
September 2021

Abstract
Finding Community: the Story of Stolen Children

Thamer Linklater

This thesis explores the history of the Indigenous child welfare system in Manitoba and the effects of the Millennium Scoop on children in care. My research question is: what was the experience of children in care in Manitoba from 1990 to 2015? A related question is: how do survivors find healing? The thesis begins with a discussion of the history of acts, policies, and practices that began with the Indigenous child welfare system during the running of Residential schools. Then the acts, reviews, and policies that have shaped the child welfare system in Manitoba are discussed more thoroughly. The focus of the thesis is on the stories of Phoenix Sinclair, Tina Fontaine, and Natasha Reimer. I share their stories and provide an analysis of how the child welfare system has affected their lives. The negative effects of being a child in care are numerous. Being a child in care leaves behind grief, loss of identity, and loss of security. The systemic issues of the child welfare system include inadequate funding, overloaded case workers, staff burnout, and a lack of transparency. These overarching failures translate into the failure of children in care: details are overlooked, wrong decisions are made, and children are left to fend for themselves. Or they fall into the cracks and do not receive adequate care. This then translates into the deaths of children in care, or they are left to navigate life on their own and forced to create their circle of supports. Despite all the complications and negative impacts, some children can succeed while in care. Natasha's story is a perfect example of such resilience.

Key Words: child welfare, Sixties Scoop, Millennium Scoop, Indigenous

Acknowledgements

The community around me has helped me finish this thesis. A huge thank you to my friends, First Peoples House of Learning, and the larger Nogojiiwanong community for supporting me throughout this experience. My friends back home, and here in Peterborough, have helped me process my emotions and find laughter through my tears. The staff at First Peoples House of Learning have walked with me through various mental health episodes, sat with me at the emergency room, laughed with me, and ate with me. The larger Peterborough community has rallied with me, postered with me, walked with me, and helped me find my voice. The community that has surrounded me and supported me is a huge piece of how I have come to finish this degree. They have given me a sense of belonging, and a sense of purpose.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
My Positionality.....	5
Research Methods	8
Literature Review.....	18
CHAPTER 1 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE STOLEN CHILDREN	22
CHAPTER 2 THE CHILD WELFARE INDUSTRY.....	42
CHAPTER 3 THE STORIES OF THE STOLEN GIRLS	54
Phoenix’s Story.....	58
Tina’s Story	61
Natasha’s Story	65
Common Threads within the Girls Stories	69
CHAPTER 4 THE EMOTIONS BEHIND THE STORIES.....	75
CONCLUSION	84
WORKS CITED.....	90

Introduction

*My heart is conveyed
on these senseless sheets
expressed by carefully chosen words.
Your heart tries to pick up the pieces
as we try to make sense of our worlds.*

*How can we know
what to work through?
How can we know
what to feel?*

*Perhaps there is a blueprint,
typed instructions.
Perhaps there is a map
showing us where to go
Perhaps there is nothing.
Just you and I.
Reader and Writer.*

The child welfare system is an extremely complicated issue in Canada, especially for Indigenous people. There is a disproportionate number of Indigenous children in the Canadian child welfare system. Indigenous people make up about 4.9% of the total population in Canada (*Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*). Child welfare system scholar Nico Trocme notes that “despite the fact that [Indigenous] children (ages 0–15) make up only 7% of the child population in Canada, they represent 49.1% of the children in foster care” (Trocme et. al. *Child Welfare Services in Canada* 32). Many Indigenous people live in the western Provinces: 17.7% live in British Columbia, 14% live in Alberta, 11.7% live in Saskatchewan, and 13.4% live in Manitoba

(*Aboriginal Peoples in Canada*). In Manitoba, Indigenous children make up about 90% of children in care (Mickelfield et. al. 4; First Nations Family Advocate Office 2; Malone). Of those children, 70% are permanent wards, meaning that they are under the custody of child welfare agencies (*Number of Manitoba Kids*). Meanwhile, 3% of Indigenous children are in a permanent placement. Permanent placement means that First Nations communities hold custody of their children, but the children are placed in permanent homes usually outside of the community (*Number of Manitoba Kids*). There is no data for national trends in the child welfare system, however, provincial, and territorial data suggest the proportion of children in care who are Indigenous ranges from 3 to 7 times higher than the proportion of Indigenous children in the population (Sinha et. al. *Understanding* 822; *Wen:de* 7). Trocme also keeps track of trends in the child welfare system. His most recent research indicates that

“over 230,000 child maltreatment investigations are conducted every year, and on any one day, over 62,000 children are in out-of-home care; these figures correspond to rates of 39.16 child maltreatment investigations and 8.5 children in out-of-home care per every 1000 children” (Trocme et. al. *Child Welfare services in Canada* 27).

Furthermore, he discovered that “First Nations children’s [rate of investigation is] 4.2 times that of non-Indigenous children” (Trocme et. al. *Child Welfare Services in Canada* 32). The numbers breakdown to “First Nations children being investigated at a rate of 140.6/1000 versus 33.5/1000 for non-Indigenous Children (Trocme et. al. *Child Welfare Services in Canada* 32). He goes on to state that this “overrepresentation increases even further when comparing children who are placed in out-of-home care following the investigation, with rates being over 12 times higher: 13.6 per 1000 First Nations children were placed in out-of-home care, compared to 1.1 per 1000 non-Indigenous children” (Trocme et. al. *Child Welfare Services in Canada* 32). Finally, Trocme notes that “the National Household Survey (NHS) data also show that over-representation was

particularly marked for First Nations children in Western Canada, where the rate of First Nations foster children was between 16.6 and 33.9 times the rate of non-Indigenous foster children” (Trocmé et. al. *Child Welfare Services in Canada* 32). Indigenous children are overrepresented in the child welfare system. It is time that we discuss the impacts of the Indigenous child welfare system on the people that it affects.

There is a dire need for research and improvements on the child welfare system in Canada. The research topic of this thesis is the Millennium Scoop, and my research question is as follows: what was the experience of Indigenous children in care during the Millennium Scoop in Manitoba from 1990 to 2015? A related question is: how do survivors find healing? I analyzed four stories from the Millennium Scoop: that of Tina Fontaine, Natasha Reimer, Phoenix Sinclair, and my own. These stories illustrate that community is essential to the survival of children in care. A community can be defined as a group of people with shared location, common interests, faith, identity, nationality, etc. In the stories of Tina, Natasha, and Phoenix, community was based on location, schooling, and family units. Each girl created, or lacked, a community based on their location, their relationship with school, or their relationship with their respective families.

Another goal of this work is to show how the Child welfare industry needs to be torn down and rebuilt. I believe that the system, as it exists today, is inherently harmful. The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs wrote in a report on the Indigenous child welfare system that “the only way out of the current child welfare crisis is to develop a completely new system based on the First Nations principles of love, compassion, respect, and dignity” (*Bringing our Children Home* 2). In place of the destructive, colonial, system there needs to be “a transition to a First Nations System that is based on the original systems of child-rearing, education, and nurturance

of individual spirit” (*Bringing our Children Home 2*). Furthermore, “resources must be used in appropriate ways to break the existing cycle to restore spiritual, physical mental, and emotional health and well-being” (*Bringing our Children Home 2*).

The term Indigenous is an international term used to acknowledge the original pre-colonial occupants of a nation, and in the Canadian context, it refers to First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples. The term First Nations describes the Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island that are not Métis or Inuit. Although the term Indian is considered offensive, as First nations peoples our legal status in the Canadian state is still defined by the Indian Act and therefore, I also made use of the term Indian but only in reference to legal documents or reports. The term settler is used to refer to the non-Indigenous inhabitants of Turtle Island. The relationship between Indigenous peoples and the non-Indigenous settlers is founded upon the treaties. Therefore, I discuss the history of the numbered treaties briefly to provide historical context. My home community rests on Treaty Five territory, so I have focused on this one specific treaty to keep the research more focused and succinct.

It is also important to understand the usage of terminologies such as the child welfare system, the Millennium and Sixties Scoops, and CFS. In his 1983 report *Native Children and the Child Welfare System* Patrick Johnston defines the child welfare system as “the activities that governments undertake or mandate to care for neglected children” (Johnston 1). Practices such as adoption, foster homes, group homes, and counselling, are considered part of the child welfare system whether they are provided by the government or independent agencies (Johnston 1). According to such understandings, the child welfare system should be the ongoing care of children by ensuring that they have healthy, stable, secure families and homes to aid them in becoming healthy young adults. However, as this thesis will illustrate, the child welfare system

practices for Indigenous children in Canada are currently not ensuring that children have healthy, stable homes. The Sixties and Millennium Scoops are examples of how the child welfare system practices are often harmful and damaging. The government took children away from parents they deemed unfit to care for the child based on racist assumptions and placed them in various childrearing places to speed the process of assimilation and civilization. By removing the child, the government wanted to ensure that the child becomes a fit adult as defined by settler society standards. I also make use of the term Child and Family Services (CFS), which is meant to refer to the actual organization mandated to oversee the child welfare system's activity in Manitoba. As this thesis will demonstrate, the child welfare system and the resulting Scoops of Indigenous children are not inherently good or positive despite how they are framed by successive generations of government and the larger settler society.

My Positionality

Identity has always been a struggle for me. I was surrounded by settlers and was raised to embody their lifestyle and thoughts. Growing up I was exposed to very few Indigenous Peoples or Indigenous cultures. During my second year of university, I was introduced to Thomas King's writing. After reading King, I began to seek out my people and culture. It was then that I started to question my history and identity.

My foster parents told me a very different history than what had truly occurred. I was raised believing that I was Métis. They told me that, along with my brothers, I had been freely given up by my birth mother. They also told me that they did not know who my biological father was. The three oldest boys have one father, but the youngest boy and I have a different father. My foster parents thought that he was probably white and had red hair; the information gathered from one very brief encounter with my biological mother while out walking around Winnipeg.

My foster mother is from Liverpool, England. My foster father is French Canadian, who ironically cannot speak a word of French. Thinking that I was half European of some kind, I proudly adopted my mother's British culture. I went around using a British accent because I could. My favourite meals were beans on toast, minced meat, shepherd's pie, and fish and chips. I proudly wore the Union Jack and adored the Beatles. For me, my adoption of my foster mother's culture was okay because I identified with my European side.

Issues arose when I reflected on the first encounter I had with my culture and people. The foster family and I went to Powwows where we heard our traditional songs. We also met various homeless Indigenous men and extremely intoxicated Indigenous women. My foster parents told us that our powwows were not dancing, the steps were too easy, too simple. We were told that our music was 'just noise.' There was no way anything meaningful could come from a drum and a language we could not understand. Ironically, we were listening to Josh Groban and opera on the car rides home. We were told that addiction runs in our genes and that we had escaped our suggested fate of addiction and homelessness. This was my first encounter with my people. My brothers and I accepted, without question, our foster parents' views.

After realizing the toxicity that existed in my adopted household, I moved out at the age of twenty-three. With the freedom that I had found, I sought out my biological mother and my biological family. My mom and I met at Portage Place mall with heavy hearts, hugs, and tears. I was afraid of what I would learn but was also ecstatic that my mom wanted to meet me.

I asked my mom about her history and the history of our family. As I worked on this thesis, she was writing me a letter about her childhood. Over several cups of coffee together, she told me about her abusive husband and how she escaped, with me and my four older brothers, to Winnipeg. Once in the city, CFS apprehended us. The reason for the apprehension is still

unknown. We had bounced from home to home while I was not even a year old. Our foster mother was babysitting for us, strangers at the time, and reported our impoverished conditions to our social worker. We were then placed in our foster mother's home.

The question of my biological father came up. I learned that my brothers and I have the same father. There was no red-headed European man. In finding out who my biological father is, I also learned that I am not Métis. I am Nisichawayasihk, Cree. There is more Indigenous blood in me than not.

In a couple of months, I had learned that my entire identity and childhood were merely a construction. A figment of imagination that my foster parents conjured up for reasons I will never be able to understand. This was my second encounter with my people. I now actively seek out cultural events, powwows, political demonstrations, drumming, beading circles, and various ceremonies. I have learned that my people are not what my foster parents told me they were.

I have both benefited from, and been victimized by, the colonial history of Canada. If it were not for my upbringing in a middle-class settler home, I would not have so easily found my way to Graduate school. I would not have had a childhood 'free' of racism. It was present, but I was not aware. I would not be so comfortable in an academic setting. Nor would I have the same morals, values, religious beliefs, or worldviews that I do.

My identity is shaped by the family that raised me as well as the biological family that I was stolen from. My religious and cultural practices are part of my identity as are all my likes and dislikes, including tea, music, scented candles, and classic literature. My identity also exists in the broader social and political sphere. My life is defined by the *Indian Act* just as much as it is defined in the ways that I speak out against colonialism. My identity can also be transformed

by deepening the ties to my community, Nisichawayasihk Manitoba, and the ways I can relate to those around me.

As an Indigenous person, raised as a settler, I must work on acknowledging that my history, both nationally and personally, has been a lie. Alongside learning my culture, I must also acknowledge the privilege my upbringing allowed me. Finally, I must work on loving the people in my past, and the present, as well as myself.

Research Methods

My thesis was written about the Millennium Scoop. The thesis is an exploration of my experiences as a Native child who was raised in a white foster home. I used mixed methods and narrative inquiry to explore and understand my history. By writing about the experiences of children in care I hope to have offered hope and encouragement to other Millennium Scoop survivors. I also hoped to find ways that we can heal. The framework I used was the resist, reclaim, and construct framework that Kim Andersen articulates in her work *A Recognition of Being* (Andersen xxvi). As Kim Andersen contends, it is important that I explain my positionality in reference to my thesis work. By doing so, the reader may understand more thoroughly my experiences and research. I will also reflect on the various methods that were available to me and why I chose mixed methods and narrative inquiry.

Before providing an overview of my research methods and framework, it is important to explain why I chose to write about the Millennium scoop and not the Sixties Scoop. Both Scoops are related, however, the experiences of children in each era differ.

Patrick Johnston coined the term, Sixties Scoop, in his 1983 report *Indian Children and the Child Welfare System* to refer to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families

and bands (Sinclair and Dainard). The term is used as a descriptor of the time between the 1940s to the 1980s when Residential Schools were being closed (Sinclair 66). Beginning approximately in the year 1947, the Government was made aware of the inadequate care that children received in schools (*Canada's Residential Schools* 149). Because of public backlash, Indian Affairs began to phase out the forced placement of Indigenous children in Residential Schools (Sinclair and Dainard). It is during this time that the practice of placing children up for adoption in primarily non-Indigenous families evolved into what is now called the Sixties Scoop. Not only were the children forcibly removed from their families and communities, but their identities and cultures were also wiped away. Parents were forced or manipulated into signing away their parental rights (Jacobs 144). The children were never told about their heritage, nor the rights to which they were entitled (Than Ha and Galloway).

When the Indian Act was amended in 1951 the provinces were given jurisdiction over the Indigenous child welfare system, despite no federal jurisdiction ever existing previously (Johnston 3; Harding 27). It was not until 1990 that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada created the First Nations Child and Family Services program. Under the program, the administration of CFS was given to local bands, and funding was established for the services to be provided. It became a requirement in many provinces that children know their backgrounds and would be able to have exposure to their cultures (Sinclair and Dainard). Under the new policies, bands have greater control over the welfare of their children but are still severely limited as they still function within colonial frameworks (Trocme, Knoke, Blackstock 579).

Despite improvements to the child welfare system practices, the practice of removing children from their families and homes is still incredibly harmful. Raven Sinclair (Anishinaabe) states that despite these improvements, “[Indigenous] children are [still] being institutionalized

through long term foster and institutional care” (Sinclair 68). Dr. Lauri Gilchrist defines the current practice of removing children as the Millennium Scoop (Sinclair 66). The Sixties Scoop refers to the year’s children were being apprehended, as does the Millennium Scoop. Although different legislation and regulation exist around the child welfare system practices the scooping of our children continues.

The commissioners of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission called the movement from the Indian Residential Schools to apprehension through widespread Scoops “simply a transferring of children from one form of institutional care... to another” (TRC 148). The foster care and adoption system merely replaced the Residential Schools. They did not improve the well-being of Indigenous children, nor did they remediate the harms the schools caused. This is because the goal of the schools, and the Scoops, remain unchanged: ensuring that First Nations children become ‘fit adults’ in settler society. In other words, the goal is still assimilation. The distinction is important for my thesis as I was a part of the Millennium Scoop.

The methods I used in my thesis were inspired by the methods Kim Andersen uses in her book *A Recognition of Being*. Andersen explores what it means to be an Indigenous woman in this modern age. Her chapters are divided by topic and were framed by a quotation and her reflection on the quotation. She also bounces from her personal story to the stories of her research participants in her writing. From Andersen’s work, I learned about the mixed methods research method. Mixed methods is a research practice that is “recognized as the third major research approach or research paradigm, along with qualitative research and quantitative research” (Johnson et. al. 112). Mixed methods can be defined as an approach to theory and practice “that considers many viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints” (Johnson et. al. 113). The term method is interpreted broadly to include data collection, research methods, and philosophical issues that relate (Johnson

et. al. 118). The mixing of research methods can occur at any stage of the research process including data collection and data analysis (Johnson et. al. 122). I mixed traditional academic work with the oral tradition of the Cree people, which includes my poetry.

By making use of mixed methods, my thesis followed the methods that other Indigenous scholars have used before me. I honoured the oral tradition of my ancestors. Just as Andersen does, I drew on my journals, poems, and the stories of other Millennium Scoop survivors. Narrative was woven through the historical explanation, reflections, and analysis of my experiences.

I also see this method as a broad metaphor for my lived experiences. Many of us adoptees are raised by settlers but are not settlers ourselves. So, we take bits of each culture and learn to create a new, unique understanding of our identity. This is what I have done, and continue to do, with my spirituality, my academic career, and everyday activities. For example, my music ranges from a Tribe Called Red to Taylor Swift, and from Irish medleys to English nursery rhymes. I am also working to blend my Catholic and Cree traditions. Other Millennium Scoop survivors also struggle with being raised in one culture but born of another. The mixed method research method fits my personality and background, as well as the reality of the lived experiences of many survivors.

The main aspect of my research was narrative inquiry. As human beings, we tend to make sense of our world through stories. We share stories with friends, at big family dinners, even to remember people or events. As a child, I was told a very specific story about who I was and where I came from, which then informed how I related to the world around me. I still work to understand which stories were true and which stories were created to force me to conform. Narrative inquiry works to examine “the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates” (Bell 208). The method works “with people’s consciously told stories” and recognizes that they “rest on

deeper stories” that most people are often unaware of (Bell 209). Therefore, I closely analyzed the stories I was told as a child, the stories I am now beginning to learn, and the stories of Tina Fontaine, Phoenix Sinclair, and Natasha Reimer. I wrote out my own experiences and then reflected on the experiences, drawing out conclusions about how I have worked to re-understand my existence as a former child in care. The chapters were divided by topic, with my narrative woven throughout, and framed by my poetry.

The auto-ethnography aspect of my research was in the written account of my time in care. This was the more challenging aspect of my work. I do not know why I was apprehended, nor do I recall the first year in care. My brothers mentioned once that we had been bounced around from home to home. They also have differing memories of our time together in the foster home. The other issue I struggled with is whether I want to try to fill in the gaps in my memory. My file exists but it may not be worthwhile tracking it down. There is also the issue of whether CFS wiped my file, or if all the information still exists. There are so many questions I have about my story and my sibling’s history.

Creative writing is another key aspect of my work. The poems work in conjunction with the prose to highlight key aspects of a survivor’s journey in the child welfare system and understanding of their world. I use poetry as a way of understanding my thoughts and experiences. The poems convey how my story has been deconstructed and rewritten in the research process. I go from being assimilated to being aware of the lies that I was told by my foster family. Finally, I better understand how my story fits in the colonial Canadian context. I begin the thesis by outlining that this work creates a relationship between the reader and the work. Perspectives will be challenged, and readers must be prepared to be unsettled. The narrative of the poetry continues by addressing how history has been framed to benefit colonizers and must be deconstructed before

any healing work can begin. I then highlight the challenges and impacts of the Indigenous child welfare system on Indigenous children, families, and communities. The poems are meant to evoke emotions. They challenge the reader to not only feel those emotions but also work to understand how their views have been shaped and constructed by an inherently harmful institution.

Utilizing Andersen's resist, reclaim, construct framework provided a concrete way of organizing this exploratory journey. It also allowed me to focus on the healing work that survivors must do. So many of us are healing and are speaking back against the negative history. Andersen focused her work on the work Native women did to heal from colonialism. She wrote about how Native women have been perceived and constructed in the Western world as the stereotypical drunk, loose, immoral woman (Andersen 79). Andersen explored how Native women have resisted that teaching and draw on traditional teachings and stories to reconstruct a modern understanding of Native womanhood. Her framework allows for room to explore the healing work that many of us are taking.

Survivors of Millennium Scoop must resist the inherently harmful and destructive stories we were told. We do so mainly by everyday acts of resistance. Acts that consciously challenge the stories that we had embraced. For example, when I moved out on my own, I threw out the frilly, pink, girly clothes my foster mother insisted I wore growing up and cut and coloured my hair in a style I knew would appall my foster parents. Part of resisting also includes reclaiming. We experience a homecoming and learn about our traditional teachings and stories. Homecoming includes the physical returning to your home community. Many survivors "[find] a level of truth and certainty within Aboriginal culture that provided a critical source of healing and renewal" (Sinclair 75). The communities found on reservations are often "vital cultural mirrors" and remain 'necessary for self-validation; a cultural reframing from which to review and re-perceive their

experiences” (Sinclair 75). When I physically returned home it was both a culture shock and extremely affirming. It was difficult to see how my family lives in a remote community. However, parts of my identity and being began to make sense. There are no words for the emotions that homecoming brings. Homecoming to me also includes more than the physical act of returning to my home community. It also includes meeting relatives, learning the history, embracing Cree traditions and stories. Homecoming also includes finding that sense of belonging in the communities that we create and people that we encounter on our healing journeys.

It is through resisting harmful stories and reclaiming identities that survivors can construct a new understanding of themselves and their identity. Part of resisting also means that we reclaim our identities. Survivors then construct a new way of understanding their experiences and identities in life. It is through the above work that we find healing. Andersen clearly articulated the above concepts in her work, and I hope that I have effectively drawn on her ideas.

I had initially wanted to make use of Indigenous research methods. Such methods are understood to be the adaptation of various western methods to “better incorporate Indigenous values, beliefs, and ways of knowing” that “[facilitate] research that is respectful, collaborative, and relational” (Drawson et. al. 2). Margaret Kovach describes Indigenous research methods as research with Indigenous peoples that influence method choices, data collection, and data analysis. Kovach uses a conversational approach as “a connection to Indigenous knowledge, a location within an Indigenous paradigm, a relational nature, a purpose (which is often decolonizing), following a specific protocol that reflects the Indigenous knowledge, a flexible nature, collaboration, and reflexivity” (Drawson et. al. 4). Therefore, my initial plan was to use story work or sharing circles to gather information about the child welfare industry. Story work draws upon various knowledge types, including family and community knowledge, to

understand a phenomenon or institution (McGregor). Sharing circles are “open-structured, conversational style methodology that respects story sharing within a Tribal cultural protocol context” and has been used by Indigenous communities over many generations (Tachine et. al. 278). Both methods make use of conversation, reciprocal relationships, and center Indigenous viewpoints. By making use of story work and sharing circles, I would have used Indigenous methods more strongly in my research.

Another option for me was participatory action research. Participatory action researchers “engage in a variety of research projects, in a variety of contexts, using a wide range of research practices that are related to an equally wide range of political ideologies” (McIntyre 2).

However, there are common tenets that researchers draw upon

(a) a collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem, (b) a desire to engage in self-and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under investigation, (c) a joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved, and (d) the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process (McIntyre 5).

The research process includes “the active participation of researchers and participants in the co-construction of knowledge; the promotion of self-and critical-awareness that leads to individual, collective, and/or social change” (McIntyre 5). This method would have also made use of Indigenous research principles. Participants would have had equal opportunity to inform and shape the research. It could have also been a conversational style of information gathering. Such a method could have also made use of sharing circles. However, I did not have the time or resources for such an approach.

Decolonizing research was briefly mentioned before. I will now discuss this option for my research. Decolonizing research involves using a variety of methods to “[center] concerns

and world views of non-Western individuals, and respectfully knowing and understanding theory and research from previously 'Other(ed)' perspectives" (Thambinathan and Kinsella 1-2).

Indigenous scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith writes "in her seminal book on decolonizing methodologies" that "decolonization [is] a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels" and "is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices"

(Thambinathan and Kinsella 1-2). Many Indigenous researchers work on decolonizing their research. I center Indigenous voices in my work by drawing on Indigenous experiences and making use of my lived experience. I also deconstruct myths about the child welfare system, an inherently colonized and harmful system. Decolonization is a key approach to Indigenous research that I draw upon.

I had initial plans for a stronger Indigenous approach, but my options were quickly removed. I was in the process of planning my information gathering when the global pandemic, Covid-19, became a crisis. A global pandemic "is not just a medical phenomenon" seeing as "it affects individuals and society and causes disruption, anxiety, stress, stigma, and xenophobia" (Javed et. al. 993). The pandemic affected all aspects of everyone's lives. The "rapid human-to-human transmission of [Covid-19] resulted in the enforcement of regional lockdowns" which caused the "closure of educational institutes, workplaces, and entertainment venues" (Javed et. al. 993-94). The closure of facilities and amenities "affected the social and mental health of individuals from across the board" (Javed et. al. 993-94). Many people found the adaptation "mentally painful and traumatic as it suddenly put brakes to our 'known normal' and it asked us to create a 'new normal'" (Chugh). I was suddenly unable to access physical space for my research and unable to connect with people safely. Part of Indigenous research is ensuring the safety and wellbeing of

participants and communities. As a researcher, I must ensure everyone's safety. I would have been compromising the health and safety of any participant had I conducted interviews and sharing circles.

I am a survivor of the child welfare system. I would have interviewed other survivors. A survivor-defined approach to research creates emotional strain on participants (Cattaneo et. al. 1254). They are forced to revisit painful and often traumatic events. Survivors also often face limited resources and systemic obstacles (Cattaneo et. al. 1254). Not only would I have exposed participants to the possibility of contracting Covid-19, but I would have also exposed them to emotional harm. A safe approach to sharing circles and interviews would have included proper mental health supports. The closure of many facilities, including mental health facilities, made it almost impossible to provide the necessary safety precautions. Doing an online interview would have meant that survivors would be on their own without access to supports in case they were triggered. Therefore, interviews and sharing circles were not an option for me. I needed a way of sharing the child welfare system stories in a way that reduced risk to myself and participants. By removing interviews and sharing circles, I removed the possibility of harming participants. It was challenging to write about the stories of Tina Fontaine, Phoenix Sinclair, Natasha Reimer, and myself. There was a lot of grief, anger, and despair. I paced my writing in a way that allowed me time to process emotions as the research moved forward. I had also spent time with therapists discussing self-soothing and trauma work. Therefore, the emotional toll on me was reduced but not entirely removed.

I chose mixed methods and narrative inquiry because they centered stories and storytelling in a way that allowed me to deconstruct myths about the child welfare system. The other research methods did not provide me with that same type of focus.

In summary, I chose to research the Millennium Scoop because I am a part of the Scoop. The key difference from the Sixties Scoop is that the Millennium Scoop exists in legislation and policies, rather than only as a practice after Residential Schools being closed. The thesis documents an exploration of various stories about the Millennium Scoop. I used mixed methods and narrative inquiry to understand the history of the Millennium Scoop. Mixed methods is a research method that involves the mixing of various research methods at various levels of research. I mixed narrative inquiry, autoethnography, and the oral traditions of the Cree people. I used my poetry to further integrate narrative and narrative analysis. The framework I used was the resist, reclaim, and construct framework that Kim Andersen uses in her work *A Recognition of Being*. My story and analysis were framed by the exploration of how I, and other survivors, have resisted the assimilation, reclaimed our identities and traditions, and constructed a new, unique way of understanding our being in this world. By writing about the experiences of children in care, I hope to have offered hope and encouragement to other survivors.

Literature Review

There has been a tremendous amount of literature on the history of Residential Schools, land disputes, the Indian Act, violence against Indigenous women and girls, and the ongoing cultural revitalisation of Indigenous cultures. However, there has been little historical research done regarding the child welfare system, which began with the closure of the Residential Schools, continued as the Sixties Scoop, and continues to the present day as the Millennium Scoop. The articles and books that have been published about the child welfare system have been done “in the fields of sociology, psychology, social work, and law” and includes “[outcome] studies and oral histories of adopted [Indigenous] children, debates about social work practice, and examinations of the new legal framework created by the passage of Indian Child Welfare

Act (ICWA) in 1978” (Jacobs 137). Much of this work was revolved around contemporary practices in the child welfare system. Therefore, this thesis will fill the gap in historical research of the Sixties and Millennium Scoop. In addition to filling the knowledge gaps surrounding the Scoops this work also provides a much-needed discussion of the legislation on the child welfare system practices in Canada and the distinct cultural lens of Indigenous adoptees on resistance and revitalisation.

The work began with a search of the Trent University databases for the names of Tina Fontaine, Natasha Reimer, and Phoenix Sinclair. Of the three names, a search on Tina Fontaine produces the greatest number of articles. However, each article merely mentioned that she was a fifteen-year-old child who was brutally murdered. A search on Natasha Reimer produced only two articles. The first was an article discussing aging out of care, in which Reimer’s story provides a key example of aging out. The second article was an interview about her experiences in care. Unfortunately, the only research that exists on Phoenix Sinclair was the provincial report that was produced after her death and reports on the implementation of recommendations.

There exists little literature about the stories of Phoenix Sinclair, Tina Fontaine, or Natasha Reimer. Very few people have written about the stories of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in chronological order. Therefore, I had very few resources to pull from. I also broadened my search beyond only academic sources turning instead to work such as blogs, podcasts, and newspaper articles in my thesis.

Tina Fontaine’s murder had very little detailed information despite a large amount of media attention on the case. What we do know came from the large collection of articles written about the murder. The details of her encounters with various systems are most likely held in court

documents and case worker files which are not readily accessible, as a result, there is still so much, we do not know about Tina's death.

The articles found connect Fontaine's story to the creation of the National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry, and the founding of the group Drag the Red. (Callison 53, Brule 337, Marchinko 19, Conn, Dean 157, Macdonald 2, Palmater *Shining Light on the Dark Places* 260, Razack 1). Her story was also fundamental to the resurgence of the Bear Clan Patrol. Only Pamela Palmater expands on the story of Fontaine. She wrote that

“Tina did not slip through the cracks. Tina was left unprotected by an entire system that is indifferent to the well-being of Indigenous women and girls. She was made vulnerable to well-known predators because those legally bound to protect her did not fulfil their responsibilities” (Palmater *Shining Light on the Dark Places* 261).

Clearly, the lives of young indigenous women like Tina, Phoenix, and Natasha are not valued in Canadian society.

the only research on Phoenix Sinclair I was able to find was the Manitoba report on the inquiry into Phoenix's death and the subsequent reports on implementing the recommendations of the inquiry. The report covered the timeline of events during Phoenix's time in care. It also provided a legislative history on the Manitoba child welfare system. Finally, the report documents key witnesses, testimonies, and evidence that was brought up during the investigation (Hughes *the Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair*). Sadly, it is not shocking to me that there exists so little information on Sinclair's death.

There are countless articles and books about the emergence of the Sixties Scoop. Including the report *Native Child and the Child Welfare System* by Patrick Johnston and the book

Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship written by Allyson D. Stevenson. The report by Patrick Johnston is a scathing review about the disproportionate number of children in the child welfare system.

The book by Allyson D. Stevenson covered the history of the Sixties Scoop in the province of Saskatchewan. Stevenson's focus was on the 'Adopt Indian and Métis project' and 'the Indian Adoption project.' Her focus was on documenting the relationship between policies and the emergence of transracial adoption (Stevenson 12). She also discussed her personal experiences of adoption and subsequently coming home (Stevenson xv). Stevenson's book is part of an emerging group of works that documents the creation of child welfare services across the country. It is integral to understanding the relationship between legislative acts and policies that created the Sixties and Millennial Scoop. She also acknowledges the relationship between Indigenous adoption and the creation of permanent wards of the child welfare industry.

Chapter 1 the Historical Background of the Stolen Children

*We know the history
of this country
the settler history
we were told
they know their history
of the land
the story we've never heard*

Many, if not all, Indigenous issues connect back to the treaties and the Indian Act. Our discussion must begin with the examination of how the Canadian Government violated the treaty promises. Integral to this violation was the creation of the Indian Act. The Act was created to enforce the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples and is still being used for that purpose today. The Residential Schools were created to erase Indigenous identity in First Nations children and youth. It is within this toxic climate that the Sixties Scoop first emerged. The goal of Indigenous child welfare system practices, beginning in the fifties and sixties and continuing today, remains assimilation. In recent decades, the authority over the child welfare system has been handed to the various provincial governments by the federal government. The key difference between the Sixties Scoop and the Millennium Scoop is that the Millennium Scoop is supported by direct legislation and is arguably more subtle and simultaneously more insidious in its' assimilationist goal than previous eras.

The goal of colonization was, and still is, the assimilation and direct erasure of Indigenous Peoples in Canada. The Residential Schools and the Scoops were a direct attack on the languages, cultures, and identities of Indigenous communities. Mik'maq scholar Pamela

Palmer states, in the five hundred years since the settler government has stolen control of Indigenous lands, they “have managed, physically, culturally, and legally, to nearly wipe out Indigenous Peoples” (Palmer *Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada* 28). The goal of early policies, Palmer asserts, “was to access Indigenous lands and resources” in order “to reduce the government’s financial obligations to Indigenous Peoples” and increase their access to profit (Palmer *Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada* 28). Anishinaabe scholar Tanya Talaga affirms Palmer’s views by writing “if every Indigenous child were absorbed in Canadian society, their ties to their language and their culture would be broken” therefore, “they wouldn’t live on reserve lands; they’d live and work among other Canadians and there would no longer be a need for treaties, reserves, or special rights given to Indigenous People” (Talaga 60-1). In 1985, Associate Chief Judge Edward Kimelman said, in a public inquiry report, that the removal of Indigenous children equated to cultural genocide (First Nations Family Advocate Office 3). It is within this climate that Residential Schools and the current child welfare system practices were created. Both the Sixties and Millennium Scoops were, and still are, direct attempts to assimilate and erase Indigenous People.

Before discussing the Scoops, it is important to explore the legislation that gave rise to the child welfare system. The Sixties Scoop was not the result of direct legislation but rather the outcome of the racist practices of government workers. However, the Millennium Scoop is a legislated phenomenon. It is important to understand the transition from the Residential Schools to the Millennium Scoop by discussing the history of legislation and practices from the beginning of Indigenous-settler relations. The best place to start this discussion is with the numbered treaties. The treaties form the beginnings of modern-day Canada. Treaties are “nation-

to-nation agreements” between Indigenous Peoples and the British Crown (Talaga 55; Monchalin 81). Métis scholar Lisa Monchalin describes the treaties as “mutual arrangements of peace and friendship” that were intended to allow for both Indigenous and European nations to share the land on Turtle Island (Monchalin 81). The treaties date back to the 1600s and continue to the present day. Monchalin notes that the early treaties “were about peaceful coexistence” (Monchalin 82). They defined the rights of both parties, as well as the responsibilities that came with sharing the land (Monchalin 82). Modern-day treaties are known as comprehensive land agreements.

By understanding the original intent of the colonizers, it becomes easier to understand how the treaties were so easily broken. It is incredibly important, as Talaga argues, for people to be able to “understand how the utter failure and betrayal of the treaties... worked in conjunction with... the Indian Act to isolate Indigenous People... to keep them subservient to Ottawa” (Talaga 55). Colonial powers had always intended to make use of the land for their economic benefit. It was important to establish seemingly friendly relations with Indigenous Peoples, and after trust had been established it becomes easier for the colonizers to manipulate the Indigenous Peoples and then impose their own rules.

Although both nations made agreements with one another, Indigenous and European worldviews had very different understandings of what treaty relationships meant. Harold Johnson explains his traditional Cree beliefs around treaty relationships as “an adoption ceremony” in which Cree people welcome settlers into their family (Simpson 30). In doing so, the Cree invited settlers to adopt the laws that govern Cree society (Simpson 30). The key word is an invitation. As a family unit, certain expectations govern the relationships. However, the trust that families establish between themselves allows room for lies. The Europeans did not

fully understand this aspect of the treaty relationships. They viewed the relationships as mere documents, and therefore tools, to gain land and power. The numbered treaties, or the post-confederation treaties, came into use during the late 1800s. The first was signed in 1871 and the last was signed around 1921. The numbered treaties partially cover Ontario, the Yukon, northeastern B.C., and the Northwest Territories. They cover all of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta.

Although they share similarities, each treaty was adapted to the specific situations of the people in each territory. Reserve lands, monetary payments, education, and agricultural tools were promised to Indigenous Peoples in exchange for the use of their lands. The exchange was supposedly meant to “assist [Indigenous Peoples in] participating fully in [the] new economy” (Monchalin 92). Treaty Five, which covers parts of northern Manitoba, Ontario, and Saskatchewan, was signed September 1875 “between the government and Swampy Cree, Pimicikamak Cree, Norway House Cree, and Saulteaux peoples” (Monchalin 95). The treaty was like the preceding treaties with one noticeable difference: only 600 square miles per family unit of five were granted. Therefore, reserves set aside for the Cree and Saulteaux were smaller than other reserves (Monchalin 95). Around the same year, fur and pelts were beginning to drastically decline and the railway was being built in between Winnipeg and Churchill. By 1910 the remaining First Nations that had not signed on in 1875 did so (Monchalin 95). Education was stressed as a key provision during negotiations. The treaty commissioners agreed to provide education “with no interference with religious beliefs” (Monchalin 101). When the schools began, several Christian denominations ran the schools which violated the original promises that were made in Treaty Five.

The Indian Act was passed in 1876 and is administered by the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada. The act “[outlines] every aspect of life for an Indigenous person in Canada” (Talaga 58). It was formed “to amalgamate all pre- and post-confederation legislation with regards to Indians and bring their control under the full jurisdiction of the federal government” (Palmer *Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada* 34). Under the act, the federal government controls much of Indigenous Peoples lives, as Pamela Palmer describes

“who can be registered as Indians; who can be members of First Nation communities (Indian bands); who has the right to live on reserve; how reserve lands are to be used; how each community is to be governed; the powers granted to community leaders (Chief and Council); and even how property is to be dispersed upon the death of an Indian (Indian Act 1985). It is comprehensive in that it touches nearly every aspect of Indigenous life as individuals, families, communities, and Nations” (Palmer *Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada* 34).

Education was promised in the treaties and subsequently legislated through the Indian Act including the Residential Schools. The Residential school policy “authorized the removal of Indigenous children from... communities and forced them” to “unlearn the ways of their own peoples and be educated in the European tradition” (Palmer *Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada* 33). In 1947 the Canadian Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers created a joint presentation to the committee responsible for amendments to the Indian Act. The presentation declared that practices in Residential Schools were not adequate, or equal to the child welfare system practices for non-Indigenous children. The Welfare Council and the Canadian Association of Social Workers condemned placing children in Residential Schools (Johnston 3).

The federal and provincial governments divided “core areas of jurisdiction” in the 1867 Constitution. The Indian Act was amended in 1951, in which the provinces were given jurisdiction over the Indigenous child welfare system, despite no federal jurisdiction ever existing (Johnston 3; Harding 27). Beginning in the 1960s, “provincial governments considered the removal of Indigenous children” the best way to address the Indigenous child welfare system issues (Sinclair and Dainard). The ongoing removal of Indigenous children “[undermines] the customary socialization of Indian children” (Jacobs 139). Many generations of Indigenous Peoples were raised away from their culture (Jacobs 139). In 1973 Saskatchewan passed the Family Services Act (Stevenson 218). Ontario passed the Child and Family Services Act in 1984 (Drumbill 8). In Manitoba, the Child Welfare Policy was created in 1982. Under the policy, child welfare services were limited for the north, but all southern Manitoba had access to child welfare services. Indigenous people living off-reserve had the same access to care as non-Indigenous people (Johnston 11). Each province had arranged different child welfare system agreements with the federal government (Than Ha and Galloway). There existed conflicts between who would pay for child welfare services and who would deliver. Some provinces provided care but only if they were federally funded (Johnston 5). Currently, more and more First Nations are taking control over their child welfare systems. The transfer of the child welfare systems will be discussed in later paragraphs.

In 1883 Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald wrote about his belief that “until parents overcame their opposition to industrial schools, enrolment would depend on ‘orphans and children who have no natural protectors” (*Canada’s Residential Schools* 147). Therefore, Residential Schools had always been connected to the child welfare system practices. Despite Indigenous beliefs in the value of education generally, concerns about conditions and treatment

of Indigenous children in the Residential Schools were identified by the governments' experts. However, little was ever done to change the conditions (*citation needed Bryce report*). To speed up assimilation eventually recommendations about Indigenous education were made in the final 1949 report by the Special Joint Committee of the Senate and House of Commons Appointed to Examine and Consider the Indian Act. This report stated that "[Indigenous] children should be educated in association with other children" (*Canada's Residential Schools* 55). This integration method was defined as gradually placing Indigenous children in public schools as opposed to the isolation of the Residential Schools. The goal with Indigenous education remained the assimilation of Indigenous Peoples (*Canada's Residential Schools* 55). Despite this insight, in 1984 amendments to the Indian Act delegated Indigenous children between six and sixteen to Residential Schools if they were not being properly cared for by their parents and communities. Indian Agents in Manitoba, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Northern Canada could take children without so much as giving notice to their parent or guardian (*Canada's Residential Schools* 147). The reality is that the Residential Schools were the child welfare system facilities. In the 1960s, half of the children in Residential Schools "were admitted for social welfare reasons" (*Canada's Residential Schools* 147).

Although the practice of removing children from their homes began well before the sixties. It was well known that the facilities in which they were placed, i.e., the Residential Schools, were unfit to care for the social welfare of Indigenous children. In *the Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, commissioners wrote that "First Nations groups worried that the government had failed to put in place adequate resources to deal with the social as well as educational needs of the children who had been living" in the schools (*Canada's Residential Schools* 105). The First Nation in Prince Albert used the Residential School as a resource for

families who had a history of abuse and family violence. The Lac la Ronge school held approximately thirty-three children who required around-the-clock care and surveillance (*Canada's Residential Schools* 105). Beginning around 1947 the Government and agents heard warnings about the inadequate care that children received in schools (*Canada's Residential Schools* 149). Because of the backlash, Indian Affairs began to phase out the forced placement of Indigenous children in Residential Schools in the fifties and sixties (Sinclair and Dainard). Some children did return home, but concerns were raised about the children who were in schools for social welfare reasons (*Canada's Residential Schools* 98).

It is during this time that the practice of placing children up for adoption in primarily non-Indigenous families, what is now called the Sixties Scoop, began. The commissioners of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* call the Scoops “simply a transferring of children from one form of institutional care... to another” (*Canada's Residential Schools* 148). The foster care and adoption system merely replaced the Residential Schools (*Bringing our Children Home* 7). They did not improve the well-being of Indigenous children, nor did they remediate the harms the schools caused. The intent of assimilation remained the same. Patrick Johnston coined the term, Sixties Scoop, in his 1983 report *Indian Children and the Child Welfare System* to refer to the mass removal of Indigenous children from their families and communities (Sinclair and Dainard). The term is used as a descriptor of the time between the 1940s to the 1980s when Residential Schools were being closed (Sinclair 66). Of the children that were taken, around 70% were adopted in non-Indigenous homes. In the seventies, one-third of Indigenous children were placed in adoptive or foster homes (Sinclair 67). The families, and communities, were often not informed when children were taken away. It was not until the eighties when the *Child, Family, and Community Services Act* was passed, that social workers were required to inform the band

councils when children were removed (Sinclair and Dainard). Not only were the children forcibly removed, but their identities and family histories were also erased. Often parents were forced or manipulated into signing away their parental rights (Jacobs 144). The children were never told about their heritage, nor the rights, that they were entitled to (Than Ha and Galloway).

Social workers were not required to have training for working with Indigenous communities. Many of the workers were not familiar with the culture, or history, of the Indigenous communities they entered. Therefore, social workers measured proper care in terms of middle-class European values and standards, instead of what was culturally appropriate for the communities (Sinclair and Dainard). Indigenous childcare practices were deemed unacceptable by the social welfare workers. Parents who allowed children to freely explore the world were deemed lazy and unfit (*Canada's Residential Schools* 150). This is because the children were given the freedom to explore, often falling, or scraping arms and legs. The children were not placed in harmful situations, they were being taught independence. Another example of cultural bias was the reliance on extended families for raising the children. Grandparents, aunts, and uncles often assisted parents with raising children. This was the norm in Indigenous communities (Jacobs 147). Dependence on the extended family was not a sign of the laziness of the parents. Additionally, issues of poverty, which remain out of the parent's control, were used as an excuse to remove children citing substandard living conditions. The controversial practice of birth alerts forced many Indigenous mothers to release their children at birth as well (Jacobs 144). The social workers used any excuse to remove children including the location of the home. As a result, Indigenous families who moved into urban environments were at a greater risk of being apprehended (Jacobs 149). This was the case with my removal. My mother was escaping my abusive father. Although she was taking steps to ensure my wellbeing and safety, my siblings

and I were scooped anyways. A young, single, Indigenous woman raising five children in Winnipeg was deemed automatically unsafe. Since connecting with my birth mother, I have learned that she had always had my best interest at heart. She would never have left me or abused me. I was only ever told about how my birth mother fit the stereotypes and fears that settler cultures perpetuated.

Dr. Lauri Gilchrist argues that the practices that created the Sixties Scoop continue to this day. She calls the current practice of removing children the Millennium Scoop (Sinclair 66). There are differences between the two Scoops, aside from the years in which they are practiced. Dr. Gilchrist notes sadly, that instead of Indian Affairs workers doing the scooping, it is now Indigenous social workers (Sinclair 66). In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood released its report *Indian Control of Indian Education*. The report was incredibly influential, pushing “[Indigenous] leaders to take control of other social services as well” (Sinclair and Dainard). In 1982 Indigenous communities were given control of their child welfare system services (Johnston 11). Leaders drew public attention to the disproportionate number of children in care, which pushed the Canadian Council on Social Development to commission the 1983 report by Patrick Johnston. A few years later, in 1985, Justice Edwin Kimelman released the review *No Quiet Place: Review Committee on Indian and Métis Adoptions and Placements*. The two reviews were highly critical of the government-run Indigenous child welfare system practices (Sinclair and Dainard). Indian and Northern Affairs Canada created the First Nations Child and Family Services program in 1990. Under the program, the administration of CFS was given to local First Nations and funding was established for the services. The child welfare system practices were also transformed. Resources for single parents were increased and juvenile probation services were created. It also became a requirement in many provinces that children

know their backgrounds and be allowed to have exposure to their cultures (Sinclair and Dainard). Under the new policies, even though First Nations have much greater control over the welfare of their children, they remain chronically underfunded and trapped within a colonial framework (Trocme, Knoke, Blackstock 579). Raven Sinclair (Anishinaabe, Cree, Saulteaux) states that despite these improvements, “[Indigenous] children are [still] being institutionalized through long term foster and institutional care” (Sinclair 68). Again, despite the changes, the child welfare system remains an inherently negative experience for Indigenous Peoples.

The negative impacts of the Sixties and Millennium Scoops are numerous (Sinclair 66). I believe that there are little to no positive impacts of the Scoops, despite being told that I was ‘saved.’ Such discourse refuses to acknowledge the harm of removing Indigenous children from their families. Many Indigenous children remain in the system, bouncing from foster home to foster home, or are in and out of juvenile detention centers (Sinclair and Dainard; *Bringing our Children Home* 4). The lack of a stable home leads to feelings of loneliness, insecurity, isolation, and feelings “that no one cared for [our] well-being” (Mckay 92; *Bringing our Children Home* 4). Indigenous youth experience a “disruption to relationships with their parents, siblings, and social network” and develop a “fear of loss of contact with siblings” (Mckay 91). Many experiences of children in care are “characterized by multiple losses, pervasive feelings of loneliness, and high anxiety about their futures” (Mckay 92). The education of children in care also takes a toll due to the high frequency of moving and lack of parental support (*Bringing our Children Home* 4). I recall grieving the loss of my family as a child, waking up in tears, and fearing abandonment around the age of four and five. I knew that I was inherently different from my peers but could never understand or explain why. The effects of the Scoops will be further

expanded on in the sharing and analysis of the stories of Tina Fontaine, Phoenix Sinclair, and Natasha Reimer.

The abuses that were experienced in Residential Schools also continued in the Scoops. Physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual abuse is prevalent (Sinclair and Dainard; *Bringing our Children Home* 7). Children also experience “emotions of immense fear, confusion, and, possibly, relief or despair” (Mckay 87). Children are often ill-equipped to adapt to life as stable adults (Mckay 91). In my own experience little, if anything, was done to support my transition out of care. Children in care also experience a loss of “recognition, acceptance, self-worth, and familial and communal supports” (Palmater 47). They also lack “access to language speakers and traditional knowledge-holders, and the ability to enjoy one’s culture in community with their specific Indigenous Nation” (Palmater 47; First Nations Family Advocate Office 3). Other impacts of the child welfare system include displacement through the physical removal of children from communities, loss of identity, connection to land, and kinship (First Nations Family Advocate Office 3). Due to poverty and intergenerational trauma, children are “dying of preventable illness... poor nutrition” and many attempt, or succeed in, committing suicide (Talaga 53; First Nations Family Advocate Office 8; *Bringing our Children Home* 4). Long-term effects include many psychological and emotional issues, such as “a loss of cultural identity... low self-esteem... feelings of shame, loneliness, and confusion” (Sinclair and Dainard; Talaga 53; Sinclair 66; Jacobs 138; First Nations Family Advocate Office 3). Many adults who were previously in care experience incarceration, substance abuse, and attempt suicide. Raven Sinclair also notes that “63% of Aboriginal offenders stated that they were adopted or in foster care” (Sinclair 73). The child welfare system involvement is becoming intergenerational, parents in care often experience their children going through care as well (First Nations Family Advocate

Office 3; *Bringing our Children Home* 4). Involvement in the child welfare industry creates “a reoccurring cycle of substance abuse, dysfunctional relationships, and losing children to the system” (*Bringing our Children Home* 7).

I have seen and experienced firsthand these emotions and outcomes. My second oldest brother passed away due to the negative influence of the child welfare system on our lives. It was not until I had left my foster home that I found my identity, a sense of belonging, or peace, an opportunity my brother never had. The journey of learning about my history has been tumultuous. I cannot explain in words how difficult it is to learn the history and, retroactively, the trauma that has informed my worldview. I have seen firsthand the devastation that the foster care system has created. The lack of respect, the sense of loss, the fear of abandonment, and the reliance on alcohol to numb the pain have been present in my own life. I have lost many family members to the system, and currently have nieces and nephews in care. Certain members of my blood family will never know who I am. I was robbed of siblings, family, and belonging. It pains me to think that there are thousands of more children, and young adults, experiencing the same fear and pain that I have.

I argue that the Millennium Scoop is a less overt but insidious tool of assimilation than the Residential Schools and Sixties Scoop. The current removal of Indigenous children is framed in such a way that mainstream society believes it to be more humane and ethical. Mainstream society believes that the child welfare system removes children from poverty, neglect, and abandonment. They also believe that the child welfare system is a sure way to ensure that Indigenous youth earn an education and come to lead healthy, stable lives. Despite there being little research in this regard, I can attest that the system is not a sure way of gaining a ‘better’ education. Of my five siblings, I am the only one to gain a university education.

The Canadian peacemaker myth, defined by Paulette Regan, is the belief that the Canadian state is inherently benevolent. Despite the absurdity of this myth in the face of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, it is still believed by many Canadians and other nations. This myth suggests the intent of the Residential Schools, the Sixties Scoop, and the Millennium Scoop was well-intentioned. The Millennium Scoop is constantly being framed as a humanitarian effort. My foster parents are constantly being congratulated for ‘rescuing me and my siblings from poverty and street life’ and for opening their homes to five strangers. So, when I openly accused them of abuse, the outward community could not believe and consequently denied that the abuse ever happened. I was told I was given a life of privilege; therefore, I should be more grateful. This seemingly positive messaging detracts attention from the inherently harmful effects that isolation, abuse, and feelings of abandonment that resulted from my time in foster care.

Indigenous communities have recently been taking more control of the delivery of their child welfare services. These masks the inherent problems faced by Indigenous social workers having to function within a colonial framework. For the past 25 years, Indigenous peoples “have negotiated delegated responsibility for child welfare” with many more nations following suit (Harding 27). What is left unmentioned is the political red-tape that comes with having responsibility for the child welfare system. Yes, more Indigenous people are being hired. Yes, this creates job stability and economic growth. However, this does not mean that the child welfare system is automatically de-colonized and less harmful. Indigenous social workers must still function within the constraints of the colonial child welfare system legislation. The only thing that has changed is who is doing the scooping. Moreover, when bands are given funds, they are also given very restricted ways in which they can use those funds. They are carefully

watched and audited. In addition, Indigenous child welfare services are provided significantly less funding than non-Indigenous child welfare agencies within the same province. As a result, they are unable to meet the needs of the children. Therefore, it is false to believe that Indigenous social workers automatically lead to the decolonization of an entire system.

The Canadian government attempted to address the over-representation of Indigenous children in care in 2018. Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families*, was introduced to the house of commons in January 2018 (*Bill C-92*). The first reading of the bill occurred on February 28, 2019, and it became law on June 21, 2019 (Metallic et. al. *Does Bill C-92 Make the Grade?* 4). The bill came into force on January 1, 2020 (Wilyman 1; Jackson).

Under bill C-92 First Nations communities and groups are free to develop policies and laws that are based on their respective histories, cultures, and circumstances. They are also able to move at their own pace when implementing these policies and laws (*Bill C-92*). There are two sections to this bill. The first section focuses on creating national principles that govern the Indigenous child welfare system. The second section “relates to the ways in which First Nations, Inuit, and Métis can exercise their inherent jurisdiction over children in their communities” (Forester). Indigenous groups must negotiate a coordination agreement with Indigenous Services Canada and their relevant provincial authorities to exercise their jurisdiction over the child welfare system (Forester). Section twenty-two of bill C-92 states that “Indigenous laws will prevail over federal and provincial laws” whenever issues arise between the three groups. However, provincial, and federal laws may prevail if “Indigenous laws contravene the Constitution, the *Human Rights Act*, or the best interests of the child” (Forester).

Bill C-92 accomplishes several goals. First, the act addresses the over-representation of children in care (*Bill C-92*). Second, the bill recognizes Indigenous people's jurisdiction over their child and family services. Third, the bill will help create national standards for the Indigenous child welfare system, which did not exist before the bill's creation. Finally, the bill is in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's fourth call to action and contributes to the implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People (*Bill C-92*; Metallic et. al. *Does Bill C-92 Make the Grade?* 4; Metallic et. al. *Promises and Pitfalls* 4; Wilyman 1).

With the implementation of the act, the federal government removed the Indigenous child welfare system from the jurisdiction of the provinces. The federal government also made "a formal commitment to the rights of First Nations to control such services' development and delivery" (King et. al. 1). This was the first time that the federal government used its jurisdiction over the Indigenous child welfare system (Metallic et. al. *Does Bill C-92 Make the Grade?* 4). The federal government worked alongside "Indigenous, provincial, and territorial partners" to focus on keeping "Indigenous children and youth connected to their families, communities, and culture" (*Bill C-92*). Bill C-92 "[was] also a result of the advocacy and leadership of Chiefs and elders, parents and grandparents, youth and community members from across Canada" (*Bill C-92*).

As promising as the bill sounds, many Indigenous people are not convinced that the bill is a positive step forward. Cindy Blackstock, executive director of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, describes the act as "a colonial Faustian bargain: accept the flawed bill in its current state or get nothing" (Wilyman 2). Lawyer Kylee Wilyman states that "the *Act* is the result of a rushed process and leaves considerable uncertainty regarding its

implementation” (Wilyman 2). The act was pushed through the necessary readings in four months. Provinces and Indigenous communities were given six months to figure out how the act would be implemented. This was not enough time for all parties involved to properly understand and implement the bill. Furthermore, many groups stated they were not advised as to how the rollout of the bill will occur. Sarah Clarke, a child protection lawyer based in Toronto, says that “it’s very unclear to me what, if any, steps the federal government has taken to make sure that everyone knows about it and to have a coordinated effort. It doesn’t seem anybody has an idea of how this is going to work” (Jackson). The act was a rushed process that leaves many gaps in its implementation.

Not only was the act rushed, but also the terms and conditions of the act are unsatisfactory. Wilyman notes that there are three key issues with the bill’s implementation: “jurisdictional disputes, funding, and the best interests of Indigenous children” (Wilyman 2). As stated before, the First Nations groups must enter into formal agreements with the provinces and federal government. In this regard, the federal government must enact its jurisdiction over the Indigenous child welfare system “although how, in what ways, and to what extent remain open questions” (King et. al. *Does Bill C-92 Make the Grade?* 2). The bill makes it sound like First Nations have full control over their child welfare system. However, it is not known as to what extent the federal government will enact its jurisdiction. The federal government may ultimately exercise full control. The wording of the act is misleading. The bill offers no funding agreement (King et. al. 2; Wilyman 7, Forester; 4; Jackson). Therefore, there is no easy way for First Nations to build capacity regarding their child welfare system. Proper offices, storage of data, adequate staff, travel costs, etc. are key to allowing First Nations communities full control over their child welfare system. Indigenous people are already inadequately funded. By giving First

Nations control over their child welfare system without proper funding, their resources are spread too thin. Finally, the bill makes use of the statement ‘best interests of the child’ which is vague and creates uncertainty (Forester). This can create problems, considering First Nations laws can be overturned if they violate the best interest of the child. Bill C-92 appears to be a good step forward for Indigenous people’s inherent self-governance. However, given that there is unclear jurisdiction, no funding, and vague language, the act is not the positive step forward that it appears to be.

Despite the ongoing attacks against our nations, our resiliency and bravery stand out while we continue to protect our people. Pamela Palmater notes that “the issue... of greatest importance to both Status and Non-Status Indians alike is the health and well-being of their Indigenous families, communities, and Nations” (Palmater 47). She also asserts that nothing “replaced traditional Indigenous identities, but it has affected the paths by which individuals can access and maintain those traditional identities” (Palmater 47). We must assert, and protect, our sovereignty every day. We also must work to decolonize our minds, communities, and institutions. We must learn about our history and the politics that continue to strangle us (Palmater 48). Many survivors now work to improve the lives of our communities (Talaga 53). Tanya Talaga noted that “the reserves are where communities have formed and where traditions are practiced, despite legislative constraints that have kept Indigenous People isolated” (Talaga 55). Many survivors return home and have “found a level of truth and certainty within Aboriginal culture that provided a critical source of healing and renewal” (Sinclair 75). The communities in reserves are “vital cultural mirrors” and remain ‘necessary for self-validation; a cultural reframing from which to review and re-perceive their experiences’ (Sinclair 75).

The first time I returned home is one of the moments that I will never forget. It was a difficult moment, a culture shock, to see how my family had been living. However, many things in my life began to make sense: the way I was more comfortable and at peace beside a lake, the sense of home that I find in nature, my humour, my looks, and other things that had been previously unexplainable. There are no words for the emotions that homecoming brings. Despite the pain that foster care brings, I continue to work through my trauma. I hope to change the child welfare system for my family. Many other young Indigenous women and men also feel the same.

In summary, the goal of the colonial Canadian government has always been the assimilation and eradication of Indigenous Peoples. The Indian Act remains a racist, sexist document that works towards the elimination of Indigenous nations. The use of education by the government to assimilate the various Indigenous nations in Canada has been clearly articulated. Education was promised in the numbered treaties. It is through the Indian Act that the promise of education was implemented. However, the promise of an education that did not interfere with the spirituality of Indigenous communities was not upheld. Residential Schools were church-run and enforced the removal of Indigenous children from communities. The schools were directly legislated through the Indian Act and were used for social welfare purposes. Children who were deemed, from a western perspective, to be living in unhealthy, poor, neglectful homes were taken and placed in Residential Schools. When the schools were shutting down, children who had been taken for supposed social welfare reasons were then to be placed up for adoption. This practice came to be known as the Sixties Scoop. Subsequently, after much lobbying, the federal and provincial governments handed over the delivery of the child welfare system practices over to individual First Nations. Although this change ensured that the identities of children would be maintained, the service providers were still forced to function within a colonial child welfare

system framework. The Canadian government enacted bill C-92 *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children, youth, and families* in 2018. The bill acknowledges the inherent sovereignty that Indigenous peoples have over their child welfare systems. The Sixties and Millennium Scoops have had many negative effects on Indigenous peoples. The removal of Indigenous children is framed as a humane and ethical practice because it removes the children from purported poverty, neglect, and abandonment. This positive messaging detracts attention from the primary goal of assimilation.

Despite the harmful attacks against us, as Indigenous people, we remain steadfast in our resurgence and revitalization. Today we raise awareness of the issues that affect us. We protest the destruction of the earth, the racist decisions of the court, and continue to work towards improving the lives of our peoples. We will continue to do so, for our families and our communities.

Chapter 2 the Child Welfare Industry

*You took our doll Betzy Barbara,
 whose tattered dress and wonky hair
 protected us from monsters under our bed.
 You thought you could get away with it.
 You used us,
 broke our soul,
 before we even knew
 what a soul was.
 You took so much from us
 to fill what you lost:
 motherly love in that teddy bear
 who should have saved you
 from the monsters lurking under your bed.*

It is important to discuss the history of the child welfare system to better understand the stories that we are sharing. We begin a timeline of acts, reviews, and policies. This is followed by a discussion of the devolution of the child welfare system into its' current form. After which the challenges that Indigenous and non-Indigenous child welfare agencies face will be explored. Finally, the history of the child welfare system will be analyzed in relation to the stories shared. As it currently exists, the Child welfare industry is equipped to help families restore themselves as it was initially designed to destroy said families.

The important acts, reviews, and policies to be discussed are *the Child Welfare Policy, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services Program, The Child and Family Services Authorities, and the Child and Family Services Act*. Each act and

policy worked to shape the child welfare system as it exists today. The *Child Welfare Policy* in Manitoba was created in 1982. The policy allowed for all southern Manitoba to have access to the child welfare system. However, services were limited for northern Manitoba (Johnston 11). Indigenous people living off-reserve had the same access to child welfare services as non-Indigenous peoples in the same area (Johnston 11). The government of Manitoba created the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in 1988 to closely examine “the relationship between [the] First Nations people of Manitoba and the justice system” (Hughes 87). The report had a dedicated chapter on the child welfare system. The report states:

that many of the issues facing First Nations people were rooted in a history of colonization; the residential school system; and the 1960s expansion of the child welfare system into First Nations communities, which had resulted in the adoption of a large population of children into non-First Nations families (Hughes 87).

In response to the report, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry - Child Welfare Initiative (AJI-CWI) was created. The initiative was a “response to the recommendation that the Government of Manitoba work with First Nations and Métis leaders to develop a plan that would result in First Nations delivering their child welfare system services throughout Manitoba, including the City of Winnipeg” (Hughes 88). This process did not begin until the nineties. In 1990 the Manitoba First Nations Child and Family Services Program was created by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). This program was created to transfer, or devolve, the administration of the child welfare system to local First Nations. INAC agreed to federal funding for the local First Nations. The child welfare system practices were also transformed. Resources for single parents were increased and juvenile probation services were created. It also became a requirement in many provinces that children know their backgrounds and be able to have exposure to their cultures (Sinclair and Dainard). Under the new policies, it was intended that First Nations would have

much greater control over the welfare of their children (Trocme, Knoke, Blackstock 579). In 2002 and 2003 *the Child and Family Services Authorities Act* was created. The act “created the foundation for designated child welfare authorities to provide oversight to child welfare agencies” (Hughes 88). This was a crucial first step in devolving Indigenous child welfare systems “from the Government of Manitoba to First Nations and Métis people” (Hughes 88). The act created four child welfare system authorities: The First Nations of Northern Manitoba Child and Family Services Authority (the Northern Authority); the First Nations of Southern Manitoba Child and Family Service Authority (the Southern Authority); the Métis Child and Family Services Authority (the Métis Authority); and the General Child and Family Services Authority (the General Authority) (Hughes 88). It also created the Standing Committee. The committee was comprised of the CEOs of the four Authorities, the Director of child welfare, as well as a member appointed by the Métis Authority (Hughes 88). The primary purpose of the committee was to ensure that the services allocated by the authorities would be consistent (Hughes 88). It is important to note that

as of 2003, Winnipeg CFS has been a separate branch within government. It is unique in that it does not have a board of directors but reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister within the Community Service Delivery Division. It also has an accountability relationship to the General Authority (Hughes 88).

Finally, *the Child and Family Services Act*, enacted in 1985, was created to develop the standards of services, “including practices and procedures relating to a child’s safety and security” (Hughes 91). The authorities are required to develop culturally appropriate standards for services, as well as ensuring services meet provincial standards (Hughes 91).

Devolution is the process of transferring control from one entity to another. The devolution process occurred from November 2003 until May 2005 (Hughes 89). The Winnipeg

Child and Family Services agency were the last to begin the process (Hughes 89). Before devolution “the province was divided into geographical areas and a single agency or government office was responsible for providing child protection services to all citizens in that area” (Hughes 89). The child welfare agencies that had serviced Manitoba were Island Lake CFS, Cree Nation CFS, Sagkeeng CFS, Anishinaabe CFS, Southeast CFS, Dakota Ojibwa CFS, departmental regional operations, CFS of Central Manitoba, Jewish CFS, Nisichawayasihk CFS, Kinosao Sipi Minisowin CFS, Awasis CFS, Intertribal CFS, Peguis CFS, West Region CFS, CFS Churchill, CFS of Western Manitoba, and CFS Winnipeg (Hughes 86).

Currently, each of the Authorities has province-wide jurisdiction. As a result, in any area of the province, there may be multiple child and family service agencies in operation. In Winnipeg, for instance, 19 of the 24 agencies mandated by one of the four Authorities are available to provide a full range of child protection services (Hughes 89). After devolution, the agencies were placed under the supervision of an authority. As described above, the four authorities that were created in the devolution process to oversee First Nations child welfare systems. The chart below depicts how the individual agencies were divided into four authorities.

The Authorities	The CFS agencies
the Northern Authority	Awasis, Cree Nation, Island Lake, Kinosao Sapi Minisowin, Nisichawayasihk, Opaskwayak, Nikan, Awasisik
The Southern Authority	Anishinaabe, Dakota Ojibwe, Intertribal, Peguis, Sagkeeng, Southeast, West Region, Animikii, All nations, Sandy Bay

The Métis Authority	Métis, Michif
The General Authority	Western Manitoba, Central Manitoba, Jewish, Winnipeg, rural and northern, Churchill

Figure 1 (Hughes 88)

While it may be assumed that the agencies were given more power under the devolution process such an assumption would be incorrect (Pompana 29). Child welfare system scholar Yvonne Pompana contends that “within the devolution process, First Nations have very little power to change policy or practice to more effectively meet the needs of the program administrators, front-line staff, or the community at large” (Pompana 29). The authorities and agencies are still held accountable by the same department of Family Services and Labour under the Manitoba government (Hughes 90).

It might also have been assumed that the devolution process may have reduced the number of issues that the agencies experience. This would also be incorrect. There are issues that all authorities face, and there are issues that Indigenous-led authorities face. There are systemic issues, including discriminatory funding and policies (Hughes 103). Other issues, such as high caseloads, frequent staff turnover and vacancies, poor training, and a lack of experience by supervisors (Hughes 103). Social workers often find that recommendations made are rarely implemented and “good practice is not recognized” (Hughes 103). The other issue found in the research is, in several cases, only the social workers and direct supervisors are privy to the details of most cases and there is, therefore, little to no accountability (Hughes 103).

Indigenous agencies face the same challenges as well as even more challenges as non-Indigenous agencies. Commissioner Ted Hughes illustrates that Indigenous agencies “are funded federally... at a much lower level, per child” and “there are jurisdictional disputes over what

costs can be recovered, and at what level” (Hughes 107). As will be discussed in greater detail in the section on the *InFocus* series, the child welfare system is indeed an industry, and as such Indigenous social workers are similarly forced to apprehend children to meet the financial needs of the agencies. On reserve, families have limited access to the wider range of services that are provided in larger cities or other communities (Hughes 107). Therefore, the agencies are often unable to provide adequate preventative measures for families in their care. Pompana writes that

First nations ‘controlled’ programs fall within the very narrow parameters of government mandates. These programs are strictly monitored and evaluated by systems and bureaucrats who have no or limited experience with or knowledge of different cultural world views, philosophies, and practices; consequently, it becomes difficult for them to defend or support a different way to carry out the daily responsibilities (Pompana 29).

Therefore, the agencies are designed in such a way that the Indigenous social workers are caught in a tight bind. They have little recourse, or alternative, to child apprehension, and they are held to such strict and limited standards that they are often unable to provide adequate resources for the families they are trying to help. This is on top of the intergenerational trauma that workers must face. The Residential Schools and Sixties Scoop removed generations of children from the care of their families. Now, as they become parents themselves, they have not had the opportunity to learn healthy parenting styles. This challenge is compounded by addictions issues, mental health issues, and familial issues that arise in Indigenous communities because of the deliberate breakdown of Indigenous social structures.

I had tried to find the agencies involved in the cases of Natasha Reimer, Tina Fontaine, and Phoenix Sinclair. I discovered that three CFS agencies were involved in Fontaine’s case. However, in what is arguably an attempt to avoid accountability, they were labelled as agency one, agency two, and agency three in the final report by the Children’s Advocacy agency

(Manitoba Children's Advocate *a Special Report*). There was at least one agency involved with both Reimer and Phoenix. If it were possible to determine the agencies involved, one might have had greater insight into the exact issues that the agencies and children faced.

There is also the issue of accountability. Only the case worker and direct supervisor know the details of any case. It has been suggested that this direct relationship makes it easier to have accountability. However, I argue that this is not the case as it makes it easier for case workers to cover their mistakes and for the supervisors to look the other way. By having more people involved in a particular case there is automatically more accountability between case workers and supervisors, at least in theory. These people are responsible for making life and death decisions which is a huge burden to place on only one or two people. The poor decisions of case workers resulted in the deaths of Tina Fontaine and Phoenix Sinclair.

Now that the full history of CFS in Manitoba has been discussed, we can move on to discuss the particulars of how the authorities are run. The next section provides even more context for the issues that arise in the child welfare industry. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of stories of children, and families, that have been involved in the child welfare system. Each story is unique, but there are common themes that arise within them. Melissa Ridgen, the host of Aboriginal Peoples Television Network's (APTN) podcast *InFocus*, highlights the common themes of the child welfare system in her 3-episode series on the child welfare industry. The stories that were shared on *InFocus* demonstrated how CFS was not the harm-reducing, family-preserving, humanitarian system that many Canadians believe that it is.

The Canadian peacemaker myth, defined by Paulette Regan, is the belief that the Canadian state is inherently benevolent (Regan 83). Unlike the United States, the formation of Canada avoided battle and bloodshed. Rather, the crown used diplomacy and nation to nation to

treaties outlining how the land would be shared between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. (Regan 83). This myth was previously challenged herein within the discussion on treaties and the Indian Act, but it also applies to the child welfare system. There are two common beliefs that settlers hold about the child welfare system. The first is founded upon notions that children are often taken for good reasons such as in cases of abuse or neglect (*InFocus*). The second is based on the idea that the child welfare system is designed to help and is doing its' best for families in its' care (*InFocus*). Settlers believe that the system is therefore inherently well-meaning, and any negative outcomes are the result of a lack of capacity. This type of viewpoint overlooks the flaws integral to the child welfare system, as well as the history behind the child welfare system in Canada.

The destruction of Indigenous families can be clearly shown through the various stories of child welfare system survivors and their families. Melissa Ridgen hosts several guests throughout her pod cast. Former foster parents, former social workers, and former children in care were interviewed. People were also able to call in, comment on live streams, and send tweets to the show. Stacy's story is just one of the many stories that were shared in the podcast. One such story is that of Stacy which was the only narrative in the podcast to be shared from beginning to end and makes it the most useful in discussing the podcast.

Stacy was travelling through Ontario, with her children, back home to her reserve. They stopped at a hotel for the night, and the police knocked on their door. The police claimed that they must investigate Stacy because, via an anonymous tip, of being a meth addict who was running a meth lab in the hotel room, which came from an anonymous tip. The police, and CFS, apprehended Stacy's children despite having found no evidence of drugs in the hotel room (*InFocus*). CFS told Stacy she would have to get a drug test. Stacy tried to book a drug to prove

her innocence. However, CFS did not schedule her the test through their services, and they would not accept the results from the test that Stacy received at the hospital. CFS did not provide any other services (*InFocus*). In December 2016, Stacy finally got her children back at that point she had been separated from her children for a total of eight months. CFS offered her \$1500 in gift certificates which felt like hush money (*InFocus*).

The actions that CFS took are not the actions of a system that helps families or protects children. The police were right to investigate the anonymous claims of drug abuse. However, having found no evidence of drugs, they should have left the family alone. Had CFS been trying to look out for the best interest of the children, they would have ensured that a timely and acceptable drug had been completed. They would have also given her the proper resources and information needed to move towards family reunification.

Four common themes were highlighted throughout the *Infocus* podcast including that the child welfare system is an industry, privacy laws protect the industry, and the child welfare system creates lateral violence within Indigenous communities and increases isolation in children and families. Ridgen begins the podcast by saying that “Child and Family Services is an industry. It is an industry where the children are a commodity” (*InFocus*). The more children in care, the more money the system receives (*InFocus*). The system is therefore designed to keep children in care rather than reuniting families to keep the money flowing within the industry (*InFocus*). Of the \$514,000,000 that goes into the child welfare system services, only 5% of that money goes towards the safety and wellbeing of actual children in care (*InFocus*). If the system was designed to help families, more money would be allocated to programs and services that support families to stay together rather than separating them.

Ridgen further argues that there are federal and provincial laws that serve to protect the child welfare industry rather than protecting the children and families. On-air Melissa asks that names and locations are changed so that no one participating can be legally implicated (*InFocus*). These restrictions also made it difficult for families to talk about their experiences. Many of the guests hesitated in sharing their stories or were surprised when they were given a different name on air.

In Stacy's story, she was not allowed to get her case file despite the case being closed. As discussed above, there were many things that the child welfare system did wrong while handling Stacy's case. If Stacy had her file, she could prove to the media, and therefore the public, that the child welfare system is not a kind, benevolent system that many believe it is. Ridgen commented several times throughout the series that the privacy laws only work to protect the industry. The laws make it difficult for stories to be shared. Therefore, not many people in Canada can hear the truths of the system.

Lateral violence that the child welfare industry creates was also discussed on the show. Ridgen commented several times that the child welfare industry is used as a tool to threaten families in disputes within communities. In Stacy's case, she was dealing with an old landlord who called the police claiming that Stacy was a drug addict (*InFocus*). In my case threatened removal was used as a weapon. When we acted in a way that our foster parents disagreed with, they threatened to have us taken away. In many communities, people threaten to call Child and Family Services when they are fighting or disagreeing with other community members (*InFocus*). The child welfare system is being used as a tool to destroy families and communities.

The final common theme focuses on the isolation in families and children. Stacy's children developed flashbacks and severe separation anxiety. It was something that Stacy and her

family dealt with every day. Natasha Reimer Okemow¹, and her friend Heaven, also talked about the isolation that the child welfare system creates within its organization. Natasha was apprehended and adopted at four. She found her birth family at age eighteen. Heaven's story is similar (*InFocus*). Both young adults talked about how they learned at a young age to not get attached to people or places (*InFocus; Bringing our Children Home 5*). Once they found their biological families, both young adults talked about how their family members felt like strangers (*InFocus*). This is something that I can relate to. My siblings feel like strangers despite us having stayed at the same home for nine years. My birth family and I have very little to talk about when I go visit.

In summary, the peacemaker myth that suggested Canada is inherently benevolent and well-meaning was deconstructed. Debunking notions that children are apprehended for good reasons, and the people within the system is trying are trying their best. These myths are disproven by Stacy's story, as well as the comments made by Natasha Reimer Okemow and Heaven. If the system was focused on the welfare of the children, they would not have been removed without evidence. The system would also have supported family reunification. We can see, as Ridgen argued, that the child welfare system is an industry, privacy laws protect the industry, the industry creates lateral violence within communities, and finally increases isolation in children and families. Child welfare agencies receive money per child in the system and therefore the more children taken, the more money the industry receives. The privacy laws

¹ Trying to decide on how to refer to Natasha was difficult. In her podcast she refers to herself as Natasha Lynn Starr. In various articles the names Natasha Reimer or Natasha Reimer Okemow were used. In her podcast, Natasha discusses how she changed names to fit in with various crowds. Names are important and hold a lot of power. Therefore, I refer to Natasha by either Reimer or Reimer Okemow, depending on how she was referred to in the sources that I used. It was important for me to respect the identities and stories of the girls that I researched, and this seemed to be the best fit.

around the industry only serve to protect the industry, rather than the parents and children. The laws make it impossible, or very difficult, to discuss certain cases or situations that arise. Finally, isolation and lateral violence are perpetuated by the child welfare system. People use the system as a threat during disputes. Children's families are turned into strangers. The children also learn to not grow attached to anything or anyone. The CFS is not the benevolent, family-preserving system that many would have us believe.

Chapter 3 the Stories of the Stolen Girls

*I pick up the phone
 and talk
 of what goes on behind closed doors
 the names that were called
 the pushing
 the yelling
 the way you made us fit in
 but never
 feel that we belonged
 forgive me, our secret is out now*

It is important to share the stories of the stolen girls as stories are powerful tools in society. They often show common beliefs and values held by individuals in the larger society. The stories shared will illuminate the many challenges of the child welfare system for Indigenous peoples in Canada. I attempt to remain faithful to the telling of the girls' stories to honour their spirits and legacies.

*Your brain gathers the facts:
 siblings separated by lies
 of a nation who had no need for them,
 no space for five broken souls,
 a manufactured family,
 white mother, white father,
 who white-washed these walls.*

The first story shared is that of five-year-old Phoenix Sinclair. She is the youngest girl to be discussed, making her story the most difficult to read. Phoenix and her father share the same last name. To avoid confusion, I refer to Phoenix by her first name and her father by his last name in this chapter.

Phoenix Sinclair was born to teenage Samantha Kematch and Steven Sinclair. Both were in the custody of CFS at the time and had suffered neglect and abuse while in the system. They were living on social assistance, with no high school education, and suffered from substance abuse issues (Hughes 20). There were no preparations for Phoenix's birth, and she was apprehended (Hughes 20). Phoenix remained in care for the first few months of her life (Hughes 20). She was bounced around from the homes of Kematch, Sinclair, Sinclair's sisters, and his friends Kim Edwards and Rohan Stephenson (Hughes 21). Edwards and Stephenson offered Phoenix a safe and loving environment (Hughes 21). Phoenix was placed in care again at the age of three (Hughes 20). By the time of her second placement in care, her parents had separated. Kematch ended up with Wesley Mackay (Hughes 21). Phoenix was returned to her mother six weeks later despite the ongoing issues of addiction (Hughes 21). She was never placed in daycare, nursery school, or any community programs (Hughes 21). There was a total of thirteen reports of abuse or neglect and twenty-seven case workers and supervisors (Hughes 20, 22; *Manitoba Claims*). In March 2005, the file was opened and closed for the last time in five days (Hughes 22). Kematch and Mackay moved from Winnipeg to Fisher River, where they killed young Phoenix (Hughes 20). The only witness to the murder was Mackay's twelve-year-old son (Hughes 24). When asked about Phoenix's whereabouts, Kematch and Mackay said that she was with her father (Hughes 24). However, her body was found a short while later. Her mother and stepfather were convicted of first-degree murder nine months later (*Manitoba Claims*).

In comparison to the case of Phoenix where provincial reports were very thorough Tina Fontaine's murder case has very little detailed information despite a large amount of media attention on the case. What we do know came from the large collection of articles written about the murder. The details of her encounters with various systems and institutions would be held in are court documents and case worker files which are largely inaccessible. Therefore, there is still so much we do not know about Tina's death.

What we do know is: Tina Fontaine was born on New Year's Day 1999, while her mother was in the custody of Child and Family Services (APTN; Conn; Malone). She is from Sagkeeng First Nation (Callison 53; Brule 337; Marchinko 19; Conn; Dean 157; Macdonald 2; Palmater 260; Razack 1). Due to her parents drinking problems, Tina was placed with her great aunt who was also Sagkeeng First Nation when she was five years old (Ward; Conn; Malone). She remained with her great aunt and uncle for ten years (Palmater 260). When Tina was fifteen, she went to Winnipeg to connect with her mother (APTN; Conn; Malone). Her social worker placed her in a hotel room during her time in Winnipeg (Callison 53; Conn; Razack 1-2; Taylor). At the time, Fontaine's mother was engaged in the sex trade and struggled with alcoholism (Conn, Palmater 260). Tina had been in Winnipeg for a month before her murder and fell into addiction, homelessness, and sexual exploitation (Blackburn; APTN; Malone; Lodge). She was also struggling with the murder of her father, who had been killed in 2011 (Callison 53; Malone; Lodge). The teen was not offered counselling and struggled with her grief (Conn, Palmater 260). During the days before her disappearance, Tina had been in contact with police, paramedics, and her social worker (Callison 53; Conn; Palmater 260; Razack 1-2; Malone; Lodge). There are little to no details of her encounter with these systems given, most likely due to privacy laws. She was reported missing on August 9, 2014, when she was fifteen years old (Blackburn, Conn).

Her body was found eight days later in the Red River (APTN, Callison 53, Conn, Marchinko 20, Dean 157, Palmater 254, Razack 1-2). She was wrapped in a comforter in a bag and weighed down with rocks in the riverbed (APTN; Callison 53; Macdonald 2; Palmater 254; Malone). A year later, police arrested Raymond Cormier for the death of Tina Fontaine. Cormier was one of the last people who had been in contact with Tina (Callison 54). Tina's family would never see justice, as he was acquitted of her murder on February 23rd, 2018 (APTN; Brule 337; Conn; Malone).

Like Phoenix and Tina, Natasha's story shows the devastating failures of the child welfare system, but in her case, it also offers hope for other children in care. Unlike the tragic endings of the other girls' stories Natasha is still living and pursuing a university degree. Natasha Reimer was born on March 6, 1994 (Okemow-Reimer). She lived with her biological family up until the age of four (Treleven 4). She was apprehended by the child welfare industry and placed in an adoptive home where she remained until she was fourteen (Okemow-Reimer, Treleven 4). Natasha does not go into the details of her failed adoption. She simply states that it fell apart. At the age of eighteen, Natasha aged out of a group home (Treleven 4). She spent seven years in the system, in a total of twelve foster homes with six different social workers. Her various placements included the psychology ward at the hospital, a group home, and multiple private family homes. In December 2011 Natasha contracted a life-threatening illness. She saw a doctor six times in five days. On her last visit, she was rushed to a Winnipeg hospital via ambulance for emergency surgery. Her colon was removed and replaced with a colostomy bag. Natasha spent two months in the hospital. She missed her final year of high school and therefore her first year of university was pushed back (Okemow-Reimer). Natasha is now a board member

of Youth in Care and founded the group Foster Up which is a peer support group for individuals who were raised in care (Treleaven 3).

Like Natasha, I too am lucky to have survived my experience in the child welfare system. I am the youngest of five children and the only girl. I was born in April of 1994. The five of us were apprehended while I was just a baby. We bounced from foster home to foster home until I was about 10 months of age. At 10 months, we were placed in a permanent foster home. We were never officially adopted but rather spent a lifetime year in the same home as a permanent placement. By the time I was 14, three of my brothers were either kicked out by my foster parents or placed elsewhere by our social worker. My time as a child was complicated. We had our moments where it felt like we were a family, but we also experienced a lot of tumultuous times. Starting when I was about 12, my foster parents started taking in other foster kids. Our family looked different every year. I stayed at the permanent placement until I was 23 at which point my foster parents and I had a major falling out.

Phoenix's Story

No one ever tells you how to grieve,

that the sadness never fades.

It just rests deep in your heart.

The child welfare system failed all of us. For Phoenix, the first failure was the lack of supports that was offered to her family. Shortly after Phoenix was born, Kematch and Sinclair had suffered the loss of a pregnancy. The child welfare system services had discontinued the support worker for Kematch, and Sinclair and grief counselling was never put in place (Hughes 21). The lack of supports did leave Phoenix's family vulnerable to issues stemming from unresolved issues manifesting as addiction. Although CFS never provided referrals or

connections, the parents had access to community supports including the Boys and Girls Club of Winnipeg, where supervisor Nikki Humenchuk came to know the parents quite well (Hughes 28). CFS did not utilize this connection to help the parents but instead left the family to fend for themselves. The parents were in no condition emotionally or physically to look after Phoenix. Sinclair had acknowledged his shortcomings. He wanted to find work for himself and daycare for Phoenix, but he also needed help with his addictions issue. CFS did not help find Sinclair a job, Phoenix a daycare placement, nor did they offer addictions counselling (Hughes 23). Had the right supports been in place, this father would have had an opportunity to properly care for Phoenix.

Following their initial failures, CFS continued this pattern when they later removed Phoenix from the home of Edwards and Stephenson where she had been offered a safe and loving environment. She could have had a stable and secure childhood had Phoenix stayed with Edwards and Stephenson. This issue raises the question of the purpose of child welfare services. Do agencies focus on the reunion of families, or the well-being of the children in care, and are these things compatible? In Phoenix's case, the answer is not so clear. There were three approaches that CFS could have taken: let Phoenix stay with Edwards and Stephenson, return the child to Kematch and Mackay, or return her to Sinclair with proper supports in place. As they had not provided supports for the parents or a means of changing their circumstances, if they had the best interest of Phoenix in mind, then CFS should have left her with Edwards and Stephenson. If the purpose of CFS is to reunite families, then the best option would be to place Phoenix with her father after he received help finding a job and given proper treatment for his addictions. Instead of supporting the parent who admitted his failings and requested help, CFS

returned Phoenix to her mother who had neither requested nor received any supports, and her new partner Mackay. With no clear purpose, CFS played a game of chance with their ward.

Phoenix had multiple social workers involved in her case (Options 29; *Manitoba Claims*). Commissioner Ted Hughes writes that he “acknowledges that Phoenix Sinclair and her family had many different workers over five years, each with limited involvement in the family’s life” (Options 29). This was a detriment to the well-being of Phoenix. As there were multiple workers responsible for Phoenix, there was simultaneously no single person with the responsibility to follow up on this case. It could be argued that at least one worker should have noticed the abuse and neglect that Phoenix had experienced, but the high turnover rate of multiple workers means that she fell through the cracks.

In addition, Phoenix’s files were opened and closed too quickly. The first time in care, Phoenix was bounced around from home to home. The second and third times in care, workers moved to close the files hastily. The report on her death notes that “files were closed when further investigation was warranted” (Hughes 22). Workers had focused on immediate safety issues rather than long-term risks (Hughes 22). This again calls into question the purpose of the child welfare system. Do they exist to address only immediate danger or to prevent long-term damage? The best answer should be both, depending on the circumstances of the case. However, one must acknowledge that in certain cases, it could be difficult to surmise how to best respond to the needs of the child which only reiterates the need for taking the appropriate time in considering the options. The next issue is the inadequate training of the social workers who should have looked out for both long-term and immediate danger. The lack of training, paired with the high number of workers involved, and the lack of in-person visits allowed those who were responsible for her care to miss the signs of eventual fatal levels of abuse (Hughes 20).

High turnover meant case plans were prepared but not followed through (Hughes 21). Tragically social workers also failed to check the backgrounds of additional adults involved in Phoenix's life. Kematch's second partner, Mackay, had a well-documented violent and dangerous background (Hughes 22). Had even a basic background check been done social workers could have identified the large risk that Mackay posed. This again calls into question the training of the social workers. A well-trained worker should have done all the appropriate checks before returning Phoenix to her mother or found a better placement. Placement should never be left to chance.

Tina's Story

It was not her that let me down

but everyone else.

They stole, lied, cheated

me out of a mom, a childhood.

They destroyed my innocence:

The safety of a moss bag

in the name of a country

that only protects its own.

There was no game of chance in the case of Tina Fontaine. The institutions that were supposed to protect Tina neglected her due to racism, indifference, or carelessness. Looking at the history of hospitals, the police, and the child welfare industry shows that they were never meant to protect Indigenous peoples. Early hospitals were run by the church which has been

instrumental to the process of colonization. The prejudice that existed in the church would have seeped into all programs and services operated by the church. To this day, there are countless reports of abuse or neglect of Indigenous peoples in hospitals. The police were also never meant to protect First Nations people. The North West Mounted Police, now known as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), was founded by the Hudson's Bay Company to help patrol the vast colonial frontier and control the Indigenous peoples. Later in Canadian history, the RCMP was used to keep First Nations on reserves, enforce the building of the railway, and squash the Red River Rebellion (Wilfred Laurier). The police forces were created to patrol and control the Indigenous peoples on Turtle Island. They were therefore never meant to protect the people that they controlled. There are still many well-documented cases of violent encounters at the hands of police, and/or neglect of Indigenous people. Additionally, as discussed earlier, the child welfare industry evolved out of the practices of Residential schools. All these colonial institutions are founded upon racist assumptions and practices designed to facilitate the eradication of Indigenous peoples. Therefore, it is not surprising that these systems rarely protect the Indigenous children that encounter them.

Tina had contact with three different colonial institutions before her disappearance: the hospital, the police, and the child welfare industry (APTN, Callison 53, Malone). There is no information provided on any actions taken during her hospital stay. There is also very little information given on her subsequent encounter with the police. Winnipeg police chief confirmed that a field trainer and trainee had contact with Tina during a spot check where Tina was found with an older man, who was driving while intoxicated. The man was consequently detained by police, but Tina was let go despite an active missing person's report for this girl (APTN). There was also very little information given on her encounters with the child welfare

agency. Tina had disclosed to her case worker that she was sexually assaulted by a sixty-two-year-old Raymond Cormier (APTN; Conn; Malone). Although the actual response of the social worker was not known the clear lack of report and charges would indicate a lack of appropriate response or follow up. It was also reported that Tina had contact with her case worker shortly before she went missing, however, she ended up walking away during this visit (APTN; Malone).

Given the minimal amount of information in the research, there remain many unanswered questions. The first set of questions centers on the social worker's decision to place a fifteen-year-old girl alone in a hotel. Why was Tina placed in a hotel? Was it because there were no other placements for her? Where was a supervisor during her hotel stay? Was it a contracted worker? Why did they allow Tina to leave the premises? The next set of questions have to do with Tina's well-being and care. Why was there no grief counselling put into place? Why was she in the hospital? Why was she discharged? Did the hospital know that there was a missing person's report filed? Why did the police let her go despite the active missing person's file? Finally, we must ask questions about the social worker and the disclosure of sexual assault. How did the social worker respond to the disclosure of sexual assault? Was there any follow-up? Why was she allowed to leave the social worker's presence? Why is there no record of statements or charges with the police? Although they were not publicly addressed, one can only hope that the answers remain in files somewhere.

Without any insight or answers to our questions, we are left to wonder if indifference, or carelessness, also played a role. Did the hospital staff disregard Tina, only hoping to get through a night shift? Police officers may have been near the end of their shift and just wanting to be done. Did they moved quickly through their spot checks, or did simply not care that Tina, a

young Indigenous child, was found with an intoxicated man? The public will never know the truth behind Tina's encounters.

Although they are at the end of a very long line of people, CFS workers were the ones who ultimately failed Tina. While the large case loads placed on social workers may have meant that they work through the case files as quickly so they could achieve their goals, this is no excuse for failing in their duty of care. Hotel stays have been a controversial practice in the child welfare system. Not only did Tina Fontaine run away from her placement, but another girl of the same age was also brutally assaulted by another foster child who had been staying at the same hotel (Baum; Lambert; Taylor). The two children had been walking together when an argument erupted between them (*Teen girl beaten in downtown Winnipeg*). The girl was rushed to hospital in critical condition and was later taken off life support (*Teen girl beaten in downtown Winnipeg*). The boy, who was also fifteen, was charged with assault (*Teen girl beaten in downtown Winnipeg*). These events took place shortly after Tina Fontaine's body was found. There is a systemic problem with hotel usage as placements for foster children. The question must be asked: why were they allowed to wander downtown Winnipeg by themselves? Where was their supervisor?

A *Globe and Mail* employee launched an investigation into the child welfare system after the murder of Tina Fontaine. The investigator found several alarming problems that include "evidence of prolonged hotel stays, questionable supervision, possible security concerns, and an overwhelmed after-hours child welfare system phone line that sometimes-kicked emergency calls to an answering service" (Baum). The issue of hotel placements did not begin, or end, with Tina's case. After this series of disasters, the Manitoba government announced that it was ending the practice of placing children in hotels (Baum; Taylor). Then Minister of healthy living and

family services, Kerri Irvin-Ross, announced that the practice would be ended within Winnipeg by June 1st, 2015 (Quan, *All Manitoba Kids in CFS Care are now out of Hotels*). A deadline of December 1st was put in place for foster children outside the city limits of Winnipeg (*All Manitoba Kids in CFS Care are now out of Hotels*). Other provinces Subsequently admitted to using hotel placements in rare emergency cases in Ontario, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland and Labrador (Quan). The *Globe and Mail* did some research after the announcement to see whether the government followed through with its plan. The newspaper found

The last statistics posted on the government's website dates from December 2015. A request for updated numbers, filed by The Canadian Press under Manitoba's freedom-of-information law, was rejected because the data are no longer collected centrally from child welfare agencies across the province (Lambert).

I was similarly unable to find any data regarding hotel placements for Manitoba. There is no way to know if the government followed through with its promise or simply stopped documenting the processes.

Natasha's Story

*Did they tell you that you do not belong,
an apple covered in ice?
They say I am safe
Wish I could believe.
I am not really here,
I can disappear.*

My analysis of Natasha's experiences reveals many similar questions about her story. The first set of questions focus on her time in foster care: why was she initially apprehended?

Why did the adoption fall through? Why so many home placements? What was her experience like in the group home? The next set of questions pertains to her experiences in the hospital: why was she repeatedly returned home? Why was the life-saving surgery questioned? What were the results, and implications, of the inquiry into her group home manager's decision? What was her diagnosis? How is her health now? Finally, there remains the question about her sibling's stories. Were they like Natasha's experiences? How did they differ?

The issue of privacy is complicated because Natasha is still living. We must respectfully address her story and acknowledge that there are things that she may not want people to know. She may, or may not, know the details of her own story. Natasha gives many examples of her experiences but there are details that she does not share. She does not go into detail about her failed adoption, just as Natasha does not go into detail about her hospital stay. All we know is that she was adopted at age four and the adoption fell through when she was fourteen. All we know about her hospital stay is that she was returned home many times despite knowing that she needed life-saving surgery. She does, however, go into details about her emotions and experiences in school and the aftermath of her hospital visit.

The experiences of her adoption and Natasha's hospital stay are extremely personal and should not be privy to general curiosity. Therefore, I need to address the issue of questions that need to be asked versus certain questions that I simply wanted to ask. Questions that need to be asked focus on how the industry, and hospital, failed Natasha. For example, questions about why she was apprehended, her home placements, why she was repeatedly returned home from the emergency room, and the results and implications of the inquiry into her group home supervisor's decision are all relevant. These questions directly address system failures. Then there are questions that I would like to know the answers to. These questions explore her

experiences in the child welfare industry, her experiences of the failed adoption, her experiences in a group home, and her diagnosis and current health. However, these questions are more personal. Natasha chose to withhold her experiences of her failed adoption, group home, and her health for a reason and we must respect her wishes.

Like they did with the case of Phoenix Sinclair and Tina Fontaine, the child welfare system played a game of chance with Natasha Reimer. Adoption, foster home placements, group homes, and hotel rooms are all a gamble if there is no monitoring or follow-up. The workers in the system hope that the parents and child, or children, placed in their care will bond but there is no guarantee that they will. The system also takes a chance on the safety of the child. Even with appropriate background (which would have saved Phoenix Sinclair) without proper follow up there is no guarantee that the placement is safe and suitable for the child.

As Phoenix's hospital records are unknown, we cannot determine if she had similarities with Natasha and Tina's stories, who were both letdown and overlooked by the hospital. Tina was a documented missing person and was let go. Natasha, however, was severely ill and continuously let go.

The other game of chance begins when children age out of care. Aging out, as described by Natasha, is "when a child reaches eighteen or nineteen... [and] is suddenly let out of foster care" with "no one to check up on [them]" (Okemow-Reimer). Once a child reaches adulthood, they are left to fend for themselves whether "[they] are ready or not" (Okemow-Reimer). Alternatively, if the child chooses to continue their education, they can remain under the purview of the child welfare system for a longer time while studying. A successful aging out is based on what supports the young adult has around them. In Natasha's case, she had the support of her friends and her group home supervisor Stella. She also created additional supports for herself

through Foster Up and found it in Youth in Care. The Foster Up group meets twice a month at the University of Winnipeg to talk about the challenges and opportunities provided for youth in care or youth previously in care (Hobson). Youth in Care is a national charitable organization comprised of youth and alumni of the industry. The founding members, Lisa H., Carleen J., Caroline M., Twila M, Alix R., Troy R., and John T., met at the welfare conference 1985 in Vancouver. They saw a gap in the community and Youth in Care was legally incorporated on December 4, 1990. The group provides research, policy development, and the training of caregivers and professionals (*Youth in Care*).

Not every child has the support and resources to successfully age out of care. Not every child has the agency that Natasha had. The chances of a successful aging out are based on the child's ability to find or create supports.

Natasha's story raises the issue of who the case workers should listen to. If they listened to their wards, CFS could place them in better situations, work on reuniting families, work on issues such as addiction, bullying, and loneliness, and finally, they could better assure their wards would be safer and happier in their placements. By listening to the foster parents, case workers may miss the needs, wants, and viewpoints of their wards. For example, while Natasha was at school the (failed) adoptive parents who were now acting as emergency foster parents packed up her belongings and called CFS. Consequently, Natasha was called to the school office and apprehended (Okemow-Reimer). The actions were meant for the comfort of the failed adopted parents and not the best interest of Natasha. As she says in her podcast that she felt as though her concerns were not heard by her social workers (Okemow-Reimer). At least, in this case, CFS did not act in the best interest of the child.

Natasha's story is like the stories of Phoenix and Tina. Like Tina, Natasha had encountered the hospital. The hospital failed to properly care for either girl. Natasha was repeatedly allowed to return home despite the clear distress that she was in. The only difference was that Tina was a missing child and should have been kept by the hospital staff for her safety. Natasha, on the other hand, should have been kept because of her obvious medical distress. In both cases, the hospital staff failed to properly care for their patients. In a similar way to Phoenix, Natasha had many case workers on her file which allowed for both girls to slip through the cracks.

In summary, the child welfare industry continues to play a game of chance with their wards. This is illustrated by the cases of Phoenix Sinclair, Natasha Reimer, and Tina Fontaine. The CFS failed to provide proper supports for any of the families, failed to provide consistent or appropriate follow-up for any of the girls, and failed to provide safe and supportive housing. As a result of these many failures, the girls' subsequent interactions with hospitals and police led to ultimately tragic outcomes when none of these institutions adequately had an appropriate level of care and concern.

Common Threads within the Girls Stories

*You used to hear laughter,
a piano drifting upstairs.
The kettle boiling used to calm you.
Now you feel the snow
melting into your canvas shoes,
freezing your toes.*

Several common themes run throughout the stories that have been shared: grief, intergenerational trauma, the movement between the reserve and the city, education, isolation and rejection, and community supports. I argue that community is essential to the survival of children in care. To begin, I will discuss each child's movement between the reservation and the city. Subsequently, I will tie the movement between reserve and city to a discussion of the isolation and rejection that each child experienced in care, after which I will discuss the supports that were, or were not, offered to each child. Then I will discuss the children's education. Finally, I will tie in how community supports were essential to the survival, or death, of each child.

The relationship between place and supports is complicated in the stories I have shared. For example, Reimer remained in primarily small white towns and the city of Winnipeg and therefore had access to schools and community supports. However, Fontaine was raised primarily in Sagkeeng First Nation and moved to Winnipeg when she was fourteen. Although she lived in Winnipeg at the time of her death, Tina did not find access to supports, and her needs were ignored by police, the hospital, and Child and Family Services. Just because Fontaine lived in Winnipeg does not mean that she always received any of the services that she needed even though they should have been readily accessible. Phoenix Sinclair spent most of her life young in Winnipeg or Fisher River First Nation but did not have access to any supports in her short life. Phoenix's parents were neglected by Child and Family Services. Therefore, they were left to neglect their child. The Sinclair family was left with little to no supports. Phoenix was too little to understand what was going on. It should have been up to the adults in her life to check in on her. However, there were no adults, in the family, community, or in the child welfare system, who lived up to their role or responsibilities. The relationship between place and supports is

tenuous as the existence of supports does not always guarantee that they are accessible or accessed.

Racism and colonialism also play into the relationship between place and services. On the reserve, very few services and supports are offered due to limited resources and capacity. This is because the reserves were created to place Indigenous peoples away from the cities and they were also therefore far away from potential supports. The reserve was never meant to be a place for First Nations to thrive, as it was hoped that we would eventually disappear, and it, therefore, makes sense that few services are offered on reserves. Providing additional supports on reserves would be counter to the stated goal of the eventual elimination of Indigenous peoples. Conversely in the city, where resources were widely available, it was the racism and prejudice within the systems that make them inaccessible to young women like Tina. Indigenous peoples have historically been blamed for their situation rather than being viewed as a victim of circumstance in need of help to overcome their problem. Therefore, it made sense that Tina went unchecked by the systems mandated to care for her, even though they were readily accessible in an urban setting. These systems and institutions were never created for her safety but rather they have functioned since the beginning for the benefit of the settler society.

The circumstances become even more tenuous when we look at the physical isolation of the reserve system to the additional social isolation that each child experienced. There are numerous examples of the social isolation that Reimer experienced. Two examples that stand out to me the most. First, she knew from a young age that she looked different from her parents and peers. Reimer's first memory was of her standing in her crib looking at herself in the mirror. Her adopted mom came in and Reimer noticed that her adopted mom had lighter skin than she did. Reimer states in her podcast that "it's hard to blend in when you're the only brown kid"

(Okemow-Reimer). In school, her peers bullied her for looking different. They called her names, asked invasive questions, and secluded her from group activities. Reimer always knew that she was different, but she did not have the resources to figure out why. Racism and prejudice are very common in small prairie towns. The small towns were created for farmers to have access to the lands and to create a community of like-minded individuals. It is this prejudice that places Reimer as an outsider.

Tina Fontaine had an unstable mother, her father had passed away, and there are no mentions of her friends in any article. People often turn to alcohol to mask their pain. People may also turn to relationships to mask their feelings of isolation. Being in Winnipeg made it easier for her to access drugs and alcohol. Her location also made it easier for people to prey on her need for social contact and relationship leading to her exploitation. In contrast to her upbringing with her aunt on the reserve, in the absence of any meaningful or supportive relationships in the city, the social isolation of Tina Fontaine becomes readily apparent. Phoenix Sinclair experienced similar isolation to that of Tina Fontaine. In her young life, Phoenix also experienced isolation from her peers and community. She was not in daycare or nursery school (Hughes 21). Therefore, she had very few peers to relate with and no community supports to keep an eye out for her. Following her move away from Winnipeg with her mother and stepfather, Phoenix's parents did not make the effort to place her in school, nor did Child and Family Services and she became completely isolated.

Unlike the tragic outcomes of Tina Fontaine and Phoenix Sinclair, Natasha Reimer's success is due to the community that she needed. Her first friend was Max, another foster child that had lived in two homes with Reimer (Okemow-Reimer). In addition to her aunt and uncle, she also made many friends along her journey: Jamie, Cara, Joel (Okemow-Reimer). Each

person offered support in their way. They drove her around, helped her get to appointments, fed her, and made her feel like she had a family (Okemow-Reimer). One of the biggest supports in her life was her group home advisor, Stella. Stella not only consented to life-saving surgery for Reimer, but she also gave up her job to care for Reimer (Okemow-Reimer). Her proximity to Winnipeg made it easier for Reimer to access easier for her to access people and services. Unfortunately, Tina and Phoenix did not have access to the same type of healthy relationships.

Despite many challenges, Reimer managed to graduate high school and attend university. School was her escape from her foster homes. She became the grade nine class representative, joined the choir and the band, played soccer, and joined in many activities (Okemow-Reimer). Her grades were well enough to have her accepted into the University of Winnipeg (Okemow-Reimer). Despite her many placements and her health, Reimer succeeded academically. This success can be attributed to her community. There is no information on Fontaine's schooling. However, it could be assumed that the teen did not access schooling since she was trying to survive in the hotel or on the streets. Her story may have been different had she been able to access more community supports. Phoenix Sinclair was never given the opportunity to access any community supports, as she was not allowed to attend daycare, nursery school, or any community programs (Hughes 21). This lack of care directly relates to her untimely death. Had there been any access to community supports, Phoenix might have found an adult who could have intervened on her behalf. Of the three girls, Reimer succeeded in life due to her access to community and supports.

Reimer's success and legacy extend beyond her own life as she created the group Foster Up. Based in the University of Winnipeg, this peer support group helps former children in care succeed at university (Reimer). Despite her challenges, Reimer surrounded herself with positive

role models and succeeded in achieving her academic goals. My own story is an example of bittersweet success as well. Like Reimer, I also succeeded at school, attended university, and created a group of friends to support me. School and academics were my escape from unhappy home life. I integrated my healing process into my educational journey as I documented the experiences of children in care within my research. The importance of community also comes up in the agency that Reimer and I showed. She created the group Foster Up, whereas I turned to activism. In our ways, we created community and gave back to the community as a way of saying thank you for helping us.

Community is essential to the survival of children in care. A child's movement between the reserve and the city relates directly to the services that each child may access. This relationship is complicated. Reimer moved between mainly the white spaces of small-town Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg. Fontaine moved between the Sagkeeng First Nation and Winnipeg. Finally, Phoenix also moved between the city and the reserve. Thankfully Reimer was able to find herself a community of people who had her best interests at heart. Despite living in the same city, Fontaine was neglected and abandoned by the services that she tried to access and that were mandated to protect. Although Phoenix began her journey in Winnipeg she was also left with no supports after she relocated with her mother. Tragically these disparate outcomes illustrate the game of chance that defined the lives of these young women. Reimer succeeded at school and finding herself a life despite her involvement with the same child welfare system that led to the neglect and death of the other two girls.

Chapter 4 the Emotions Behind the Stories

It's terrifying like being neck-deep in the sand, feeling the ebb and flow of the ocean. The fear hits every so often, then flows away. Relief. You know the wave that will drown you is coming. No telling when. After a while, you see a beached fish. It reminds you of what you forgot. Then it hits.

In the previous chapter, I discussed the systemic failures of the child welfare industry. We must now turn to a discussion of the emotional effects of the system on the three girls. This discussion is important to expand upon for one reason: very few people address the emotional outcomes of children in care. The focus has been primarily on statistics and the history of colonization. By examining the emotional impacts of the system on Phoenix Sinclair, Tina Fontaine, and Natasha Reimer we can see that the child welfare system has been inherently harmful to Indigenous people.

The discussion of Phoenix Sinclair is complicated because she was so young, and her story is only conveyed in reports. Phoenix was only five years old, which makes it difficult to surmise how she was feeling. The reports mean that I only have a second-hand account of Phoenix's experiences. To remedy this lack I use my own experiences to balance this section out. I also focus on the parents in this section as the industry also failed them. The results of the system failure on the parents also translate into emotional effects for both the parents and the child.

Intergenerational trauma is a key factor in all three stories. In Phoenix's case, the trauma plays out in the story of her parents, who were also involved with CFS. As a result of CFS

intervention, the family had very few kinship networks or community supports, which left Phoenix in a vulnerable position. The neglect of the system left the parents free to neglect Phoenix. Due to this lack of supports, Phoenix was left without emotional supports of any kind,

Most, if not all, Indigenous families suffer from the effects of intergenerational trauma due to the Residential Schools and the Sixties and Millennial Scoops. Unhealed trauma results in various mental health issues, addictions, neglect, and abuse. Because generations of Indigenous people were removed from their homes and families, they can find it difficult to form healthy relationships. Both Kematch and Sinclair were wards of CFS when they had Phoenix. They had also suffered the loss of a child shortly after Phoenix's birth. Therefore, they had a tremendous amount of grief and pain to work through. This pain translated into addictions issues. With no positive parental role models, and very few supports, Kematch and Sinclair had no teachings on how to be good parents. This gap resulted in the mother's abuse and neglect of Phoenix. It also resulted in the addictions and work issues of the father. Phoenix was left with no healthy parent to care for her. She suffered from the most extreme form of the effects of intergenerational trauma. The system neglected the parents, which left the parents to neglect Phoenix. There are no words for how Phoenix must have felt. She was so little, and so innocent, that it is hard to speak on how she was affected.

I can speak to the intergenerational effects of trauma in my own family. My parents, aunts, and uncles all attended day school. My grandparents attended Residential Schools. When we were taken from my biological mother, she fell into addiction issues due to her grief. In their young lives, my brothers also fell into addictions issues. Mental health issues also run in my family. Almost every Indigenous family faces intergenerational trauma.

I was not neglected as a child. I was, however, trained to neglect my own emotions and fears. In our foster home, emotional and physical pain did not exist beyond my foster mother's pain. Therefore, I learned quickly how to care for her needs and neglect my own. It was so difficult and draining. Looking back, I lost my sense of innocence and my childhood trying to take care of my foster mom who was being paid to take care of me. There are not many words for how draining and scary the experience was. Just as there are no words for how scared Phoenix must have felt. It is not something people can understand unless they have experienced neglect at a young age themselves.

Phoenix also experienced isolation from her peers and community. She had little to no friends to relate to. She also had no community supports to ensure her wellbeing. This left the child abandoned with only her mom. Having no children to play with must have been incredibly isolating and lonely for Phoenix. Her loneliness, on top of the fears and abuse, left Phoenix in an even more vulnerable position. Similarly, I always knew that I was different than my peers and was isolated as a result. I was also different from my brothers. There were very few friends growing up. It was lonely. I can imagine how lonely and scared Phoenix must have felt. We were both so young that we did not understand what was going on.

Unlike Phoenix and I, Tina was old enough to comprehend her emotions. Intergenerational trauma is also a key factor in Tina's story. Tina's story mirrors her mother's story almost perfectly. Her mother was a ward of the child welfare system, suffered from substance abuse issues, and was sexually exploited. Tina also became a ward of the system. She also turned to substance abuse and was similarly sexually exploited. Tina's mother may not have had a good parental role model in her life, which leads to Tina having no healthy parent to model herself after. Therefore, both Tina and her mother turned to unhealthy coping mechanisms. Many

children in care, including my brothers, turn to drugs and alcohol to mask their pain. Many also run away from their homes, placements, or hotel rooms. They end up couch surfing, or on the streets looking for family members or simply a place to stay. CFS does little to help the children work through their pain and find healthy coping mechanisms.

Grief is a factor in the story of Tina. Her father was sick, and he eventually passed away (Callison 53). She was dealing with grieving his death. It is not known how close the two were. However, I know that dealing with the death of a loved one even if you had little contact is devastating. She also missed her mother, who lived in Winnipeg, and siblings, whose location is unknown. Grieving the loss of people who are still alive is probably the most difficult experience there is. The grief leaves one wondering what the family member is doing, if they are safe, and if they also miss you. Tragically Tina also struggled to deal with the grief of her sexual assault, exploitation, and homelessness. Sexual assault leaves a victim missing their innocence, their agency, their self worth, and their safety. Assault leaves one questioning their self-worth. Being exploited leaves the same scars as being assaulted. Finally, being homeless not only compromises the safety of the individual but also comes with grieving the home that you had before becoming homeless. The amount of grief that existed in her life is a lot for a child to carry, for anyone to carry. Her grief also explains her actions. She was looking for a way to mask her grief and searched for companionship wherever she could no matter how inappropriate.

Tina had a lot of heavy emotions to deal with. She may not have had the tools she needed to cope with her emotions or a way of addressing them safely. CFS should have given Tina the supports that she needed to work through her emotions. Instead, they left the teen to cope on her own which ultimately led to her exploitation and death. As a child welfare system survivor, I also had a lot of heavy emotions to cope with. Instead of turning to alcohol I shut down emotionally

and turned to self-harm. CFS never caught on to the abuse that I experienced, therefore they did not even know that my siblings and I needed help. I was lucky that I had a counsellor at school to talk to. I also had the support of many of my teachers. Like Natasha, I had the ability to find my supports and build myself up. Unfortunately, not everyone has the tools to cope on their own and this does not come without a cost.

Both Tina and Phoenix were left to fend for themselves, which ultimately led to their murders. Although Natasha experienced similar issues, she manages to find her supports and became a successful student. She provides an account of her third placement with her failed adopted parents. Natasha states that “my adopted father told me he couldn’t wait until I was gone” (Okemow-Reimer). Her adopted family did not want to keep her. Another moment that highlights Natasha’s isolation is illustrated when she says “who... these people [are] remains a mystery. Just like you” (Okemow-Reimer). Being transferred from one home to another leaves one feeling alone and unwanted. Natasha had to get used to new people every few months. So, the strangers make her feel even more alone. This memory also highlights how confused and isolated a child in care must feel when they do not know their background. Finally, Natasha says that she was “left to pick up the pieces of a life [she] did not create” (Okemow-Reimer). She was apprehended and moved around from home to home too many times. After a while, it becomes exhausting. There are so many questions that arise from being in care. Where is your family? What is your background? Do you have siblings? What is my true story? Natasha is able to find out these answers after she ages out. Just as I was able to find out some of the answers myself when I moved out. However, there remain many questions for which answers are not possible to find. Why were you apprehended? Did your foster parents ever love you? These questions leave

a child in care feeling lost and confused. They also serve to further prove how isolated a child in care can be.

Natasha has experienced many losses in her life. She lost her childhood, her identity, and a sense of normalcy. She says that she “learned having a childhood was a privilege” (Okemow-Reimer). Throughout the podcast series, Natasha talks about how she had to grow up quickly. She also discusses how she had to continuously plan for her future on her own. There was no one to care for Natasha during her illness. She had to plan for her secondary education on her own. She also learned to adapt to situations from a young age. Most children have parents to rely on. Their parents care for them when they are sick and help with schooling whether it be financially or emotionally. All the things that Natasha loses are things that come with living in a healthy, stable, family environment. CFS robs her of this privilege. CFS also robbed me of certain privileges. I lost out on having a relationship with my siblings, a childhood, and a sense of safety and wellbeing. CFS removed my brothers from my foster parent’s care, or they were kicked out before I was ten. I spent my childhood caring for my foster mother’s needs and wants. Years of abuse robbed me of my safety and wellbeing. We started fostering more children, so every year my foster family looked completely different. I always knew that I was different, and I always felt alone. CFS robs their children of so many things that others not in care simply take for granted.

Yes, having a family is something that I would consider a privilege. During colonization, family units were attacked first. The Canadian State removed children from their families and communities. At first, it was through the Residential Schools, then the Sixties Scoop, and finally the ongoing Millennial Scoop. Due to the intergenerational trauma, addictions issues, mental health issues, financial issues, and living environment issues, it is more difficult to keep an

Indigenous family together as one unit. Parents are left without stable parents to model themselves after. Which then translates into children having unstable parents to model themselves after. As shown by these stories, CFS robs children of families. The foster family unit is artificially constructed, and children always know that they are outsiders, no matter how hard the family tries to make them fit in.

Another thing that Natasha loses is her sense of identity. She says that she “didn’t understand [she] would be trading in [her] identity for another one” (Okemow-Reimer). She was called Natasha Lynn Starr as a child, but her name was changed to Natasha Dominique Reimer by her adopted parents. She even went by different names at different schools (Okemow-Reimer). She went by Dominique at her second high school. She was constantly having to change her identity to fit her surroundings or adapt so people did not figure out she was a foster child (Okemow-Reimer). Natasha’s identity was constantly changing. She also had many questions about her biological family. Natasha talks about how she questioned who she was and where she came from for most of her childhood. The last thing she lost was her sense of normalcy. Natasha states that she asked, “what was normal?” constantly (Okemow-Reimer). She also wondered if it “was... normal to feel guilt and loss despite having a new family?” (Okemow-Reimer). Her life, up to this point, had been chaotic. She had a new family every few months and lived in a state of uncertainty during her teenage years. Her life was not normal.

Grief is a large factor in this story. Natasha has lost so many things: her identity, sense of safety, family, friends, a balanced lifestyle, and her health. She is also grieving her past identity, who she was before she was put in care. Many Indigenous People face grief in their lifetime. Many of us have lost what Reimer has lost. Just like Tina, the amount of grief Reimer must carry is way too much for any child.

Finally, each girl has left an important legacy behind her. Phoenix's story led to changes in the system. Her case is discussed in social work classes.

The death of Tina contributed to a national inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ+ people, the founding of Drag the Red, and the resurgence of the Bear Clan Patrol in Northern Winnipeg (Dangerfield; Taylor; Malone). Tina's death also "pushed the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs to create the First Nations Family Advocate Office" (Malone). Advocates work with families to "address unethical practices or human rights concerns that result from the decisions enforced upon families or children" that "contribute to negative impacts on the child's safety or well-being of their spirit, emotions, mind, and body" (First Nations Family Advocate Office). Thousands of stories about missing and murdered Indigenous peoples were shared throughout the inquiry. The inquiry was hosted in various cities across Canada, allowing for many stories to be shared. The national inquiry began in December 2015, the report was published, and the inquiry closed in June 2019 (MMIWG). The inquiry resulted in a report that contained many action items for Canada and its' citizens to act on. These actions would reduce the number of Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ+ that go missing and offer better services to find those who are currently missing. The group Drag the Red exists to scan the bottom of the Red River, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, for the remains of loved ones, or clues into their disappearance. People climb in boats, attach nets to the boats, and slowly navigate their way down the Red River. The group is very effective. Finally, the Bear Clan Patrol was re-founded to keep the streets of northern Winnipeg safe (Taylor). They walk down a specified area of northern Winnipeg, looking for used needles, weapons, and drugs. They also hand out hampers, food, and snacks for the residents on their walk. They keep the streets safe for children and families that live in the area.

Natasha is an excellent example of our resiliency. Despite her many challenges, social and physical, she managed to graduate high school and attend university. School became her escape from the many foster homes that she lived in. As her legacy, Natasha created the group Foster Up to support child welfare system survivors. Despite her challenges, Natasha surrounded herself with positive role models and succeeded in achieving her academic goals.

There are no words for the trauma, loss, and grief that each girl has faced. There are no words for the murder of a child and teenager. Each girl deserved a much better life than the ones they were given. I hope to have honoured each story and each girl. They have helped me cope with and understand my own story just as much as theirs.

Intergenerational trauma is a huge aspect of each story for these girls. In Phoenix's case, the trauma plays out in the story of her parents, who were also involved in CFS. Tina's mother was a ward of CFS. There is no background on Natasha's parents. All three girls were isolated from their communities in some way. Phoenix's family had very few community supports, which left the family to neglect Phoenix. This lack of supports further isolated Phoenix. Tina was isolated from her peers and community, which Raymond Cormier exploited. Grief is a huge factor in the stories of Tina and Natasha. Tina was grieving her father, mother, and siblings. Just as she was grieving the loss of her safety, innocence, and comfort. Natasha was grieving the loss of her sense of identity, family, and a sense of normalcy.

Conclusion

*Nothing ever made sense
until I travelled north
on to my people's land.
Nothing ever made sense
until I started connecting with myself.*

I researched the Millennium Scoop and asked the question: what was the experience of children in care during the Millennium Scoop in Manitoba from 1990 to 2015? A related question was how do survivors find healing? I answered these questions by analyzing the stories of Phoenix Sinclair, Tina Fontaine, Natasha Reimer, in addition to my own. Before analyzing the stories, I gave a history of the Sixties and Millennium Scoops. It was important for me to explain the context of the Scoops as there is very little research done on the topic.

I believe that there are little to no positive effects of the child welfare industry. As shown in the stories, the impacts of the Millennial Scoop are numerous and deeply damaging. However, there are ways in which we can survive and find healing. Reimer and I have succeeded in finding healthy lives and working towards improving care for our children. Improve is not the right word. I believe that the system needs to be torn down and rebuilt on entirely new foundations. I hope to have shown others the necessity of this work.

There are many things that I would work on improving. These are not necessarily recommendations, but rather a reflection on the areas that need the most work in the child welfare industry. The areas that need improving are

- Wrap around, holistic supports for families and children

- Continuity in care, i.e., one worker per family's involvement in CFS
- More thorough assessments for long term and immediate risks to the child(ren)
- More thorough training and protocols for workers
- Better communication protocols between CFS, police, hospitals, and other institutions
- More transparency around placements, data, and existing protocols
- Improved safety protocols around disclosure of assaults
- Reduce caseloads for workers
- More thorough the collection of data, i.e., placements, demographics, etc.
- Proper dialogue with families and children, to better understand their needs
- More supports for aging out of care
- More thorough check-ins with families and placements
- Increase capacity on reserves for resources and programs for their families
- Increase in cultural supports

There is the hope that the implementation of Bill C-92 will address several of these issues. Communities know what their children and families need. However, seeing as there is no guaranteed funding, there remain doubts as to the effectiveness of these changes. Some of these changes are much more complicated than others. For example, reducing caseloads for the workers involves hiring, and retaining, employees for longer periods. This work is not as straightforward as it appears. There may not be the necessary funding for more employees, offices may not have enough space, and there may be way too many cases than there is the capacity to deal with them. The restructuring of assessments and services also requires the necessary staffing and funding. More research is needed to figure out how to best implement these changes.

There have been many recommendations made to improve Child and Family Services by journalists, scholars, government researchers, and First Nations advocacy groups. In the 2013 inquiry report on Phoenix Sinclair's death, Ted Hughes made 62 recommendations. The recommendations include mandating that CFS's role is to keep children safe in their homes where possible, early intervention and wrap-around services, continuous monitoring of children's safety, and partnership with community resources to deliver services for families (Hughes 37). Other recommendations include ensuring that the same worker is involved in a family's file throughout their time in CFS, changing legislation so that workers can be transparent with families and various service providers can share necessary information to provide adequate care to children and families, and ensuring that workers and managers must complete comprehensive reports on all families care (Hughes 37-40). Other highlighted recommendations include creating a centralized database, only 20 files per caseworker, improved training for social workers, and creating a regulatory body for social workers in CFS (*Manitoba Claims*). The Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs recommends that Manitoba end CFS as it currently functions, establishing a youth council, better representation of Indigenous peoples on the advisory boards, and changing funding agreements so that emphasis is put on reunifying families (*Bringing Our Children Home* 8). Other recommendations include upholding Elders, Grandmothers, and Youth's voices in providing better care for youth and increasing the roles that Indigenous laws have in the child welfare system (*Bringing Our Children Home* 10- 14). Many of these recommendations are similar to, or the same as, the improvements to the child welfare system that I have suggested. Many people that have studied, experienced, or worked for, CFS agree that Indigenous culture must be upheld and strengthened to ensure that Indigenous peoples are better able to care for their children. I agree that a regulatory body must be implemented for social workers. This body

must be filled by former youth in care, elders, and other people with experience in the child welfare system. A centralized database is also a good improvement, although this would require better coordination of information and ideas between all bodies of the child welfare system in Manitoba. A national database and a national regulatory body, with regional representation, would be an improvement, ensuring that there are national standards and more transparency within the child welfare system. This would require many years of research and consultation but would ultimately improve the child welfare system for Indigenous peoples.

I am a former child in care. My story has been shared throughout. However, I need to talk about how I have healed through the journey of completing this research. The truth is that my healing began long before this research started. During the third year of my undergrad degree, I was taking a cultural studies course in which the history of colonization was introduced. I was also taking a short literature course in which I was introduced to the work of Thomas King. Both courses made me realize that there was a much broader history than what I knew. I had asked my foster parents about Residential Schools and the Idle No More movements but received very little information. So, the two courses opened my eyes to the true history of my ancestors and ‘adoption’. I knew that there was something not quite right about my supposed ‘adoption’ to a Catholic, British, and French-Canadian foster mother and father. When I talked to my first Elder, a lot of what he was saying made no sense to me. But that was the beginning of my healing journey.

A few years down the road, I had a loving and caring boyfriend who helped me to realize that what I was experiencing was abuse. He helped me come to know that young adults should have a lot more freedom and reciprocal caring relationships with their parents.

After I had thrown a huge event for my foster parents' 40th anniversary, things began to decline at home. I was spending more time away from home, with my friends, or at school which is only natural at that age. My foster mother did not like this and continually lashed out at me. After a few attempts, I finally left home. I had nothing but three plastic garbage bags, my winter coat, and canvas shoes. After leaving, I had more freedom to be who I wanted to be and learn more about my history and identity. I talked to elders, went to culture camps, researched, read, and listened.

Then I started my master's degree. I allowed myself time to research and digest the truth of what my past was like. I began to understand that I was a victim of a larger scheme to erase Indigeneity. There were a lot of tears, anger, and sadness. Sadness about the truth of our history, and the fact that there are hundreds of thousands more children and young adults out there in my shoes.

This is why I chose the research that I did. More people need to know the truth of the Scoops and how they impact youth today. My research has helped me better understand my history, and how my siblings can or cannot heal. It also helped me to appreciate my healing journey and gives me hope that others in my shoes can also find healing. I cannot speak to Reimer's healing journey. I can, however, say that her community helped her survive, just as my community of people has helped me survive.

Here is to all those who come after me, I hope that you find your community and healing process. It will be hard. Your ideas will be challenged. You will cry. You will feel lost and hopeless. But just remember, if Reimer and I can do it, so can you. You are a huge part of why I wrote this thesis. You are not alone.

The blanket started to unweave.

Each stitch a mere illusion

to mask the truth

that we are

beautiful

resilient

kind

brave.

*The walls started to fall
before they were ever finished.*

*They were meant to shield us
from the pain of genocide*

killing

breaking

scarring.

We try rebuilding

Homes without floorplans

We try reknitting

Families without the pattern

We succeed because our blood knows

Despite us never seeing

a finished house

a blanket whole

Works Cited

“Aboriginal peoples in Canada: Key Results from the 2016 Census.” *Statistics Canada*, 2016.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/171025/dq171025a->

eng.htm?fbclid=IwAR3ilohOGvTC4UXzIUmVkukjwp9GfdMMdADCeAJdwSLLTQG
UARN7ymitZ2g

Aboriginal People’s Television Network. “Manitoba claims to be fixing child welfare system, but critics say not fast enough.” *Aboriginal Peoples Television Network*, 8 October 2014, aptnnews.ca/national-news/manitoba-claims-fixing-child-welfare-system-critics-say-fast-enough/

“Manitoba’s Child Services Watchdog Launch Review Tina Fontaine Case.” *Tina*

Fontaine: Aboriginal People’s Television Network Website, August 19, 2014,

www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/manitobas-child-services-watchdog-launch-review-tina-fontaine-case/

“Nothing Has Changed: Tina Fontaine’s Body Pulled from River Five Years Ago.” *Tina*

Fontaine: Aboriginal People’s Television Network Website, August 16, 2019,

www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/nothing-has-changed-tina-fontaines-body-pulled-from-river-five-years-ago/

“Aunt believes Tina Fontaine ‘could still have been alive’ if police didn’t let her go.”

Tina Fontaine: Aboriginal People’s Television Network Website, September 25, 2014,

www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/winnipeg-police-tina-fontaine-custody-shortly-death-report/

“All Manitoba Kids in CFS Care are now out of Hotels.” CBC Website, 21 April 10

Andersen, Kim. *A Recognition of Being: Reconstructing Native Womanhood*. Ed. 2. Toronto:

Women’s Press, 2016.

Baum, Kathryn. “Manitoba ends placement of foster children in hotels across the province.” *The*

Globe and Mail, November 30, 2015,

www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/manitoba-ends-placement-of-foster-children-in-hotels-across-the-province/article27538419/

Bell, Jill. “Narrative Inquiry: More Than Just Telling Stories.” *Teachers of English to Speakers*

of Other Languages, vol. 36, no. 2, 2002, p. 207-213.

“Bill C-92: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families

receives Royal Assent.” *Government of Canada News Release*, 11 August 2021,

canada.ca/en/indigenous-services-canada/news/2019/06/an-act-respecting-first-nations-inuit-and-metis-children-youth-and-families-receives-royal-assent.html

Blackburn, Mark. “Body of First Nations girl, 15, pulled from Winnipeg’s Red River, found

in bag.” *Tina Fontaine: Aboriginal People’s Television Network Website*, August 18,

2014, www.aptnnews.ca/featured/body-first-nations-girl-15-pulled-winnipegs-red-river%e2%80%8e-found-sack/

Bringing our Children Home: Report and Recommendations, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs,

2014.

Brulé, Elizabeth. “The REDress Project: Casting an Indigenous Feminist Worldview on Sexual

Violence Prevention and Education Programs in Ontario's Universities (Dispatch).”
Studies in Social Justice, vol. 12, no. 2, Centre for Studies in Social Justice, Dec. 2018,
pp. 337–44, doi:10.26522/ssj.v12i2.1233.

Callison, Young. “Battling for the Story.” *Reckoning*, Oxford University Press, 2020,
doi:10.1093/oso/9780190067076.003.0003.

“Canada’s Residential Schools: The History, Part 2, 1939-2000.” *The Final Report of the Truth
and Reconciliation Commission*, vol. 1, no. 2, Montreal: University of McGill Press,
2015.

Cattaneo, Lauren et. al. “Survivor-Centered Practice and Survivor Empowerment: Evidence
From a Research-Practitioner Partnership.” *Violence Against Women*, vol. 27, no. 9,
2021, p. 1252-1272. 10.1177/1077801220935196

Chugh, Sanjay. “Mental Health and COVID.” *Journal of Medical Evidence*, vol. 1 no. 2, 2020, p.
159. [ink.gale.com/apps/doc/A646888964/AONE?u=ocul_thomas&sid=bookmark-
AONE&xid=df3f1661](http://ink.gale.com/apps/doc/A646888964/AONE?u=ocul_thomas&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=df3f1661). Accessed 1 Sept. 2021.

Conn, Heather. "Tina Fontaine". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 05 December 2019, *Historica
Canada*. www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/tina-fontaine

Dangerfield, Katie. “How the tragic death of Tina Fontaine helped spark the MMIWG inquiry.”
Global News, 23 February 2018. [globalnews.ca/news/4043492/tina-fontaine-march-
mmiwg-inquiry](http://globalnews.ca/news/4043492/tina-fontaine-march-mmiwg-inquiry)

Dean, Amber. "The CMHR and the Ongoing Crisis of Murdered or Missing Indigenous Women:

Do Museums Have a Responsibility to Care?" *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, vol. 37:147–165, 2015, DOI: 10.1080/10714413.2015.1028834.

Drawson, Alexandra, Elaine Toombs, and Christopher Mushquash. "Indigenous Research #

Methods: A Systematic Review." *The International Indigenous Policy Journal*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2017. 10.18584/iipj.2017.8.2.5

Dumbrill, Gary. "Ontario's Child Welfare Transformation: Another Swing of the Pendulum?"

Canadian Social Work Review, vol. 23, no. 1-2, 2006, p. 5-19.

Ermine, Willie. "The Ethical Space of Engagement." *Indigenous Law Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1,

2007, p. 193-204.

First Nations Family Advocate Office. *Lifting Children Up*. Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs.

Forester, Brett. Federal Indigenous child welfare Bill C-92 kicks in – now what? *APTN*, January

1, 2020 [aptnnews.ca/national-news/federal-indigenous-child-welfare-bill-c-92-kicks-in/](https://www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/federal-indigenous-child-welfare-bill-c-92-kicks-in/).

Harding, Robert. "News Reporting on Aboriginal Child Welfare: Discourses of White Guilt,

Reverse Racism, and Failed Policy." *Canadian Social Work Review*, vol. 26, no. 1, 2009, p. 25-41.

Ha, Tu Thanh, and Gloria Galloway. "Ontario judge sides with Sixties Scoop survivors." *Globe*

and Mail, 14 February 2017, updated April 14, 2017.

Hobson, Brittany. "Former kids in care find support in Foster Up group at University of

Winnipeg.” *Aboriginal Peoples Television Network*, January 22, 2019, www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/former-kids-in-care-find-support-in-foster-up-group-at-university-of-winnipeg/

Howard, Heather A. “Healing Research: Relationalism in Urban Indigenous Health Knowledge Production.” *Indigenous Research: Theories, Practices, and Relationships*, ed. McGregor, Deborah, and Jean-Paul Restoule, Rochelle Johnston, 2018, Canadian Scholars.

Hughes, Ted. *The Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair Achieving the Best for All Our Children*. Vol. 1, Province of Manitoba, December 2013.

Infocus: The Child Welfare Industry. Spotify, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. January 2019, www.aptnnews.ca/child-welfare-industry/

“Intro to Child Welfare: The Story of Tina Fontaine.” *Faculty Blog, Faculty of Law, University of Alberta*. November 5, 2019 ualbertalaw.typepad.com/faculty/2019/11/intro-to-child-welfare-the-story-of-tina-fontaine.html

Jackson, Kenneth. “Trudeau government has no plan in place to implement new child welfare act: lawyers.” *APTN*, November 19, 2019, aptnnews.ca/national-news/trudeau-government-has-no-plan-in-place-to-implement-new-child-welfare-act-lawyers/.

Jacobs, Margaret. “Remembering the ‘Forgotten Child’: the American Indian Child Welfare Crisis of the 1960s and 1970s.” *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 1-2, 2013, p.

136-159.

Javed, Bilal, et. al. "the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic's Impact on Mental Health." *Wiley*, 2020. 10.1002/hpm.3008

Johnson, Burke R., Anthony Onwuegbuzie and Lisa Turner. "Towards a Definition of Mixed Methods Research." *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2007, p. 112-133.

Johnston, Patrick. *Native Children and the Child Welfare System*. Toronto: Canadian Council on Social Development, 1983.

King, Adam et al. "What's at the "Core of Indianness?" Bill-C92, Labour and Indigenous Social Services." *Yellowhead Institute*, 2020, [jstor.org/stable/resrep32648](https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep32648)

Lambert, Steve. "Manitoba stops tracking CFS wards in hotels." *CBC News*, April 6, 2015, www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-cfs-tracking-hotels-1.4058633

Lodge, Andrew. "New report on Tina Fontaine's death outlines problems we keep failing to address." *National Observer*, 16 March 2019.
nationalobserver.com/2019/03/16/opinion/new-report-tina-fontaines-death-outlines-problems-we-keep-failing-address

Macdonald, Nancy. "Welcome to Winnipeg." *Macleans*, vol. 128, no. 4, pp. 16–24, February 2015.

Malone, Kelly Geraldine. "Nothing has changed:' Tina Fontaine's body pulled from river five

years ago.” *CBC News*, 16 August 2019. [cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/tina-fontaine-death-five-years-anniversary-1.5249346](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/tina-fontaine-death-five-years-anniversary-1.5249346)

Manitoba Children’s Advocate. *A Place Where it Feels Like Home: the Story of Tina Fontaine*.

Province of Manitoba.

A Special Report published after an Investigation in accordance with Part 4 and Part 5 of The Advocate for Children and Youth Act. Province of Manitoba.

Manitowabi, Darrel and Marion Maar. “Applying Indigenous Health Community-Based

Participatory Research.” *Indigenous Research: Theories, Practices, and Relationships*, ed. McGregor, Deborah, and Jean-Paul Restoule, Rochelle Johnston, 2018, Canadian Scholars.

Marchinko, Elan. “Subverting Colonial Choreographies of Memory: Drag the Red and the March for Tina Fontaine.” *Canadian Theatre Review*, vol. 176, University of Toronto Press, 2018, pp. 19–25, doi:10.3138/ctr.176.003.

Martin, Jean-Claude. "Hospital". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 04 March 2015, Historica Canada. www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/hospital. Accessed 03 February 2021.

McGregor, Deborah. “Toward an Anishinaabe Research Paradigm: Theory and Practice.”

Indigenous Research: Theories, Practices, and Relationships, ed. McGregor, Deborah, and Jean-Paul Restoule, Rochelle Johnston, 2018, Canadian Scholars.

Mcintyre, Alice. “Participatory Action Research.” *Participatory Action Research*, Sage

Publications, 2014, 1-14. Accessed 20 August 2021.

Mckay, Sharon. "Strengthening Children's Capacity to Cope with Separation, Loss, and Uncertain Futures: Action Steps for Front-Line Child Welfare Practice." *Transforming Child Welfare: Interdisciplinary Practices, Field Education, and Research: Voices from the Prairies*. ed. Montgomery H, Don Fuchs, Daniel Kikulwe, Dorothy Eleanor et. Al. Regina: University of Regina Press, 2016. P. 115- 133.

Metallic, Naiomi, and Hadley Friedland, Sarah Morales. *The Promises and Pitfalls of C-92: an Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Children, Youth, and Families*. Yellowhead Institute, 2019.

Metallic, Naiomi, et al. *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Children, Youth and Families Does Bill C-92 Make the Grade?* Yellowhead Institute, 2019.

Micklefield, Andrew and Sherwood Arbruster, Joanne Crate, Diane Redsky, Frances Chartrand, Michael Champagne, David Daniels, Natalie Daniels. *Transforming Child Welfare Legislation in Manitoba: Opportunities to Improve Outcomes for Children and Youth*. Manitoba, 2018.

Monchalin, Lisa. "Canadian Legal History": the Interpretation of Indigenous Treaties and Rights" *Colonial Problem: An Indigenous Perspective on Crime and Injustice in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016, p. 61-80.

"Montreal Sixties Scoop survivors critical of federal settlement." *CBC*, 6 October 2017.

“Number of Manitoba Kids in CFS care down 4 percent from last year.” *CBC News*, 1 October 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/cfs-child-welfare-system-manitoba-families-kids-in-care-drops-annual-report-1.5746315>

Okemow- Reimer, Natasha. *The Disappearance of Natasha Lynn Starr*. Spotify, ed. Damian Joseph, Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, September 2019, open.spotify.com/show/0hI5oW4KsOkQx3kUV8BlAp

“Options for Action - An Implementation Report for The Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair: Achieving the Best for All Our Children.” *Options for Action - An Implementation Report for The Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair: Achieving the Best for All Our Children*, Manitoba Family Services, 2015.

Palmater, Pamela. “Genocide, Indian Policy, and Legislated Elimination of Indians in Canada.” *Aboriginal Policy Studies*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2014, p. 27-54.

"Shining Light on the Dark Places: Addressing Police Racism and Sexualized Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls in the National Inquiry." *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, vol. 28 no. 2, p. 253-284, 2016. Project Muse, muse.jhu.edu/article/629375#info_wrap

Pompana, Yvonne E. *Tracing the Evolution of First Nations Child Welfare in Manitoba: A Case Study Examining the Historical Periods 1979-2006 and 2000-2006*. The Author, 2009.

Quan, Douglas. “Manitoba vows to stop housing foster children in hotels but other provinces

engage in same practice.” *National Post*, April 2, 2015,

www.nationalpost.com/news/canada/manitoba-vows-to-stop-housing-foster-children-in-hotels-but-other-provinces-engage-in-same-practice

Razack, Sherene. “Sexualized Violence and Colonialism: Reflections on the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women.” *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, vol. 28, no. 2, 2016, p. i-iv.

Regan, Paulette. *Unsettling the Settler Within: Indian Residential Schools, Truth Telling, and Reconciliation in Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010.

Simpson, Leanne. “Looking after Gdoo-naaganinaa: Precolonial Nishnaabeg Diplomatic and Treaty Relationships.” *Wicazo Sa Review*, vol. 23, no. 2, 2008, p. 29-42.

Sinclair, James Niigaanwewidam and Sharon Dainard “Sixties scoop,” *the Canadian Encyclopedia*, 21 March 2018, Historica Canada.

Sinclair, Raven. “Identity lost and found: Lessons from the Sixties Scoop.” *First Peoples Child and Family Review*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2007, p. 64-82.

“Sixties Scoop.” *Indigenous Foundations*, 2009,

indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/sixties_scoop/.

Stephenson, Allyson. “Vibrations across a Continent: The 1978 Indian Child Welfare Act and the Politicization of First Nations Leaders in Saskatchewan.” *American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 1-2, 2013, p. 218-236.

Stevenson, Allyson. *Intimate Integration: A History of the Sixties Scoop and the Colonization of Indigenous Kinship*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.

Styres, Sandra, Dawn Zinga, Sheila Bennett, and Michelle Bomberry. "Walking in Two Worlds: Engaging the Space Between Indigenous Community and Academia." *Canadian Journal of Education*, vol. 33, no. 3, 2010, p. 617-648.

Tachine, Amanda, Eliza Yellow Bird, and Nolan Cabrera. "Sharing Circles: An Indigenous Methodological Approach for Researching with Groups of Indigenous Peoples." *International Review of Qualitative Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2016, p. 277-295.
10.1525/irqr.2016.9.3.277.

Talaga, Tanya. "Why Chanie Ran." *Seven Fallen Feathers*. Winnipeg: House of Anansi Press, 2017, p. 49-90.

Taylor, Jillian. Tina Fontaine: "1 year since her death, has anything changed?" *CBC News*, 16 August 2015. [cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/tina-fontaine-1-year-since-her-death-has-anything-changed-1.3192415](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/tina-fontaine-1-year-since-her-death-has-anything-changed-1.3192415)

"Teen girl beaten in downtown Winnipeg taken off life-support." CBC Website, 21 April 10.

Thambinathan, Vivetha, and Elizabeth Anne Kinsella. "Decolonizing Methodologies in Qualitative Research: Creating Spaces for Transformative Praxis." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, vol. 20, 2021, pp 1-9, Sage Publications
10.1177/16094069211014766

“The History of Policing in Canada.” *Wilfred Laurier University*, 2021,

online.wlu.ca/news/2019/08/13/history-policing-canada

“The Legacy of Phoenix Sinclair.” *Winnipeg Free Press*, 31 January 2015,

winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/editorials/the-legacy-of-phoenix-sinclair-290413461.html

“Timeline of Key Milestones.” *National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women*

and Girls, www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/timeline/

Treleaven, Sarah. “Life After Care: Kids who grow up in the system are not expected to do

well. That's a big part of why they don't.” *Maclean's*, vol. 132, no. 11, December 2019.

www.macleans.ca/society/life-after-foster-care-in-canada/

Trocme, Nico, Della Knoke, and Cindy Blackstock. “Pathways to the Overrepresentation of

Aboriginal Children in Canada’s Child Welfare System.” *Social Service Review*, vol. 78,

no. 4, 2004, p. 577-600.

Trocme, Nico et. al. “Child Welfare Services in Canada.” *National Systems of Child Protection*,

edited by Lisa Merkel-Holguin, John D. Fluke, Richard D. Krugman, Springer

International Publishing, 2019, 27-50.

Sinha, Vandna, Nico Trocme, Barbara Fallon, and Bruce MacLaurin. “Understanding the

investigation-stage overrepresentation of First Nations children in the child welfare

system: An analysis of the First Nations Component of the Canadian Incidence Study of

Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2008.” *Child Abuse & Neglect* vol. 37, 2013, 821-

831.

“What We Do.” *The First Nations Family Advocate Office*

<https://firstnationsfamilyadvocate.com/what-we-do/>. Accessed September 1, 2021.

Ward, Dennis. “Mother of the murdered: Tina Fontaine’s mother speaks.” *Tina Fontaine:*

Aboriginal People’s Television Network Website, March 15, 2016,

www.aptnnews.ca/national-news/mother-of-the-murdered-tina-fontaines-mother-speaks/

Wen:de: We are Coming to the Light of Day. First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, 2005.

Wilyman, Kylee. *A Nation of Hollow Words: An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit, and Métis*

children, youth, and families. Board of Editors of the Saskatchewan Law Review,

2020 CanLIIDocs 2076, <<https://canlii.ca/t/swc2>>, retrieved on 2021-08-11

Youth in Care Canada. National Youth in Care Network, 2020, youthincare.ca