Genealogy of Resilience in the Ontario Looking After Children System

by

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Bachelor of Arts, University of Ottawa, 1993
Master of Arts, Pepperdine University, 1996

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

Resiliency has become common in child welfare parlance in recent decades and producing resilient youth is touted as the panacea to improving notoriously poor outcomes for youth in care, when compared to youth not in the care of the state. The Looking After Children (LAC) system emerged in the U.K out of neoliberal and managerial policies of the 1990s. The LAC system, and its corresponding Assessment and Action Record (AAR), was subsequently imported to Canada and has been heralded to foster resilience in youth in care. The AAR is composed of hundreds of tick box questions posed to young people in care, child welfare workers, and foster parents; these questions are pedagogical and the mined data from the AAR is aggregated to inform child welfare policy. The Looking After Children: A Practitioner’s Guide (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) instructs workers how to administer the AAR, Second Canadian adaptation (AAR-C2), and it informs workers how to do their job. The notion of resilience in the Practitioner's Guide and the AAR-C2 are based in normative development and day to day experiences (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007).

My interest in the LAC system emerges out of my experiences as a child welfare worker and my experience of being a youth in care. I wondered how it was, given the oppressive track record of child welfare in Canada, that the state could initiate a system to
produce normal youth. This was a particularly salient question given the massive overrepresentation of Indigenous youth in foster care. With this critical curiosity as a point of departure I employed a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis of the *Looking After Children: A Practitioner’s Guide* (2007, University of Ottawa Press), and three versions of its corresponding Assessment and Action Record, Second Canadian adaptation (AAR-C2) (2006, 2010, 2016, University of Ottawa). My analysis asked the question: How have we come to this ideal of resiliency? What were the contingencies and complex set of practices that enabled this specific notion of resilience to emerge in child welfare? What are the material outcomes of this notion of resilience?

My findings suggest that: Youth in care are produced as deviant and outside of normal development, versus the desired resilient youth; youth in care and foster parents are responsibilized to produce resilient outcomes, which can never actually be achieved; the AAR-C2 acts as a surveillance system to enable to production of neoliberal subjects; the LAC system and the AAR-C2 are a method of colonization of Indigenous youth in care.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it.

- Adolf Hitler

Resiliency has become vernacular in child welfare and producing resilient youth has become child welfare’s magic bullet for improving outcomes for youth in care. Youth in care have long represented a population at risk for “poor outcomes” when compared to young people not in the care of the state. Seeking to improve these outcomes, the Looking After Children (LAC) system emerged out of neoliberal and managerial policies that flourished in the 1990s in the United Kingdom, and has been heralded to foster resiliency and improve outcomes for young people in care. Dr. Robert Flynn, of the University of Ottawa, brought to Canada one of the main LAC tools, the Assessment and Action Record (AAR), which later became the central tool in the formation of the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) system. The Canadian version, the AAR-C2, has been comprised of up to 325 ‘tick box’ questions over 70 pages. Some of these questions are completed by the young person in care, some are completed by their foster parent, and some are completed by their Children Services Worker. The document is mandated by the Ministry of Family and Children Services to be completed annually and takes approximately 3.5 hours to complete. Klein, Kufeldt and Rideout (2006) describe the AAR as an age-specific form that assesses the youth’s status in seven developmental dimensions: health, education, identity, family and social relationships, social presentation, emotional and behavioural development and self-care skills. These assessment tools reflect the simple premise
that good parenting will contribute to good outcomes (Klein, Kufeldt & Rideout, 2006, p. 42).

In essence, LAC claims that “good parenting” produces a resilient young person, who then attains “good outcomes”. Resilience as an outcome is “based, of course, on average developmental potential on the one hand but certainly on normative day to day experience on the other” (Lemay, Ghazal, Byrne, 2005). The copyrights to the LAC system in Canada and the second Canadian adaptation of the AAR, the AAR-C2, are owned by the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies. Modifications are made to the AAR-C2 every few years.

My interest in researching the OnLAC system emerged from the intersection of my experience as a child welfare worker and my experience of being a youth in care. I have worked in child welfare since 1998 and have done so primarily with youth in care. The focus of this work has been ensuring that the needs of youth, on my caseload, are assessed and met, and that specific mandated guidelines and timeframes are adhered to. The notion of what constitutes a young person’s needs, as well as and government mandates, have changed corresponding to the politics of the time. Over the past decade, the notion of what a youth in care needs has been conceptualized through the lens of the OnLAC system. This has resulted in creating so called “normal” youth, and conflating normalcy with resiliency. I have been a part of this process through my administration of the AAR-C2 to the youth in care on my caseload. At times I find my complicity in this process wrought with tension. During my time as a youth in care the focus of workers and foster parents was not on how to support my healing but rather, on supporting me to conform to the rules of a foster home, and the expectation that I should willingly and obligingly share my thoughts and feelings with ever changing social workers. The
violence that brought me into care was never discussed. Similar to conceptualizations of resilience today, the focus became how I could “bounce back” and how “I” could be the least disruptive to those around me by fitting in and doing well. In this way the violence that brought me into care was obscured and minimized, and “I” became the focal point of intervention where change was expected to occur, and to occur quickly. Indeed, my experience does not seem be an isolated one as noted by the National Youth In Care Network (2009):

It has been said that the experience of being in the care system is unlike anything one would wish a child or adolescent to become acquainted with. From the moment child welfare removes a young person from the family home, literally everything can change overnight... In short, the young person’s identity has been altered. And as they try to make sense of this new reality, the expectation placed upon them is to adapt, all within a period of time deemed ‘reasonable’ by those appointed to care for them (p. 11).

My apprehension of the AAR-C2 stems not only from the intensely personal, and often negative nature of the questions asked and the overall tick box answer format designed for computer generation of aggregate data, but also from how the system uses the relation of power between child welfare workers and youth in care to coerce youth to participate in the process of completing the AAR-C2. At the outset of this thesis I wondered how it was, given the oppressive history of child welfare in Canada, that the state would initiate a project to make youth in care become a specific kind of normal. At the same time, I have been troubled by the sparse scholarly critique of this system particularly given its dominating influence in Anglo-American child welfare systems (i.e. Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, etc). Garrett (1999a; 1999b; 2002; 2010; 2015) has provided the most consistent critique and resistance to the LAC system in the U.K. There is also sparse critique of the LAC system in Canadian literature. Brade (2011) explored
the experiences and opinions of former Ontario Crown Wards regarding their participation in the AAR-C2. She found that most former Crown Wards did not know they could refuse to answer the AAR-C2 questions and that all had become so accustomed to answering any question their worker asked that they responded to the AAR-C2 without consideration. It is important to me that I add my voice to the few who problematize this system. It is difficult but necessary work, to critically analyze the OnLAC system, and in the spirit of social justice, to understand what it is we “do” by using this system.

In this thesis I have taken up a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis of the *Looking After Children’s Practitioner’s Guide* (2007, University of Ottawa Press), and three editions its corresponding Assessment and Action Record, Second Canadian adaptation (2006, 2010, 2016, University of Ottawa). Throughout this process I have drawn on the principles of genealogy within a feminist poststructural methodology. This approach exposes the discourses within which knowledge about resilience has been constructed and allows me to explore what happens when this construction is applied to youth in care. My genealogy asks the question: How have we come to this ideal of resiliency? In this genealogy I aim to problematize how the notion of resilience emerged by asking: What were the contingencies and complex set of practices that enabled this specific notion of resilience to emerge? What does this notion of resilience accomplish and what does it concretely do (who benefits, what subjectivities are made available and to whom, what are the material outcomes, etc); what understandings of resilience have been excluded; and how have these inclusions and exclusions shaped the potential subjectivities of youth in care to reflect neoliberal pursuits?
In the next section I give a brief historical overview of how the notion of resilience has changed over time, how this notion of resilience is conceptualized in OnLAC, and what the material consequences are of marginalizing other notions of resilience.

The Emergence of Resilience

Moulding young people in care to embody a particular brand of resiliency is one of the goals of the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) system. The main definition of resilience referenced by OnLAC is: “good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development” (Masten, 2001, cited in Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 44). This definition did not suddenly appear onto the landscape of child welfare; rather it emerged from various social and historical forces. “Resiliency research is rooted in child psychology and clinical studies conducted in the 1950s and 1960s on children's coping and competence” (Martineau, 1999, p. 2). Beginning in the 1970s resilience became a focus of academic research when child psychologists began to observe that some children seemed emotionally invulnerable to such traumatizing situations as experiencing political violence or living with mentally ill parents. This "invulnerable child" was described as resilient and the resultant "resilient child" was characterized as successful (Martineau, 1999, p. 2).

Numerous studies published since the 1970s have re-constructed resilience to “competency-as-conformity in the dominant discourse” (Martineau, 1999, p. 121), while removing trauma “as an essential context in which resilience occurs” (Martineau, 1999, p. 3). Educational programs have subsequently been developed to teach at risk or disadvantaged youth this brand of resiliency and download onto them the dual task of conforming to social norms while overcoming systemic distress and adversity.
(Martineau, 1999, p. 3). The OnLAC system supports this conforming construction by promoting a universal understanding of resiliency and a standardized approach to instilling this resiliency in youth in care in order to improve their current poor outcomes.

Who are these young people in care whose outcomes are said to be improved by teaching OnLAC resiliency? Demographically, young people in care are different from young people not in care. Consider this: A two parent, white family, not receiving social assistance, with three or fewer children, who own their own home with more rooms than people living in the home, has a 1 in 7,000 chance of their children aged 5-9 entering into care. Conversely, a single adult household, of mixed ethnic origin, receiving social assistance, with four or more children, who rent their home with fewer rooms than people living there, have a 1 in 10 chance of their children aged 5-9 entering care (Wong & Yee, 2010). "Although provincial child welfare data vary, it is estimated that across Canada 38 percent of children in care (approximately 25,000 of the 66,000) are Indigenous despite representing only 5 percent of the child population in Canada” (Strega & Aski Esquao, 2009, p. 18). These are substantial differences that raise questions regarding who is being targeted to become resilient, and within what socio-political climate this system and definition of resilience developed.

The LAC system was developed in a political climate of conservatism in the U.K. (Garrett, 1999), and gained traction in numerous countries. At the same time neoliberalism advanced and expanded in these countries ushering in conservative Western values (BCRW, 2013). Brown (2006) states that neoliberalism is more than simply facilitating the economy, the state itself must construct and construe itself in market terms, as well as develop policies and promulgate a political culture that figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in
every sphere of life... citizens whose moral autonomy is measured by their capacity for “self care” (p. 694).

Consider a quote by former Prime Minister Thatcher, just prior to the development of LAC, wherein she bolsters a neoliberal discourse that sanctifies the individual and de-values the social: “And, you know, there's no such thing as society. There are individual men and women and there are families. And no government can do anything except through people, and people must look after themselves first” (1987). It is within this climate that the construct of resilience in LAC was developed as “good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development” (Masten, 2001, cited in Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 44). In the OnLAC system a good outcome for a young person in care is resilience. Resilience is achieved if the young person presents with normal development which is “based, of course, on average developmental potential on the one hand but certainly on normative day to day experience on the other” (Lemay, Ghazal & Byrne, 2005). The use of the words “of course”, “average”, and “normative” hint at the foundations of OnLAC as a normalizing system. Indeed, the Practitioner's Guide states that two important dimensions contribute to resilience: personal characteristics and the life conditions and experiences that surround a youth - both of which “are amenable to intervention” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 47). Martineau (1999) discusses, in considerable detail, the various components that make up this current dominant understanding of resiliency and how such components include desirable character traits that often “describe children who do not present problems for professionals in school settings” (p. 130). In addition, Martineau (1999) critiques Garmezy and Masten (1991) and suggests they
posit the absence of risk [i.e. family support, upward mobility, and academic achievement] as the condition for resilience. It is then a small step to claim that targeted risk populations are incompetent, dysfunctional, and in need of social interventions.... Here, competence as resilience, by way of upward mobility, is conformity to White, middle-class ideals (pp. 118-119).

There is no discussion in *Practitioner's Guide* (2007), or its corresponding AAR-C2, of alternate understandings of resilience. However, Ungar (2008) notes “that all aspects of healthy functioning associated with resilience [can be fulfilled] through... unconventional, and illegal adaptation” (p. 221). Therefore, a youth may fail to score well on a measure of resiliency in OnLAC, and yet be highly resilient. Indeed Ungar (2004) “suggests that ‘[f]or many children, patterns of deviance are healthy adaptations that permit them to survive unhealthy circumstances’” (cited in Bottrell, 2009, p. 325). This draws attention to Bottrell’s (2009) observation that resiliency is often associated with resistance, and further, when resiliency serves the purposes of the dominant group, it becomes a reflection of normalization and hegemony.

Despite the publication of many alternate understandings of resilience, OnLAC continues to present only its version of resiliency, an implicit devaluation of alternate conceptualizations of resiliency in Ontario child welfare. This is particularly alarming when one considers the disproportionate representation of Indigenous young people in care on whom this normalizing system is being implemented. In this thesis I use the word “Indigenous” to refer to Indigenous, First Nation, Native, and Aboriginal peoples of Canada as it is often used by the authors whose works I am discussing. The use of the word “Indigenous” is not meant to diminish “the diversity of terms that different Native people in Canada now use to refer to themselves” (Lawrence, 2004, p. 21). Child welfare in Canada has a long standing history of implementing policies of normalization,
marginalization and colonization onto Indigenous peoples, and yet the OnLAC system has received only minimal interrogation and critique in this regard. There is no mention of Indigenous young people in care in the *Practitioner’s Guide* (2007), and I found only one study examining the use of the OnLAC system with Indigenous young people in care and their families (McKenzie, Bennett, Kennedy, Balla & Lamirande, 2009). Although some positive aspects of the system were noted, such as the eight dimensions of planning in a Plan of Care, “in general, the scope of the indicators being assessed in the AARs was regarded as culturally inappropriate because of their more individualized focus on child well-being... In addition, important domains such as spirituality were largely absent from the instrument” (McKenzie, et al., 2009, p. 80). Although the AAR-C2 has several questions pertaining specifically to Indigenous children and youth, these questions do not make the instrument culturally relevant or applicable. This point is discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis. Although the focus of my work is not Indigenous youth in care, I am committed to centring social justice and thus, it is critical to discuss how this system may materially impact Indigenous youth in care, as they are the most adversely affected by the Canadian child welfare system. By using genealogy to analyze OnLAC discourse regarding resilience, I have been able to expose what it is that child welfare has been “doing” to youth in care.

**Introducing the Research**

This thesis is divided into five chapters. In a traditional thesis the introduction chapter would be followed by a literature review. However, in keeping with a genealogy-inspired discourse analysis, Chapter Two positions my approach to inquiry and is divided into several sections. I begin by discussing the concepts of ontology and epistemology;
why I situate myself within a poststructural framework; and the origins of my desire to practice within this frame. In the second section of this chapter I explore feminist poststructuralism, my research design and the methods I utilized in analysis. My chosen method is a Foucauldian inspired genealogy, which problematizes a practice in the present (in this thesis the OnLAC notion of resilience) and traces the historical and social contexts and contingencies from which the problem emerged (Koopman, 2013). In the third section of this chapter, I discuss the selection of data for analysis and the approaches to the assessment and evaluation of the research process.

In Chapter Three I begin the genealogical process by exploring the conditions of possibility of the OnLAC notion of resilience. Conditions of possibility are a set of limits for what is possible to emerge as credible and true knowledge in a particular place at a particular time. In the context of this thesis, I show that the conditions of possibility have limited what has been possible to emerge in child welfare discourse regarding resilience in young people in care. This chapter is divided into five main sections: The Emergence of Resiliency; The Epistemological Positions of Researchers of Resilience; Constructing Resiliency Through Constructing Normalcy; The Framework of Resiliency in OnLAC; Alternate Notions of Resilience; Socio-Political Influences: neoliberal roots of “Looking After Children”. As the titles suggest, I explore a different condition of possibility in each section.

In Chapter Four I begin my analysis of the Looking After Children: A Practitioner’s Guide (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) and three versions of the AAR-C2 (2006, 2010, 2016). As a point of departure I cite the definition of resilience in the Practitioner's Guide and identify four key points that inform the framework of my
discursive analysis of the AAR-C2 and the Practitioner's Guide (2007). These four points centre around the definition of resiliency as normal development; responsibilization of the individual; and absence of any discussion of structural factors impacting resiliency. The chapter is then comprised into four additional segments: “Normal is the New Resilient” which explores how youth in care are located within a discourse of deficiency, deviancy, and even danger, which represents the corollary to the normal subject. “What is Normal” analyzes how the normative position is constructed in the Practitioner's Guide (2007) and the AAR-C2, and the professional utility of this construction, which forms a disciplinary method upon child welfare workers and produce youth in care as docile bodies. The third segment, “How to Make a Normal Subject” explores the normalization process promoted by the OnLAC system, but more than this, I explore the technologies of the self as a form of discipline which facilitates, and even creates desire for, the normalization process. The last segment, “Individualization as a Method of Discipline in the Making of a Normal Youth” is divided into two additional parts: The Outcome of Individualizing Foster Parents and The Outcome of Individualizing Indigenous Youth In Care. These sections analyze the AAR-C2 as a form of panopticism; specifically, how the asking of certain questions comprises a pedagogy of the type of subject foster parents, and youth in care, should desire to become; and in relation to Indigenous youth, how this practice constitutes a continuation of colonization and imperialism.
Chapter 2: Positioning My Approach to Inquiry

“Above all the thrall in which an ideology holds a people is best measured by their collective inability to imagine alternatives.”

- Tony Judt

Clearly laying out the ontological and epistemological positions I have used in this thesis is crucial. These positions shaped my research paradigm, determined the type of research question I explored, and the methodology and methods I used. Situating myself within a specific paradigm and approach also sets out the intentions of this research. In this thesis I have used a Foucauldian-inspired discourse analysis. This approach necessarily grounds me in a poststructural epistemology. My intention in this thesis is to further the political goals of social justice by questioning a mainstream social work practice that has been left largely unproblematic, and I have taken up a feminist poststructural approach to do so. As Fine (1998) lays out, “it is not just important to what we speak about, but how and why we speak” (p. 70). In this chapter I begin by discussing my ontological and epistemological positions and how these positions have created the footings for my methodology of feminist poststructuralism. I then discuss the central concepts of feminist poststructuralism and how this methodology is a good fit with my research question.

Ontology and Epistemology

Ontology is the lens through which I make sense of the world, how I understand reality and the nature of being. I locate myself within a belief system that views reality and truth as multiple, that reality is constructed in specific and multiple contexts, and
through the use of language. This points to the poststructuralist understanding that “in the knowing is the doing”, which suggests there is no separation between ontology and epistemology, that how we make sense of the world and construct knowledge determines our actions. Strega (2005) suggests that the ontological lens of modernity and enlightenment epistemology, which holds that through investigation and acquisition of knowledge one absolute fact and truth can be found, has provided “a rationale for the continuing project of colonizing and assimilating people of colour into White, Western ways of knowing, being, and doing” (p. 204). Further, that this form of epistemology continues to be the foundation and justification for continued injustices in our world. This example demonstrates how one’s subjectivity “remains a reflection and extension of one’s knowledge” (Moosa-Mitha, 2005, p. 59).

In order to be a force for social justice I have approached this discourse analysis outside of this dominant, taken-for-granted paradigm, and looked towards multiple perspectives, truths, and ways of knowing. However, given that I am a White heterosexual woman who grew up in Canada in a working class family, I had to consider how I could possibly work outside of the dominant worldview. Indeed, it was no easy task as enlightenment epistemology is everywhere, and it influences my way of thinking, talking, living, and being. It is difficult to think for extended periods of time outside of this thought system without a daily intellectual effort, encompassing critical reflection and reflexivity. Regardless, it is my desire is to continue this work. This desire emerges out of my pivotal experiences as a youth in care.

My experience of child welfare as a youth was one of dismissal and minimization of my experiences, and that I was in foster care because there was something wrong with
me. The focus of my time in care was not on how to support me in healing, but rather on my conformity to the rules of a foster home and the expectation by ever-changing social workers to share my feelings, thoughts and experiences with them. Following my apprehension, the social context of why I was in care was never discussed. Similar to understandings of resilience today, the focus became how “I” could “bounce back”, and how “I” could be the least disruptive to those around me. In this way the violence that brought me into care was obscured and minimized, and I became the focal point of intervention. This is not an uncommon experience of those who endure violence in our society (see Coates & Wade, 2007; Todd & Wade, 1994). I grew to resent the experts who denied my experiences, and knowing of the world around me, in favour of their own. This led me to question the widely held belief that police officers, social workers, and doctors were “experts” who could speak for me and create knowledge about me, because I could not recognize myself in their words used to describe me. The insistence that their truth was the only valid one discredited my reality and produced me as abnormal. From these experiences it was clear to me that knowledge cannot be created apart from the subject of this knowledge and, therefore there can be no universal knowing.

Despite this history, I did not consciously set out to gain employment in child welfare; I did not seek to make a difference; nor did I think I could help youth in care. Eighteen years ago, I merely wanted a job that paid decently with the education I had. It was only during the completion of this academic program that I “came out” as having been in care during my youth, and found the “moral courage” (Blackstock, 2011), at times, to be less fearful in pursuing social justice in child welfare. My story of being in care has always felt like a dangerous piece of information to share, and this apprehension
continues. My practice in child welfare has always been wrought with tension and difficulty. Always underlying my practice is my belief that valid knowledge is constituted in and through many ways, experiences, and people. It was, and is, clear to me that truth and knowledge are multiple, and springs forth from experience, intuition, emotion, dreams, and so on. I see my epistemology reflected in feminist poststructuralism.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge that there have been other pivotal experiences that have, and continue to, shape my worldview. Despite the desire to locate myself outside of the dominant worldview, I often submit and revert to it, and often without awareness. There is danger of being complicit and it is necessary to engage in an ongoing critical process in living, and thinking, in order to identify and usurp the dominant worldview. Ladson-Billings (2000) summarizes the challenges of this position:

The process of developing a worldview that differs from the dominant world view requires active intellectual work on the part of the knower, because schools, society, and the structure and production of knowledge are designed to create individuals who internalize the dominant world view... (p. 258).

In the following section I discuss my chosen methodology of feminist poststructuralism. Methodology is a theoretical framework that determines the approach taken to answer the problem posed in this thesis, which in turn provides the foundation for the specific research design and methods. In the following section I will discuss feminist poststructuralism and how this methodology is a good fit with my research question.

**Feminist Poststructuralism**

Feminist poststructuralism merges the epistemological positions of feminism and poststructuralism. Western feminism emerged in the late 19th century, and like
poststructuralism, there is significant diversity in what constitutes feminism and feminist research. Indeed, Weedon (1997) states that there are many forms of feminism, but all imply “a particular way of understanding patriarchy and the possibilities of change” (p. 4). Hesse-Biber, Leavy and Yaiser (2004) state that the “most important tenet of any feminist undertaking... [is] the acceptance of the existence of not one feminism but many feminisms” (p. 4). This is a way of understanding the world that is reasserted by poststructuralism and the notion of multiple truths. In western methodological approaches, feminist poststructuralism is the beginning of multiple perspectives and ways of knowing, and challenges dominant epistemology regarding what kind of subjects can create knowledge (Strega, 2005). In so doing, feminist poststructuralism breaks with enlightenment epistemology.

Enlightenment epistemology is the use of reason grounded in the scientific method of imagined unbiased observation, thought and empiricism (Hamilton, 1995). This epistemology is grounded in a worldview that epitomizes individualism, universalism, duality, secularism, and is intimately linked with patriarchy - particularly that created by white, rational, and affluent male subjects (see Strega, 2005, p. 205-211). Conversely, the enlightenment produced women, and the associated qualities of being irrational, emotional, and feminine, as inferior.

A feminist poststructural methodology works to analyze and change the social construction of patriarchy which is tied to neoliberalism, racism, classism, heteronormativity, cis-normativity, and ableism. Further, it works to query how it is that many women, and marginalized peoples, willingly occupy subjugated subjectivities within our society. It provides theory to discern the various practices we perform on
ourselves, and upon others, practices that maintain current positions of power. As Weedon (1997) suggests, feminist poststructuralism is useful to expose the relationship between “subjectivity and meaning, meaning and social value, the range of possible normal subject positions open to women, and the power and powerlessness invested in them” (p. 19). This methodology moves away from humanist notions of duality and enables a difference centred approach to social justice. Moosa-Mitha (2005) argues that “feminist writing has moved to theorizing about gender roles in ways that move beyond the binary of ‘same’ versus ‘different’” (p. 53), enabling feminist theorizing to become more difference-centred, rather than normative focused. By doing so the voices of previously marginalized subjects, who may not subscribe to dominant norms, are centred. This methodology provided a framework within which I could analyze the discourses OnLAC and the AAR-C2 are situated in and how these discourses (tied to patriarchy, neoliberalism, neocolonialism, and conservatism) perpetuate a system of patriarchal normalcy. A feminist poststructural methodology does not only seek to disrupt binaries, but also “to disrupt that which is taken as stable/unquestionable truth” (Davies & Gannon, 2005, p. 320), such as dominant and oppressive knowledges (Gavey, 1989, p. 462). The OnLAC system and the AAR-C2 represent knowledge constructed through dominant discursive practices and institutions, and feminist post-structural methodology is well positioned to question it.

Language and Discourse

A central tenet of feminist poststructuralism is that language and discourse construct our world, thus our experiences have no essential truth, rather it is how we describe our experiences through language that gives them meaning (Weedon, 1997).
This is applicable to how the current notion of resilience in child welfare has been constructed. The language used in the OnLAC system inscribes specific criteria for resiliency, by drawing from the discourses within which this version of resilience is situated. A second layer of problematization emerges when we consider how culture influences the use of language and the discourse it is situated in. For instance, how would an individual versus collective-based culture define resiliency? Feminist poststructuralism provides a venue through which to push back against dominant discursive constructions and recognize multiple truths about what it means to be resilient, and how honouring this multiplicity can further social justice in practice. St. Pierre (2000) states that

we have constructed the world as it is through language and cultural practice, and we can also deconstruct and reconstruct it. There are many structures that simply do not exist prior to naming and are not essential or absolute but are created and maintained every day by people (p. 483).

A feminist poststructural framework provides theoretical concepts that enable me to investigate materials such as the Practitioner's Guide (2007) and three versions of the AAR-C2 (2006, 2010, 2016). These concepts include discourse and subjectivity, and power/knowledge.

**Discourse and Subjectivity**

In western knowledge discourse is understood as topics of conversation, such as discourse regarding child welfare, or the discourse on criminality. In this context language is understood to be transparent, and words are merely representations of the topics a person is talking about. The individual speaking, or writing, is understood to be the constructor of meaning to the discourse topic. Further, language is understood as
progressive in that words are used and new words are constructed to further progress. These are viewed as the neutral characteristics of language and discourse.

Poststructuralism challenges this assertion and “focus[es] on the all-encompassing nature of discourse as the constructor and constitutor not just of ‘reality’ but of our ‘selves’” (Strega, 2005, p. 217). Subjectivity is produced through discourse, and subjectivities are limited to the discourses available to an individual. For instance, the discourses available to a white, middle class woman are likely not to be the same in western society as those discourses available to a South Asian working class woman. Similarly, discourses available to young people in care are different than those available to young people not in care. Therefore, unlike within Enlightenment epistemology, one’s subjectivity is not seen as a product of one’s free will to choose, or something that is “natural”, but rather as shaped by the subjectivities available in the social and political environment at the time. As Weedon (1997) notes “subjectivity is produced in a whole range of discursive practices - economic, social and political - the meanings of which are a constant site of struggle over power” (p. 21).

Although he did not refer to himself as a poststructuralist, Michel Foucault, is often referred to as one in the literature and his research is often referenced by poststructural scholars. Foucault did not provide a specific definition of discourse, rather, he discussed what discourse “did” and how it operated. For instance Foucault (1972) states that the power imbued in discourse and the materiality of its effects produces a regime governing the minutia of being as a set of “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). In this way discourse is both repressive and productive. He stated that “a discourse permits certain statements to be regarded as the truth and the rules
which govern a discourse also determine who may speak, what conventions they need to use and with what authority they may speak” (Usher, 1997, p. 44). Finally, discourses buttress various technologies, for instance technologies of the self to become a desirable resilient subjectivity; and discourses buttress various practices, such as disciplinary practices utilized by the AAR-C2 upon youth in care, their foster parents, and social workers in order to shape youth in care as resilient subjects.

Foucault (1970/1981) discusses discourse as a system of exclusions. The “will to truth” was an exclusion Foucault discussed at length, and which he believed was becoming ever more prevalent. Foucault described this exclusion as constraining other discourses and truths because it rests on an institutional support: it is both reinforced and renewed by a strata of practices such as pedagogy, of course; and the system of books, publishing, libraries; learned societies in the past and laboratories in the present. But it is also renewed, no doubt more profoundly, by the way in which knowledge is put to work, valorised, distributed.... Finally, I believe that this will to truth - leaning in this way on a support and an institutional distribution - tends to exert a sort of pressure and something like a power of constraint... on other discourses. I am thinking of the way in which, for centuries Western literature sought to ground itself on the natural, the ‘vraisemblable’, on sincerity, on science as well - in short on ‘true’ discourse (1970/1981, pp. 55).

I apply these notions of discourse and subjectivity to the OnLAC system by considering how this system has constructed resiliency, and the need for this specific brand of resiliency for youth in care. Such notions are a “will to truth”, eliminating all other meanings and practices of this thing we know as resiliency. Therein, the OnLAC system is able to assert authority over the truth about resiliency and young people in care, what constitutes a resilient subjectivity and what does not. This brand of resiliency can also be understood as a form of colonization, in that a hegemonic truth regarding what is resiliency, and how it is achieved, is transfused via a whole system of technologies and
practices displacing alternate truths and ways of being. These oppressed truths and ways of being in the world are what Foucault (1980) referred to as subjugated knowledges.

**Power and Knowledge**

Mills (1997) discusses power from a poststructural perspective as “a form of action or reaction between people which is negotiated in each interaction and is never fixed or stable” (p. 39). Central to poststructural ideas of power is that power is dispersed throughout the population rather than being held or possessed by specific institutions (i.e. government, universities). Foucault did not discuss power as a single construct; rather power and knowledge were discussed as corollaries of each other (Koopman, 2013). Strega (2005) states that from a Foucauldian perspective “knowledge and power are inseparable and are both productive and constraining of ‘truth’... power is so co-extensive with knowledge that only power/knowledge can describe it” (p. 218). Strega (2005) further explains that “knowledge is not ‘discovered’ but is a product of the discourse and power relationship...” (p. 218). Therefore, power/knowledge is a relationship in which there is a constant struggle over the authorship of “truth” and “knowledge”.

The Foucauldian notion of power/knowledge provides the possibility of resistance to oppression and movement toward social justice because relations of power are never stable: there is always tension, struggle and resistance within them. Similarly, because knowledge is constituted within relations of power there is always resistance and struggle over authorship of knowledge, and therefore knowledge is never fixed. As Strega (2005) states “knowledge disputes are also power struggles, and power struggles are also about which/whose version of knowledge will prevail” (p. 226). A genealogy of *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) and the AAR-C2 seeks to locate these points of dispute and struggle, not
only by naming the discourses within which the OnLAC notion of resiliency functions, but also the discourses and subjugated knowledges that are absent.

**A Foucauldian Inspired Discourse Analysis**

A Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis can push back against hegemonic constructions of resiliency by exploring how the present notion of resilience in the OnLAC system came about, and how this notion impacts practice and young people in care. Within this line of thinking further questions emerged: How is the OnLAC notion of resilience constructed? What subjects benefit from this construction? What understandings of resilience are excluded? How do these inclusions and exclusions shape the potential subjectivities of young people in care to reflect neoliberal pursuits? The Foucauldian methodology I draw on to answer these questions is genealogy. Hook (2005) states that genealogy is a set of profound philosophical and methodological suspicions toward the objects of knowledge that we confront, a set of suspicions that stretch to our relationships to such objects, and to the uses to which such related knowledges are put. Foucault’s genealogical method, in short, is a methodology of suspicion and critique, an array of defamiliarizing procedures and reconceptualizations that pertain not just to any object of knowledge, but to any procedure of knowledge production (pp. 4-5).

A genealogical methodology allowed me to approach the notion of resilience in the OnLAC system with suspicion and question long standing truths upon which this notion of resilience has been founded and how this construction of resilience shapes the lives of young people in care. In these ways a Foucauldian genealogy of the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) and the AAR-C2 can expose the discourses and processes within which knowledge about resilience has been constructed and what happens when this
construction, also conceived of as a universal ‘truth’ about resilience, is applied to young people in care.

Koopman (2013) writes that the purpose of genealogy is to show that the current state of affairs is not inevitable; that it is a construction that emerged from a range of possibilities; and that the particular emergence of the present is the effect of practices of knowledge-power-subjectivity (p. 107). Therefore, utilizing concepts and approaches of Foucauldian genealogy allows me to consider how power has been used to privilege certain forms of truth and knowledge about resilience and young people in care, and how various disciplines and techniques have been used to limit the subjectivities available to these young people. By identifying these impingements, possibilities emerge for resistance to them and therein space is created for alternate subjectivities. For instance, a youth doing poorly academically, or a youth with an introverted personality who places little importance on pro-social activities such as organized sports and clubs, would be targeted by various disciplinary mechanisms of the AAR-C2 to take up goals and characteristics that are associated with the OnLAC notion of resilience. By exposing the current OnLAC conceptualization of resilience as only one of many ways of conceptualizing resilience, and demonstrating that this construction it is not natural or universal, we can begin to understand who, or what, has benefitted from this notion of resilience, and how it has materially impacted youth in care. In these ways, a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis, when paired with a feminist poststructural stance, can work towards addressing issues of social justice related to youth in care.

I have repeatedly referred to this methodology as being “inspired” by a Foucauldian genealogy, rather than being a “pure” genealogy. I understand the latter to
involve extensive archival research, which in this case would involve archival research of the social and political context of the emergence and construction of the OnLAC system. Rather than using historical archives, I have searched academic and research papers that would give me clues regarding the discourses that have shaped the construction of resilience in our society; what version of resilience the OnLAC system took up; and what the social and political context of these developments were at crucial intersections. My aim is to use these clues to analyze the discourses that emerge in two documents, the *Looking After Children: A Practitioner’s Guide* (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) and three versions of the AAR-C2 (2006, 2010, 2016) and to consider these discourses in relation to resiliency and neoliberalism. These two documents comprise my data selection and will be discussed later in this chapter. My genealogy asks the question: How have we come to this ideal of resiliency?

**Research Methods**

Genealogy is not a specific set of steps. Indeed, Foucault was against prescribed methods, which he understood as throwbacks to Enlightenment epistemology wherein only certain approaches and subjects could reveal the one “truth”. Rather, genealogy encompasses at its core a critical philosophy and inquiry into the problems of the present, “a philosophico-historical inquiry into the conditions that make possible problems such as modern sexuality and modern punishment” (Koopman, 2013, p. 6). The “explication and conceptualization of [the] complex set of practices that contingently coalesced” (Koopman, 2013, p. 93) reveals alternate and indefinite ways of knowing and being that can be consciously taken up in the transformation of ourselves as subjects. Within this landscape, social justice aspirations can flower by centring knowledges that have been
subjugated. Given that Foucault did not prescribe to a fixed method of genealogy there have been many interpretations and approaches to utilizing this method of discourse analysis. What I offer here is a description of the method as will be employed in this thesis. In the following section I discuss the central concepts and practices to this method: dimensions of discourse and problematization.

**Dimensions of Discourse**

Discourse is an integral term in genealogy and therefore it is important to thoroughly understand the context of its use. While discussing Foucauldian genealogy, Hook (2005) states that in genealogy it is less important to specify a definition of discourse than it is to ensure that three critical dimensions of discourse are encompassed in the genealogy (p. 9-10). The first dimension is the role of history in discourse. This entails the history of the production of the notion of resiliency. In other words, from what epistemology and historical context did the notion of resiliency emerge, and how did it come to its current construction in OnLAC? Tracing the lineage of resiliency aids in mapping its emergence and how it continues to emerge in the landscape of the present via various technologies and self-disciplines.

The second critical dimension of discourse that must be considered in genealogy “entail[s] a focus on discourse-as-knowledge, discourse as a matter of the social, historical and political conditions under which statements come to count as true or false” (Hook, 2005, p. 9). In other words, which subjects (both individual and institutional, i.e. white middle class child welfare worker) within the social and political landscape can speak about certain notions of resiliency and have their text (whether spoken or written) understood as true, self-evident, or common-sense knowledge? How have certain truths
been bolstered and how can they be re-visited and critiqued? How does this critique open possibilities for future subjectivities, and new ‘truths’?

The third critical dimension of discourse to be considered is a “reference to materiality, [as without it] discourse analysis remains largely condemned to tracing ‘the markings of a textuality’” (Hook, 2005, p. 9). What are the material effects of employing in practice the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) and its corresponding AAR-C2? From this context, what does a social worker ‘do’ when they gather information about a young person in care through the application of the AAR-C2? By extension, what subjectivities are re-produced in this daily social work practice with young people in care? All of these demonstrate the material effects of discourse. Koopman (2013) unifies these three dimensions beautifully in his description of genealogy:

Genealogy tracks complex histories of alliance, support and reinforcement that facilitate the production of spaces of practical possibility. The point is not to discern how the intentions of those in the past effectively gave rise to the present, but rather to understand how various independently existing vectors of practice managed to contingently intersect in the past so as to give rise to the present (pp. 107).

**Problematization**

A starting point for this genealogy is the identification of a problem, or, in other words, the problematization of a practice which has historically not been questioned or seen as a problem. Problematization can also be understood as

the analysis of the way an unproblematic field of experience or set of practices which were accepted without question, which were familiar and ‘silent’, out of discussion, becomes a problem, raises discussion and debate, incites new reactions, and induces a crisis in the previously silent behaviour, habits, practices and, institutions (Foucault, cited in Koopman, 2013, pp. 94).
The problematization I identify in this thesis is the construction of resilience within the OnLAC system, and how this construction is concomitantly produced through, reinforced by, and bolstered within neoliberalism. However, the problematization of the OnLAC notion of resilience is not synonymous with stating that this notion is entirely wrong and that the whole OnLAC system should be thrown out. As Koopman (2013) states: “To say that practices are problematic is not to insist that they are wrong. It is to insist that they constitute a field in which we find that we must continue to work” (p. 95). Therefore, to begin a conversation about a problem is not about holding up a solution to it. It is to recognize that these conversations must be continually ongoing; the truth-knowledge-power-subject matrix of modern society must be continually acknowledged and reflected upon.

Tamboukou (1999) and Hook (2005) identify four central arguments that Foucault employed when analyzing a problematization: dispersal, reversal, critique and singular enlightenment. During the genealogy of my problematization, these arguments are employed while exploring the three previously discussed critical dimensions of discourse. The first two arguments, dispersal and reversal, disrupt in discourse what is generally understood as coherent, linear, and self-evident. They identify the breaks and disjunctions, particularly where resistance to what appears as a self-evident truth exists. In this way alternate truths become visible. For instance, what does the OnLAC system present as natural, universal and self-evident? No one truth exists, therefore where a truth is asserted beckons a peeling away of its construction to expose alternate subjugated truths about resiliency. Further, problematization begs the questions: through what discourses and forms of governmentality has the notion of resiliency in OnLAC emerged,
and therein what notions of resiliency have been submerged? This is what Koopman (2013) refers to as the “anti-inevitability thesis” (p. 141), that is, the understanding of resiliency in OnLAC was not inevitable but rather emerged out of a multitude of other possibilities.

The third argument in problematization is “critique”. This “criticize[s] the present by reflecting upon the ways the discursive and institutional practices of the past still affect the constitution of the present” (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 205). For instance, how do the historical practices of child welfare, which contributed to the current notion of resiliency, continue to impact young people in care? Are these practices gendered, and/or normalizing?

The fourth argument to employ in problematization is “singular enlightenment”. This is a paradoxical term as it encourages one to see multiple truths and therein to create space for the freedom to choose alternate subjectivities. It also enables one to consider the materiality of the problematization. For instance, how might the availability of alternate subjectivities, outside of the OnLAC notion of resilience, impact an individual’s self-worth, in turn impacting life choices? Is the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) gendered, and if so in what ways? Understanding the answers to these questions leaves the space and freedom for alternate subjectivities, and regarding them as equitable to subjectivities hegemonically constructed. Sawicki (1994) states that

Foucault brings to our attention historical transformations in practices of self-formation in order to reveal their contingency and to free us for new possibilities of self-understanding, new modes of experience, new forms of subjectivity, authority, and political identity (cited in Koopman, 2013, p. 140-141).

Freedom for new possibilities can impact larger political processes and policy that changes the material lives of young people in care and their futures.
It is my intention to show that the notion of resilience in OnLAC is the effect of many strands of impact, strands which do not travel in a linear fashion, but which are multidimensional and collide. At each point of collision there are practices shaping the relations of language, power and knowledge that allow for this specific neoliberal emergence of resilience, and the expulsion of other notions of resilience. By extension, how has this construction of resilience impacted practice? What forms of disciplining and surveillance has it employed? Is this notion of resilience gendered? It is these strands and collisions that I aim to trace.

**Introduction to Data Selection: Looking After Children: A Practitioner's Guide (2007) and the AAR-C2**

I selected two data sources: the *Looking After Children: A Practitioner's Guide* (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) and three versions of the AAR-C2 used with youth in care 16-17 years of age: the AAR-C2-2006 (Flynn, Ghazal, & Legault, 2006), AAR-C2-2010 (Flynn, Miller, Desjardins, Ghazal, & Legault, 2010) and the AAR-C2-2016 (Flynn, Miller, & Desjardins, 2016). The AAR-C2 is the Canadian adaptation of the AAR, which was developed in the U.K. Unless citing one of these versions of the AAR-C2, I refer to them collectively as the AAR-C2. My aim is to use the methods I have discussed to problematize their construction and use in practice with youth in care. Although not all the chapters of the *Looking After Children: A Practitioner's Guide* (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) discuss resilience, they each can provide information and clues that trace and situate the discourse(s) from which the system emerged and within which it is situated. Unless referencing a citation from this work, I refer to it as the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007). The *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) has been used by the Ontario Association of
Children Aid Societies to train managers and trainers in the implementation of the OnLAC system and, as the title suggests, it acts as a guide for practitioners of the OnLAC system and how to administer the AAR-C2. In this way it is understood as a credible source of knowledge in child welfare regarding one of the central and much used tenets of the system - resilience. These choices in data selection would seem appropriate as Tamboukou (1999) states that “it is significant that a genealogy should start with a major interrogation of what has been accepted as the 'truth', any truth concerning the ways individuals understand themselves as subjects of this world” (p. 214).

I have not located research utilizing any form of discourse analysis of the OnLAC system, the Practitioner's Guide (2007), or the AAR-C2. Aside from a handful of scholarly works critiquing the LAC system in the U.K. (with the primary critic being Garrett, (1999a; 1999b; 2002)), and a research study by MacKenzie et al (2009) exploring the use of the AAR-C2 with Indigenous youth in care, the system has received little attention outside of the principal participants in its construction and ongoing implementation across child welfare. Therefore, this thesis would add to the literature, or at the very least initiate a critical conversation of the OnLAC system.

**Approaches to the Assessment and Evaluation of Research**

The assessment and evaluation of research aimed at promoting social justice occurs throughout the development of the research design, throughout the research process, and afterwards. Therefore, assessment and evaluation is both a developmental and a post hoc process. Employing a universally prescribed method of assessment and evaluation, such as one would find in a positivist, quantitative research project, would be counter to the feminist poststructural Foucauldian methodology I have chosen, which is positioned in a
field of multiple truths, and is difference centred. Therefore, rather than adhering to prescriptive steps to assess the quality of this research, I seek to move through this thesis with prevailing principles to guide my research process. I found Potts and Brown’s (2005) discussion of three emerging tenets of anti-oppressive research instructive here. The epistemology of these tenets fit with a feminist poststructural methodology. The first of Potts and Brown’s (2005) principle tenets echoes a central tenet of feminist research. The authors state it is imperative that research “challenges the status quo in its process as well as its outcomes” and that it promotes social justice through being a tool for social change (Potts and Brown, 2005, p. 260). Secondly, Potts and Brown (2005) state that research must recognize that all knowledge is produced through the interactions of people, and as all people are socially located (in their race, gender, ability, class identities, and so on) with biases, privileges, and differing power relations, so too is the creation of knowledge socially located, socially constructed... that ‘truth’ is a verb (pp. 261).

Thus, knowledge can be a means of resistance. Finally, Potts and Brown (2005) note that a researcher must recognize that all research is about power and relationships (p. 262-263). This includes recognizing that I influence all aspects of the research through the research question and design I have chosen, the data selected for genealogy, and so on.

Additionally, I employ the work of Tracy (2010) and her conceptualization of eight universal “big tent” criteria for excellent qualitative work (p. 840). I have considered her use of the word “universal” and that overall the taking up universal approaches works counter to a poststructural methodology. However, I agree with Tracy (2010) in that criteria, when flexible to various methodologies and epistemologies, can be helpful when learning “how to do” excellent qualitative research. At the same time I also recall the work of Reid and Gough (2000) who discuss the potential dangers of promoting
standardized methods to judge the quality of qualitative research, suggesting this could lead to yet another process of hegemonic knowledge production and therein limit the possibilities of what constitutes qualitative research, narrowing possibilities of knowledge production. For this reason, I do not agree with Tracy’s (2010) assertion that universal criteria would be a way of giving credibility to qualitative research when talking to power holders. This would imply that qualitative methodologies must adhere to a universal system of assessment and evaluation (this sounds strangely like the OnLAC system) merely to accommodate positivists, or those who do not expend the intellectual energy required to think outside of their paradigmatic practice. Having said this, I employed some of Tracy’s (2010) criteria pedagogically within this position.

Employing these criteria began with asking questions about my motivation for completing this research. Although I have a keen interest in this research topic, the primary reason for the completion of this research is to meet the requirements of an academic program. This has shaped the formality and criteria with which I have approached this research process. Despite this academic context, which is rooted in a lineage of power and privileged positions over marginalized groups, such as youth in care, I remain deeply committed to challenging the status quo and the dominant constructions of youth in care. This commitment is partly due to my own experiences as a youth in care, and partly due to my experiences over the past 18 years working with youth in care. I recognize that throughout this time I have not always been an ally, that I have made decisions affecting the lives of these young people from a dominant discourse and position and that I am committed to doing better. These elements signify to me that this is what Tracy (2010) refers to as a “worthy topic” (p. 840).
As previously mentioned, an essential criteria by which to assess this research is its ability to concretely work towards social justice. In other words, as Tracy (2010) asks, will this research make a “significant contribution” (p. 840) toward social justice? What difference will it make in the lives of young people in care? Will my argument be convincing to change hegemonic notions of resiliency? My hope is that the outcome of this research will provide a basis for political action to change how resiliency is understood, to question the current “essential” definition of resiliency in child welfare, and question who benefits from the multitude of practices invested in the construction of this subjectivity. It is my hope that such queries, even if posed only by myself within my daily practice, can be a resistance to these dominant notions and ways of being, and provide openings for alternate subjectivities of young people in care, foster parents, and for child welfare workers. My hope is that this research will further inform these conversations and lay another brick towards a foundation for change.

Throughout the process of this genealogy I have considered how my subjectivity and positionality as a privileged White, able-bodied, professional woman influenced the thesis process. This involved an ongoing process of reflection, questioning, and critique of my thought processes and how I approached the data. Indeed, my subjectivity has been an impediment to interpreting the data outside of the mainstream lens, and it was an ongoing intellectual struggle to conceptualize and see outside this discourse. In other words, without considering my reflexivity, I would not have been able to engage in an effective analysis of the data. I also found that my intuition regarding the discourse within which the data was situated informed the analysis process. Often this involved a feeling regarding the data that led me to dig deeper in order to uncover the discursive
markers of the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) and the AAR-C2. This process led me to re-
consider a quote from George Orwell’s work “1984”, wherein he states that “nothing was 
your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull” (Orwell, 1948). The 
experience of moving through thesis exposed to me that these few cubic centimetres have 
been fully colonized, and indeed have not been my own for a very long time. Thus, it is 
not surprising that knowledge emerging from a felt sense informed the path my intellect 
needed to travel.

Another aspect of adhering to Tracy’s (2010) “big tent” criteria for qualitative 
work were periodic reviews and check ins with committee members and peers. This was 
instrumental throughout thesis to refocus my efforts and share the emotional processes 
that inevitably accompanied the intellectual work of analysis. Journaling was helpful to 
organize and analyze my own thoughts and the discourses within which they are 
immersed. This was true not only in regards to the data, but overall, across my practice 
of life. In other words, tethering myself through journaling to discourses outside of 
mainstream notions was critical to being able to engage in a poststructural discourse 
analysis. This enabled me to move away from the position of being a “knower” and 
reside in de-authorized spaces (Lather, 2008), and encouraged strong objectivity, and 
what Tracy (2010) referred to as “sincerity”, meaning “that the research is marked by 
honesty and transparency about the researcher’s biases, goals, and foibles...” (p. 841). 
Fine (1998) notes that even within qualitative research, the researcher often does not turn 
the gaze upon themselves, however they “are always implicated at the hyphen” (p. 72) 
between self and other. In my experience of this thesis process, turning the gaze upon 
myself was unavoidable.
During the analysis of the data I considered Tracy’s (2010) discussion of achieving “credibility” (p. 843) through “thick description” (p. 843). This directed me to reference the Practitioner's Guide (2007) and the AAR-C2 in strategic detail, and explicate with considerable discursive specificity, and provide “enough detail that readers may come to their own conclusion...” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843) about my analysis. This approach also supports Foucault’s description of his genealogies as works of fiction. Foucault acknowledged that there are many versions of the truth, and therein history, all of which could be described as fictions. My analysis was no different. This is not to discredit my work, rather to draw attention to the multiplicity of analysis and truth, which has inherently been shaped by how power, knowledge, discourse and subjectivity intersected during the genealogical process.

In the following chapter I begin with defining the term “conditions of possibility”, and then explore the conditions of possibility for the emergence of resiliency in the OnLAC system. The data selected for this exploration is comprised of a review of academic literature regarding the history of the notion of resiliency, the construction of the Looking After Children system, the construction of the Ontario Looking After Children system, and alternate understandings of resilience.
Chapter 3: The Non-Inevitability of OnLAC Resilience

*Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.*

- Albert Einstein

Conditions of possibility are a set of limits for what is possible to emerge as a truth in our society. More narrowly in the context of this thesis, conditions of possibility have limited what has been possible to emerge as a truth regarding resiliency in young people in care. Conditions of possibility result from various interlocking discourses which emerge from social structures, practices, and theories. Understanding the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the current notion of resiliency in the OnLAC system is critical to understanding what alternate notions of resiliency have been marginalized, and what groups of people and/or structures benefit from the OnLAC notion of resiliency.

Exploring the formation of these conditions of possibility involves questioning practices that may not been questioned before. Questioning these practices problematizes them, and allows me to explore how they have given rise to, and continue to influence current practices (Koopman, 2013) with youth in care. “Foucault thought we could locate the conditions of possibility of our present ways of thinking, doing, and being through historical investigations that would describe the problematizations that provide a basis for the elaboration of our thought, action, and existence” (Koopman, 2013, p. 112).

In this chapter, I will problematize and explore practices that have limited what was possible to emerge as the truth about resilience in the OnLAC system. Hook (2005) states that in order to explore these conditions of possibility I must consider the critical
dimensions of discourse from which this notion of resilience emerged. My point of departure in this exploration asks the following question: What was the role of history in the production of this notion of resilience, and from what epistemology, and historical context did this notion emerge. I have organized the conditions of possibility into the following sections: The Emergence of Resiliency; The Epistemological Positions of Research on Resiliency; Constructing Resiliency Through Constructing Normalcy; The Framework of Resiliency in OnLAC; Alternate Notions of Resiliency; and Socio-Political Influences: Neoliberal Roots of “Looking After Children”.

The Emergence of Resiliency

Resiliency is a concept that has been used across disciplines, from environmental ecology and economics to physiology and psychology. The Oxford dictionary (2014) defines resilience as “the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity... [and] the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness”. In social sciences resilience is a highly contested term and there is little consensus on how it should be defined, researched, or measured (Kolar, 2011; Ungar, 2004; Pooley & Cohen, 2010). The definition of resilience is often “heavily laden with subjective, often unarticulated assumptions” (Glantz & Sloboda, cited in Kolar, 2011, p.423) reflecting White middle class values (Martineau, 1999; Ungar, 2004). The definition of resiliency in child welfare is situated within a normative developmental framework. The roots of this notion of resiliency stretch back to epidemiological studies, particularly those related to the outcomes of children whose parents had significant mental illness, such as schizophrenia. These early studies are often referred to as the first wave of resiliency research (Kolar, 2011; Pooley & Cohen, 2010). Garmezy (1971) is often credited with
pioneering resiliency research by posing such questions as: Which children “will fall to the ravaging effects of mental disorder or who will, despite stress and adversity, remain inviolate to psychopathology...” (p. 102)? These early studies recorded how children responded to trauma (identified as living with a schizophrenic parent), and they were subsequently characterized as vulnerable versus invulnerable, the later “seemingly immunized against disorganization” (Garmezy, 1971, p. 114). However, Hinkle (1974) offered a less positive view of invulnerable individuals describing them as typically having an “‘almost sociopathic flavor’...reminiscent of some form of narcissistic disorder” (cited in Anthony, 1987, p. 5).

From these early inquiries, notions of vulnerability, risk and resilience emerged as a group of “generative ideas” that facilitated the development of resiliency theory (Anthony, 1987, p. 3). Risk research through the 1970s and into the 1980s was primarily concerned with resilience and invulnerability. The notion of invulnerability to traumatic events was eventually re-named “resiliency” (Anthony, 1987; Martineau, 1999), and whether or not children were determined to be resilient children relied on the extent to which they embodied particular personality characteristics, such as creativity. For instance, Hesdon & Denney (1968) found that some of their research subjects who developed successfully despite having had traumatic experiences “...were more spontaneous when interviewed and had more colorful life histories. They held the more creative jobs: musician, teacher, home-designer; and followed the more imaginative hobbies: oil painting, music, antique aircraft” (cited in Garmezy, 1974, p. 105). Overall these early studies identified “the correlates and markers of good adaptation among young people expected to struggle because of their genetic or environmental risk.... A
‘short list’ of potential assets or protective factors associated with resilience” emerged (Masten & Obradovic, 2006, p. 14) that continues to be used today.

This operationalization of resiliency as a set of specific characteristics, assets, and protective factors gained momentum in research such that the initial ‘short list’ expanded to include an array of personality traits. This list includes individual personality traits (i.e. good cognitive abilities, easy temperament, optimistic outlook, etc); family factors (i.e. authoritative parenting, organized home environment, post-secondary education, good socio-economic status, etc); and community factors (i.e. effective schools, prosocial organizations, etc). Citing her earlier work, Masten (2006) states that the presence of these resilience-promoting factors are concrete evidence of good human adaptation systems which are the “result of biological and cultural evolution, [and which] provide children with the capacity for adapting and recovering from a wide range of adversities in the course of development (Masten, 2001). Further, if these systems are operating normally, resilience is common and can be expected” (p. 7).

Problems emerge when these resilience-promoting, or protective factors, are not culturally and economically contextualized within white western middle class norms, which has been the case with the OnLAC system. Other authors have identified this problem in resiliency research. For instance, Martineau (1999) states that paradoxically the presence of these resiliency promoting factors infers an absence of risk and trauma, not a protection from them. Ungar (2007) builds on this observation when he notes that the

early pioneers of resilience research changed the focus of their studies (or at the very least incorporated a dual focus into their work) to study these young people who thrived as a distinct group from those who showed problems. Normative positive development under stress came to be known as resilience (p. 4).
This conceptualization of resilience justifies the normalization of undesirable populations, through such practices as “resiliency training” (Martineau, 1999). Thus, the dominant notion of resiliency, noted by Masten (2006), operates within a discourse of normal versus pathological development, the parameters of which are rooted in western, white, middle class social, cultural and economic values. This is noted in the first wave of resiliency research wherein observable normative developmental benchmarks were utilized as a measure of resilience, rather than using other markers, such as internal well-being or happiness, as a measure of resilience (Masten & Obradovic, 2006, p. 15). Thus, resilience is now understood in child welfare, and the OnLAC system, as developmental competence which is achieved by meeting age specific normative benchmarks which have emerged from a specific intersection of class, race, and culture, without subjective measures of well-being.

Martineau (1999) argues this further, stating that “resiliency has been conflated with normativity and that resiliency no longer needs to occur within the context of trauma”, rather that trauma has been replaced by socioeconomic risks and resiliency has become a concept through which populations of young people at risk or living with adversity in poor and oppressed neighbourhoods are targeted for resiliency training. She references the work of Garmezy & Masten (1991), which states that childhood competence depends upon family support, upward mobility, and academic achievement, and as such the absence of risk becomes a condition for resilience. Martineau (1999) states that “it is then a small step to then claim that targeted risk populations are incompetent, dysfunctional, and in need of social interventions” (p. 118). In the context
of young people in care, wherein the vast majority of young people are apprehended from poor, non-white homes, this problem becomes critically relevant.

**The Epistemological Positions of Researchers of Resilience**

A researcher’s epistemological position determines how resiliency research is carried out and how the results are understood. Diverging epistemologies of post-positivism and constructivism surfaced during the third wave of resiliency research, at which time the OnLAC system emerged in child welfare. Masten (2001) is repeatedly referenced by the OnLAC system; it is helpful to understand the epistemological lens she has utilized in her work, as this lens shapes how resilience is understood in OnLAC. Kolar (2011) notes that Masten and Obravodic (2006) employ a post-positivist epistemology in their research on resilience. This post-positivist position produced one prong of a third wave of resiliency research that sought to promote resilience through prevention, intervention, and policy... for children growing up with adversities and vulnerabilities... Resilience intervention efforts were spurred by the concomitant rise of prevention science, which underscored the importance of promoting competence as a strategy for preventing or ameliorating behavioral and emotional problems (Masten & Obravodic, 2006, p. 14).

Conversely, Michael Ungar is noted to employ a constructivist epistemology in his research of resiliency (Kolar, 2011). This epistemological position produced a very different notion of the third wave of resiliency research. “Liebenberg and Ungar (2009) argue that the third wave is actually comprised of a recognition that both internal and external resources contribute to resilience” (Kolar, 2011, p. 423).

The impact of these diverging epistemologies is even more profound when considering the emerging fourth wave of resiliency research. For instance, Liebenberg and Ungar (2009) discuss resiliency as being discursively negotiated, and influenced by
both culture and context (Kolar, 2011). Conversely, Masten and Obravodic (2006) remain within current notions of what constitutes resilience and state that the fourth wave of research “is constituted by the integration of research across levels of analysis that range from individual differences to environmental risk gradients” (Kolar, 2011, p. 423). Post-positivism has occupied a dominant position in child welfare and the OnLAC discourse and sets a significant limit on what is understood as resilience, within both policy and practice. Within an outcome based system such as OnLAC, resilience is defined as a “class of phenomena characterised by good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development” (Masten, 2001, p. 228). An outcome based conceptualization of resilience is problematic, when imposed on marginalized populations because it relies on decontextualized normative benchmarks to assess resiliency (Kolar, 2011, p. 425-426). Indeed, this pulls forward Liebenberg and Ungar’s (2009) assertion that resilience is discursively negotiated.

It should not be surprising then that resilience has emerged without any mention of social structural influences (i.e. class, culture, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, etc). Seccombe (2002) warns that

the widely held view of resiliency as an individual disposition, family trait, or community phenomenon is insufficient... resiliency cannot be understood or improved in significant ways by merely focusing on these individual-level factors. Instead careful attention must be paid to the structural deficiencies in our society and to the social policies that families need in order to become stronger, more competent, and better functioning in adverse situations (cited in Ungar, 2008, p. 220).

Martineau (1999) echoes these sentiments, stating that when structural oppression is not challenged when working with marginalized groups “practices typically devolve into pathologizing the individual” (p. 11). Indeed, the inability to be resilient when resiliency
is framed as “ordinary magic” (Masten, 2001) can amount to being deficient. As such, situating resiliency within the individual is a dangerous proposition and exposes the neoliberal discourse within which OnLAC is immersed.

**Constructing Resiliency through Constructing Normalcy**

Thus far in this chapter, I have discussed the changing notion of resiliency from a focus on trauma to a focus on meeting developmental normative behaviours in spite of adversity. I have also discussed the epistemological context within which this notion of resiliency has developed, and how these conditions have shaped and limited how resiliency is taken up in the OnLAC system. In this section I explore how the notion of normal was constructed, the conditions within which OnLAC norms were established, and how these norms have limited what is understood as developmental competence and therein part of the OnLAC notion of resilience.

In researching the origins of the notion of normal I found the work of Davis (1997) instructional. Understanding how the notion of normal was produced in a particular historical and social moment is critical to understanding the position of the concept today. Davis explains that the idea of “normal” is fairly new, entering the English language around 1840. Its production coincides with the rise of industrialization and the rise of the middle class, and is intimately tied to eugenics. Previous to this, there were only notions of the “ideal” body, and the “grotesque” body. The former was understood as divine and therefore never attainable. Its corollary was “the grotesque [which was] a signifier of the people, of common life… had a life-affirming transgressive quality…. and signified a common humanity” (p. 4).

Davis (1997) traces the emergence of normal, and the well known associated bell
curve, to the emergence of statistics. Davis discusses the work of Adolphe Quetelet, and eugenicist, Sir Francis Galton as pivotal to the modern notion of “normal as an imperative” (p. 4). Quetelet used astronomy practices to develop the foundational ideas for the notion of normal. He “noticed that the ‘law of error’, used by astronomers to locate a star by plotting all the sightings and then averaging the errors, could be equally applied to the distribution of human features…” (p. 4). He took this one further step and formulated the concept of the average man. At the time, the middle class represented the average, or middle way man, which encompassed morals, the body, behaviours, etc.

Outside of this catchment was deviance and defect - attributes that would bring down the human race. These ideas provide the rationale for eugenics, which legitimized “the state to norm the non-standard” (p. 6); and Galton re-named the “error curve” used by astronomers, the curve of “normal distribution” (p. 7). This advanced the ability of eugenics to label the extremes of the bell curve as non-desirable versus desirable, rather than both ends of the curve being understood as errors. From there, Galton established a ranking system from either side of the median. This production of normal, emerging out of a discourse of eugenics, is evident in almost every part of Western neoliberal society today.

In order to promote specific competent developmental behaviours OnLAC creators required normative standards to hold up as the desired developmental targets. The normative standard utilized by OnLAC was the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), which is noted as the “the cornerstone of our method of identifying resilient outcomes among young people in care” (Flynn, Ghazal, Legault, Vandermeulen & Petrick, 2004, p. 69). In problematizing these norms, it is critical to have a contextual
understanding of the data produced by the NLSCY. The NLSCY began in 1994 and “is a household survey that followed a sample of about 25,000 children under age 12 over time. The sample was obtained from households with children that were currently in, or recently rotated out of the National Population Health Survey (NPHS)” (Tambay & Catlin, 1995, p. 31). Therefore the sampling procedures of the NPHS were largely those used for the NLSCY. “Underrepresent[ed in this sample were] people in large households, typically parents and dependent children, and overrepresent[ed were] people in small households, who are often single or elderly” (Tambay & Catlin, 1995, p. 31). The percentage of participants was lower for rural areas due to high data collection costs. Participants who moved frequently were difficult to locate or trace, and therefore their data was also underrepresented. Additionally “missing from the sample were the children in homeless families.” (McIntyre, Connor, & Warren., 2000, p. 965). Tambay and Catlin (1995) note that “such people often have characteristics that differ from those of the general population” (p. 38). These underrepresented families and children bear resemblance to many of the children who come into care (Wong & Yee, 2010). Perhaps most disturbing is that “First Nation reserves were excluded from the [NLSCY] survey, and data collected for residents of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon Territory were not released for analysis” (McIntyre, et al., 2000, p. 962). Given that First Nation young people are over-represented in care this is highly problematic. The Practitioner Guide (2007) briefly mentions this representation issue: “unfortunately, looked-after children and youth are underrepresented in the NLSCY sample” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 3). What seems implicit in the subtext as a rationale for not including these populations in the NLSCY is that these groups are judged not to be desirable subjects and
therefore data regarding them should not be used to determine normative standards.

Similarly, in the U.K LAC system the parents who opted out of their benchmark norms community study were portrayed as deviant (Garrett, 2002, p. 837), and that “the resulting data are biased in favour of the more functional families in the communities” (Ward, 1995, cited in Garrett, 2002, p. 837). Thus, on multiple levels the OnLAC notion of resiliency, based in large part on these normative standards, may lead us to “...overlook factors that predict positive development for those populations under stress, but which have little or no relevance to populations that are not under stress” (Ungar & Lieberberg, 2013, p. 251).

**The Framework of Resiliency in OnLAC**

In this section I explain the OnLAC version of resiliency and the operational framework that the OnLAC system and the AAR-C2 has developed to enable a form of “resiliency training” (Martineau, 1999). The OnLAC system references two definitions of resilience:

Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker in 2000 defined resilience as “a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity” (543), and Masten in 2001 succinctly defined resilience as “good outcomes in spite of serious threats to adaptation or development” (228). Both of these definitions will suffice for our purposes, because both contain the necessary ingredients. The first is that resilience is clearly an outcome, an achievement that follows adversity. The second is that the quality of the adversity is serious, severe, or significant (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 44).

In this analysis I reference the definition by Masten (2001) as my experience with the OnLAC system this has been the most referenced. The meaning of this definition becomes more clear when its terms (good outcomes, adaptation, development) are understood. Resilience as an outcome is “based on average developmental potential and
normative day to day experience” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 46). Adaptive functioning is improved by the presence of correlates to behavioural resilience, these include: strong connections with one or more effective parents; connections to prosocial and competent peers; bonds with other prosocial adults; self-regulation skills; learning and problem solving skills (intelligence); positive outlook on life; appealing qualities; socioeconomic advantages; etc (Masten, 2006, p. 7). These correlates determine the functioning of a young person’s adaptive systems, and together make up the “two important dimensions that contribute to resilience: the personal characteristics required for resilience and the life conditions and experiences that surround the person. Both of these dimensions are amenable to intervention” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 47) in the promotion and training of normative resiliency. Klein, Kufeldt, and Rideout (2006) list risk and protective factors for resiliency across four categories: individual, family, school, and community (p. 37). Some examples of individual risk factors are: behaviour problems, learning disabilities, or peers who use alcohol or drugs (Klein, et al., 2006, p. 37). Some examples of individual protective factors for resilience are: good cognitive abilities, attractiveness to other people, a pleasing personality, and a good sense of humour (Klein, et al., 2006, p. 37). Indeed, the OnLAC notion of resilience echoes Martineau’s (1999) earlier observations that resilience has become the absence of risk.

This very narrow framework for understanding and instilling resilience serves as a form of identity management, potentially stigmatizing young people in care who do not take up these characteristics or traits, and it limits the pathways through which young people can be understood as resilient. This limiting of difference is accomplished by OnLAC’s main tool, the AAR-C2, which accumulates aggregate data on the above
measures of resiliency, and while mining this data it employs social role valorization to install this form of resiliency and a particular form of parenting.

**Social Role Valorization**

In the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007), Social Role Valorization is taken up as a central method through which to promote normalization and developmental competence. Wolfensberger (1972) popularized normalization in North America through his book *The Principle of Normalization in Human Services*. In this book he operationalized the notion of normalization originally promoted by Nirje in the 1960s (Perrin & Nirje, 2004, p. 37). However, Perrin and Nirje (2004) state that Wolfenberger’s (1972) theory was fundamentally different from the normalization principle stated by Nirje. Contrary to Wolfensberger, normalization does not mean making people normal, nor that one’s behaviour should be forced to conform to any particular standards. Rather, “normalization means the acceptance of a person with their handicap within ‘normal’ society, with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as are available to other[s].... Just as... a “normal” individual may engage in unpopular, nonconformist or even “deviant” behaviours, the normalization principle implies that the same right also should apply to mentally handicapped people” (Perrin& Nirje, 2004, p. 34-37). Perrin and Nirje (2004) argue that Wolfensberger’s promotion of forced conformity, often to the most conservative standards “however benevolent in its intentions, represents an unwarranted abuse of the powers of the therapeutic state...” (p. 38).

Wolfensberger later re-named his theory and approach Social Role Valorization (SRV) (Wolfensberger,1983). Fundamentally, SRV holds that certain groups of people in society are less valued than other groups and that devaluation can be mediated by
changing the devalued individual’s social image. For instance, they can’t be instructed to dress like other normal people in their community and not draw attention to themselves through socially undesirable behaviours (for instance an adult carrying a doll, or walking with a strange gait). Similarly, young people in care are stigmatized by various reports in the media and research that categorically assign them roles as homeless people, welfare recipients, high school drop outs, or criminals (Downton & Lemay, 1999). SRV seeks to counter these stereotypes by ensuring that young people conform to social norms in how they look, the activities they engage in, who they pick to be their friends, and how they interact with others. Therefore, the onus is on the young person in care to convince the rest of society that they are a valuable human being because they present with normal, positive behaviours. Downton and Lemay (1999) suggest that the avenue to achieve sameness, and therein fair treatment is to ensure that young people in care graduate from post-secondary education and secure employment, becoming adults who will occupy a “valued contributory citizenship” and not continue to create “a long term burden on the taxpayer and on the community” (p. 36-37).

SRV theory emerges from discourses espousing the idea that wellness and social acceptance are best achieved by redirecting or eliminating difference from the norm. This limits how wellness, and therefore resilience, can be understood. SRV also supports the idea that people who are identified as different are of less value, an idea within which it makes sense to convince young people in care to change their disposition, characteristics, social groups, academic performance, their views of the past and future, so as to convince normal citizens that they are not damaged, that they are normal and therefore valued. Experiences of young people in care, such as violence, poverty, etc, are
reduced to an idea of difference from the norm. This reduction renders these experiences invisible except as markers of difference. The lack of such considerations is a critical piece in neoliberalism’s role in the conditions of possibility for the emergence of this particular notion of resilience.

**Alternate Notions of Resilience**

The conditions of possibility that I have been discussing emerged through marginalizing other notions of resilience. It is important for the purposes of social justice to raise awareness of the notions of resilience that have occupied a less privileged, or even pejorative, position. By doing so, we have a point of reference from which to gain a deeper understanding of how resiliency is represented by the OnLAC system.

**Resilience and Indigenous Young People In Care**

Given that Indigenous young people represent a disproportionate percentage of young people in care in Canada, and that Indigenous peoples are the most socially, economically, and politically marginalized in the world, it is important to consider how the OnLAC notion of resilience, and its main tool, the AAR-C2, is suited or not to Indigenous culture and communities. Lalonde (2006) warns us that attempting to improve resiliency by “the parachuting of solution strategies into Aboriginal communities from far-off university campuses or government offices is not just disrespectful but also bound to fail” (p. 68). He advocates for a facilitation of a “lateral knowledge exchange” (p. 68) between Indigenous communities and discusses how the notion of resilience can be considered at a cultural level. Lalonde (2006) states that:

the process of creating and maintaining a strong sense of collective cultural identity not only promotes the continuity or resilience of Indigenous culture, but
also acts to support and protect young persons in their efforts to build a commitment to their own future that is able to withstand and overcome periods of adversity (p. 57).

Applying a false universality, such as the definition of OnLAC resilience to Indigenous communities, exposes a considerable bias towards western epistemology. In other words, the assumption is made that what white, middle-class people experience, think, feel, and believe not only can be applied to, but is good for, Indigenous communities. McKenzie, Bennett, Kennedy, Balla and Lamirande (2009), explored the usefulness of the AAR-C2 in an Indigenous context. They found that resilience in an Indigenous context can be significantly different from that represented by the AAR-C2. One example of resilience in an Indigenous community was succinctly summarized as “love for one’s parents, love for the community and a love of oneself” (p. 61). Although the participants in this research found that aspects of the AAR-C2 were helpful, overall they found that Indigenous culture was being quantified within a system found to be culturally incompatible with Indigenous lived experiences. Ungar (2008) echoes this sentiment stating, “we do not yet know what resilience means to non-western populations and marginalized groups such as Indigenous people who live side-by-side with their ‘mainstream’ neighbours in western settings” (p. 219). As Ungar (2006) notes “cross-cultural and international studies [which] have shown, what may constitute risk in one cultural context may not apply to another or elsewhere may constitute a protective factor or process, based in specific conditions, cultural values and norms” (cited in Bottrell, 2009, p. 324). Despite these critiques, Indigenous young people in care continue to be quantified through the rubric of the AAR-C2. Yet, the importance of awareness and respect for different cultural, ontological and epistemological traditions cannot be
overstated, particularly in relation to Indigenous peoples who continue to be subjected to colonization and cultural genocide.

Differences between Indigenous and mainstream epistemologies and ontologies create an inherent problem for the application of the AAR-C2 to Indigenous communities. Lalonde (2006) brings these differences to light in a discussion about Indigenous identity development. The development of identity is one dimension of the AAR-C2 within which the OnLAC notion and operationalization of resiliency is employed. Lalonde (2006) found that personal continuity, noted as part of identity formation, is conceptualized very differently by Indigenous youth and mainstream Canadian youth. He found that eighty percent of mainstream Canadian youth employ an essentialist strategy to their personal continuity, which holds that “beneath a changing surface, more enduring aspects of self can remain untouched by time and change” (Lalonde, 2006, p. 63). This is congruent with enlightenment epistemology and binary thinking, wherein one either has, or does not have, personal continuity. Conversely, eighty percent of Indigenous youth utilized a narrative approach to personal continuity “by creating an easy-to-follow story that stitches together the various and changing parts of their life” (Lalonde, 2006, p. 63). These examples demonstrate why it is incongruous to apply the OnLAC notion of resilience to Indigenous youth in care, and how the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the OnLAC notion of resilience, concomitantly silenced alternate notions of resilience.

Marginalized Notions of Resilience

The current notion of resiliency in OnLAC emerges out of the LAC system in the U.K which was constructed by a government appointed working party.
The membership of this working party reads like the Who’s Who of child welfare, child psychology, and child development in the United Kingdom. Led by Professor Roy Parker, and later by Harriet Ward, the working party made profound and practical recommendations, and helped implement them, in order to improve services to looked-after children and youth (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 4).

Further, Garrett (2002) shares an excerpt from an unsolicited letter to him from a prominent social work academic associated with the LAC regime: “...[the LAC regime] was developed under a Conservative government and controlled by intimidated civil servants that exercised tight control over the content... [they] resisted any mention of research which did not coincide with their current line...” (p. 839). Thus, the notion of OnLAC resiliency, based on normative measures, and positioning non-normative behaviours as negative outcomes, was produced through privileged professionals, academics, and politicians. Bottrell (2009) argues that locating resiliency within normative frameworks minimizes the significance of cultural diversity and social positioning (p. 322). For instance, in many cases, non-normative behaviours have enabled young people to survive traumatic experiences and substantial adversity, and in this sense to be resilient. If we accept this as so, alternate notions of resiliency may emerge that help us to understand what knowledges and truths were pushed aside in order for the current notion of resilience in OnLAC to emerge.

Given that the vast majority of young people in care come from marginalized families, described as “high risk” in child welfare parlance, understanding their lived experiences of adversity and resilience is critical. Unfortunately, studies of resilience in young people in care from a non-normative perspective are scarce. As an exception is, Bottrell (2009), who studied the experiences of another high risk group young people, girls from inner-city public housing. Similar to Lalonde’s (2006) arguments previously
discussed, Bottrell (2009) argues that aspects of developmental and individual level analyses in the resilience literature do not account for the significance of social identities and collective experience in resilience (p. 321). Interestingly, she notes that how resilience is conceptualized influences the interventions offered to youth. For instance, social role valorization is the intervention of choice for resiliency training in OnLAC, because this system espouses normalcy in its conceptualization of resilience. However, SRV may not develop resilience in many marginalized young people. As Bottrell (2009) notes, when young people experience normative ascribed identities as intolerable, non-normative responses and behaviours may be necessary to maintain a youth’s experience of positive identity and their ability to survive adversity (p. 329). Given that a disproportionate number of children and youth in care come from poor, non-white, marginalized homes this is a critical argument.

In this sense, the normative framework of resilience, positive outcomes and social role valorization utilized by OnLAC can serve to further marginalize youth already deemed ‘high risk’. In addition, a system emerging from this discourse is unable to acknowledge a youth’s resiliency when it is in opposition to normative understandings of resilience. For instance, in a home environment where a child or youth is largely responsible for meeting the needs of siblings, their caregiving skills and sibling relationships may be negatively framed as parentification or ‘unhealthy’ by normative developmental standards. Interventions that reshape these relationships in line with normative developmental behavioral, emotional and relational standards may at the same time pathologize their sources of self-esteem and personal agency. Similarly, Bottrell (2009) found that marginalized girls experienced school as a source of adversity due to
the stigma ascribed to them based on where they lived, meaning that school achievement and positive identity achievement were often in conflict with each other. Therefore, achieving normative development and measures of resilience became juxtaposed to positive identity. For these youth resilience is more aptly defined as coping and competence despite adversity in which identity work and cultural management are central processes. Thus, to speak of resilient individuals is to refer to young people’s engagement in processes that accrue positive outcomes, not only as normatively defined but also on their own terms, which in specific contexts of adversity may include and require resistances (Bottrell, 2009, p. 323).

It is important to understand how marginalizing alternate notions of resilience shaped the conditions of possibility for the emergence of the OnLAC notion of resilience, because it can help us to understand how certain groups of young people have been objectified and disciplined to accept normative subjectivities, and what has been lost in the process.

**Socio-Political Influences: Neoliberal Roots of “Looking After Children”**

What happened socially and politically prior to the emergence of the LAC system in the United Kingdom, and the OnLAC system in Ontario, determined the conditions of possibility for the dominant emergence of resiliency in these systems. I consider the influences for the LAC system in the U.K. because the OnLAC system is its progeny. I begin by discussing what neoliberalism is, its material effects, its emergence in the U.K. and Canada, and how neoliberal language shapes social services.

**What is Neoliberalism?**

Neoliberalism emerged in the late 1970s, first in the U.K (Blond, 2008), and then in Canada in the 1980s (Clark, 2002). Neoliberalism is both an economic and a political system. It has been described as a shape-shifting hegemony of state facilitated market
rule (Peck, 2013) and according to Blond (2008), it devastated the economies of the global south, increased the concentration of wealth within a tiny minority, and doubled poverty in developed countries such as the U.K. In spite of this, Harvey (2005) maintains that freeing up the markets even further will bring about social good; and that in every area of existence the state must facilitate, by force if necessary, the creation of markets in areas such as water, land, education and healthcare (cited in Garrett, 2010, p. 86). Even those aspects of life once thought sacred including the family, parenting, children, and even the soul are neoliberal targets. In essence, neoliberalism aims to orchestrate a way of thinking, feeling, and living that creates a symbiotic relationship between all that is and the financial markets. Brown’s (2006) discussion of neoliberalism is instructive here:

In order to comprehend neoliberalism’s political and cultural effects, it must be conceived of as more than a set of free market economic policies that dismantle welfare states and privatize public services in the North, make wreckage of efforts at democratic sovereignty or economic self-direction in the South, and intensify income disparities everywhere. Certainly neoliberalism comprises these effects, but as a political rationality, it also involves a specific and consequential organization of the social, the subject, and the state (p. 693).

As such, neoliberalism both produces and constrains the discourse on resiliency in child welfare. This rationality has licensed the state to universally shape youth in care into specific neoliberal subjects ready to take their place in the market. In order to understand how this has been accomplished it is important to further operationalize neoliberalism, its emergence, ideological underpinnings, and the material impacts of neoliberal policies.

Brown (2006) explains the two most prominent features of neoliberalism. First, neoliberalism “depicts free markets, free trade, and entrepreneurial rationality as achieved and normative, as promulgated through law and through social and economic policy—not
simply as occurring by dint of nature” (p. 694). The notion of “free” in the “free market” is obviously rhetorical as the market is facilitated and protected by the state. Second, neoliberalism is “more than simply facilitating the economy, the state itself must construct and construe itself in market terms, as well as develop policies and promulgate a political culture that figures citizens exhaustively as rational economic actors in every sphere of life” (p. 694). In this way, the notion of normative is applied to both people and the markets. The normativity of the markets is facilitated by the state, and similarly the normativity of its’ subjects as well. In recent years, I have noted a shift in language used in child welfare practice; “clients” are now referred to as “service users”; “foster parents” are now referred to as “service providers”, and “case planning” has been chunked into “inputs” and “outcomes”. This shift has infused notions of economy and efficiency, within which accountability and timeframes are delineated, and a person’s moral value is based on their ability to meet their needs within service parameters.

Neoliberalism has also been described as a set of paradoxes that has had an intense impact on the social landscape. There are three central paradoxes in what neoliberalism claims will occur within a free market system and what actually takes place. While neoliberalism claims to be an amoral economic policy, in practice it ushers in a conservative moral agenda (BCRW, 2013), such as the adherence to white middle class parenting values and desired child subjectivities expressed in LAC (see Garrett, 1999). Brown (2006) details the reciprocal relationship between neoliberalism and neoconservatism in the United States. Secondly, neoliberalism depoliticizes risk, enabling the downloading of safety and security to individuals from the state. In other words, regardless of a young person in care’s race, culture, religion, and the multitude of
interlocking discourses that surround them, neoliberalism maintains that young people in care always have the choice to avoid risk by being responsible subject-citizens.

“Meanwhile, there is a hyper-politicization of national security under a regime of fear” (BCRW, 2013) that criminalizes the subjectivities of the poor, immigrants, young people in care, and the families they emerge from. This leads to the final paradox, wherein “poor populations are ravaged by mass incarceration, reduction of wages and benefits and plundering of resources... [while] humanitarianism and volunteerism are celebrated as the solutions to the crisis in poverty management” (BCRW, 2013). In these ways, the state absolves itself of responsibilities, downloading them onto the young person in care, their foster parent, and their social worker.

**Emergence of Neoliberalism in the U.K. and Canada**

Neoliberalism’s emergence and impact on the economic, social, and cultural landscape was progressive. It emerged in the U.K. in the late 1970s with the Thatcher conservative government and the severe cutbacks made to public spending. The mid-1980s saw the expansion of managerialism and the evaluating of services and products based on models of economic efficiency (Clark, 2002, p. 778). By the late 1980s, neoliberal ideology operated with a “far-reaching programme of reform intended to bring about cultural change within the public services” (Clark, 2002, p. 778). This ideological shift transformed the public into individual consumers, and laid the groundwork to shift responsibility for care and success onto individuals while pathologizing deviation from neoliberal subjectivity. Downloading responsibilities in these ways forces discussions of structural inequalities outside the realm of legitimate discourse in addressing social problems. Following the rollback phase of social programs in early neoliberalism, the
state sought to change its role in the daily lives of citizens. The beginning of this can be seen in the U.K 1989 Children Act, in the wake of which the LAC system emerged.

The Children Act 1989 [sought] to strike a delicate legislative balance between promoting voluntary support services for families with children ‘in need’ and intervention strategies to protect children deemed to be at risk of ‘significant harm’. However, by focusing on the micro-level of prevention and ignoring structural issues the act fail[ed] to limit the widening net of the child protection system” (Jack & Stepney, 1995, p. 30-31).

The authors go on to discuss that with less economic resources, and available funding used for investigation and surveillance, rather than family support services, child welfare became more intrusive in the lives of families.

In Canada, neoliberalism emerged beginning in 1984 with the conservative Mulroney government, which immediately downsized social services that had been expanding since WWII. In a pattern similar to that in the U.K, downsizing was followed by a series of task-forces intended to introduce cultural change into the public sector. The Ontario Harris government of the late 1990s called these moves the “common sense” revolution, which included getting tough on crime and on abusive parents (Dumbrill, 2006, p. 8). In Ontario child welfare changes were made to risk assessment tools that further individualized social and political problems.

A seemingly trivial change in language downloaded responsibility for an impoverished societal environment and a lack of social supports onto children and families, and it masked the way in which the removal of social supports had created stress for families, thereby actually raising the risk of abuse and neglect (Dumbrill, 2006, p. 12).

This highlights how neoliberal ideology in Ontario downloaded onto already marginalized families the responsibility of improving their circumstances without the State acknowledging structural contributors to these circumstances. Despite the reduction in the funding of social programs in the U.K. and Canada, there was not a
concomitant reduction in the level of state intrusion into family life, on the contrary it transformed into subtler forms of bio-power wherein the “trick has been to govern through the family without appearing to do so” (Moss & Petrie, 2005, p. 74).

**Neoliberal Paternalism and OnLAC**

Neoliberalism is also understood to privilege forms of paternalism through identity management that are made possible through cultural changes in how social services are managed and delivered. Pollack and Rossiter (2010) state that “neoliberalism extends economic calculation into traditionally non-economic arenas, including identity itself” (p. 156). The manner in which social services are delivered has changed under neoliberalism such that its delivery is gendered. This has occurred as an outcome of the micro-management of social services, which has traditionally been women’s work. This shift has resulted in a movement from helping people, to managing people. This has undermined, and trivialized, the complex practice of this work “making it more vulnerable to external monitoring and increasingly deskill ed” (Pollack & Rossiter, 2010, p. 162). This is an important observation given the large proportion of women who work in child welfare, the neoliberal managerial qualities of the AAR-C2, and the instrument’s clear intention as an identity shaping intervention.

Indeed, Garrett (2002) states that the AAR embraces a new paternalism ushered in by neoliberalism. This form of paternalism is described as a set of social policies meant to solve social problems (such as poverty) through directives and supervision (Mead, 1997), under which individuals who need to access various social services must demonstrate that they “meet specific behavioural requirements” (cited in Garrett, 2002, p. 834) first. This enables the state to require individuals to produce themselves as desirable
subjects in order to receive services. For instance, a youth in care may tell a child welfare worker what it is the worker wants to hear, but this does not necessarily mean the youth believes what they are saying. It is within this neoliberal, inherently paternal, discursive framework that resiliency emerged in the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) and the AAR-C2, and how they subsequently became a paternal form of identity management, limiting how resilience has been understood, and how this limited understanding is imposed on young people in care as a consequence of them requiring service. This amounts to a form of mass identity management to limit differences between the developmental profiles of young people in care and normative developmental profiles. Framing OnLAC within a discourse of service and resilience, obscures the larger political and structural issues that have shaped the OnLAC system and the AAR-C2.

One of the political issues in the early 1990s that shaped the conditions of possibility for the emergence of resiliency, was the media’s representation of young people in care and a growing concern regarding cases of youth violence (Garrett, 1999). Stereotypes about youth in care were largely negative: young people in care failed to integrate into mainstream society; and they “made up a disproportionate number of the unemployed, criminals and a variety of other problem groups later in life” (Parton, 2006, p. 980) who were a burden on the state. Many of the risks associated with these negative outcomes were situated in childhood. Therefore interventions with parents and children was seen to be the most advantageous way to alter a young person’s outcome. “The way children grow up - their attitudes, behaviour and achievements - were seen as being crucially ‘conditioned by their relationships with parents and other members of their families’” (Utting, 1995, cited in Parton, 2006, p. 981). Indeed, the influence of parents
on the outcomes of their children was noted as stronger than the influence of other structures such as poverty or education. The goal of intervention was not only to mitigate risk, but to maximize positive potentials in child development by maximizing protective factors (Parton, 2006, p. 981-982). These protective factors are now understood in the OnLAC system to foster resilience.

**Neoliberalism and the AAR-C2/LAC**

The ability of the AAR-C2 to aggregate data and assess service outcomes made it a highly attractive instrument to those researching prospective changes to Canadian child welfare systems. Interestingly, resiliency is not a central concept in the original LAC system. Flynn, Ghazal, Legault, Vandermeulen, & Petrick, (2004) notes that despite this, the system is imbued with resiliency theory and a framework of resiliency theory was imposed over an already existing system. This imposition obfuscates the political agenda from which this notion of resiliency and the AAR instrument emerged, and situates the AAR-C2 and OnLAC within a discourse of state care through the imagined neutrality of neoliberalism.

Indeed, Davies (2008) discusses how neoliberal states buttress policies that support dramatic changes to the social by claiming these policy changes are underpinned by quantitative scientific research imagined to be without bias or ideology. In so doing the state juxtaposes qualitative research, and the professions often affiliated with it, such as social work, as deficient and ideological, and as such without the credibility to critique systems such as LAC and the AAR (Knight & Caveney, 1998; Jackson, 1998). This subjugation of knowledge outside of positivist and quantitative research reflects the paradox that neoliberal regimes are amoral when in fact there is an adherence to
conservative positivism and a subjugation of all qualitative knowledge. Similarly, the AAR-C2 consists of hundreds of quantitative questions, with the claim that the tool is universally applicable, suggesting the tool is amoral.

Similarly, the AAR-C2 consists of hundreds of quantitative questions, with the claim that the tool is universally applicable, suggesting the tool is amoral.

The impacts of neoliberalism on the day to day practice of social work, particularly in child welfare, are significant. Rogowski (2013) states that practice has been “subjugated to the demands of managerialism with its focus on ensuring practitioners complete bureaucracy speedily so as to ration resources and assess/manager risk” (para. 2). The LAC regime, with its pre-occupation with checklists, measurement and outcomes, is solidly situated within this ideology (Garrett, 1999b). However, the creators of the AAR deny this fixation (Jackson, 1998) despite the staggering amount of quantitative checklists and data mined by the AAR, and state that these questions are meant to provoke conversation (Lemay & Ghazal, 2006). Reflecting these opposing positions, Castel (1999) argued that specialists found themselves “cast in a subordinate role, while managerial policy formation [was] allowed to develop into a completely autonomous force, totally beyond the surveillance of the operative on the ground who is now reduced to a mere executant” (cited in Parton, 1999, p. 102). Indeed, the Practitioner's Guide (2007) refers to the AAR-C2 as a job description for workers. Alternatively, Knight and Caveney (1998) state that the checklist approach of the AAR meets managerial concerns of efficiency, monitoring and outcomes, but its lack of a qualitative approach and focus on “checklists can hinder rather than help good practice. The security they seem to provide is a deception and, instead of being an aid to good practice, they can become a substitute for it” (p. 39).
A primary characteristic of the neoliberal state is its pre-occupation with the market and how to ensure the market stays ‘healthy’. The AAR-C2, and its notion of resiliency, mirrors this characteristic by functioning as a financial and cultural tool investing in children as future participants in the market. In this way children are valued for their unrealized potentials, vitality, and assets that can be shaped to benefit the market, and ensure they do not become a burden the state. In other words, they are valued for becoming resilient regardless of the structures that surround them. Indeed, the AAR-C2 fosters a specific resiliency - one which ensures future participation in the liberal marketplace. In protecting and fostering this resilience, the state is buttressed by an increase in neoliberal subjects that keep the marketplace healthy. These actions are framed within a discourse of empowering young people in care to reach their full potential. Aitken, Lund and Kjørholt these (2007) argue that traditional developmental theories of childhood and current notions of economic development serve to complement each other. This is readily illustrated in the OnLAC notion of resiliency as a normalizing project. Further, these authors maintain that coercing children to “become like us” limits their futures, and disempowers them. They argue that we must move “beyond traditional notions of economic development and... challenge child development as a series of stages... if we are to confront the excesses of neoliberal capitalism and the disempowerment of children” (Aitken, et al., 2007, p. 5). In this sense, the notion of resiliency in OnLAC with its emphasis on normative adherence, and managerial forms must be countered by

true listening to disaffected young people requires time, so that a trusting relationship can be developed. It also demands an acceptance that the adult agenda may be flawed and a willingness to consider alternative possibilities. This can
challenge preconceptions, not just of individual workers, but of agencies and of national policy-makers (McLeod, 2007, p. 278).

The confrontation of this disempowerment, exemplified by the notion of resiliency in OnLAC, must begin with a critical consideration of the OnLAC system, which is largely absent in the literature.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored how numerous interlocking discourses have contributed to the emergence of the notion of resilience in the OnLAC system. By questioning this emergence I have concomitantly problematized it, and the emergence of a particular discourse of resilience in the OnLAC system as a truth. It is crucial to understand that there is no one truth regarding resilience. The notion of resilience that comes forward in the OnLAC system is a function of an advanced neoliberal state and the desire of the state to produce a particular mainstream subject. This narrow conceptualization has necessarily resulted in the marginalization of alternate notions of resilience, most notably Indigenous notions of resilience.

In the following chapter I begin my analysis of the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) and the AAR-C2. I begin by providing a framework for my genealogical analysis, and use as a point of departure the definition of resiliency provided in the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007). Through dispersal and reversal, four key points emerge that inform my analysis. I begin by problematizing normalcy as the definition of resilience in OnLAC and how this definition produces youth in care as deficient, and even dangerous. Following this I trouble who and what is produced as normal in the OnLAC system and how youth in care are positioned in this discourse of normalcy. As a normal subject is
clearly positioned as the desired subject in the OnLAC system, I unravel how the OnLAC system operationalizes the production of a normal subject, at the same time limiting the production of alternative subjects. Finally I explore how the AAR-C2 functions as an individualizing tool, surveilling both foster parents and youth in care. I explore the possible implications of individualizing Indigenous youth in care and how this process is another form of colonizing Indigenous communities.
Chapter 4: Producing Neoliberal Subjects

So, so you think you can tell
Heaven from Hell,
Blue skys from pain.
Can you tell a green field
From a cold steel rail?
A smile from a veil?
Do you think you can tell?

- Roger Waters

Continual reflection and critique of social work practice is crucial in advancing the goals of social justice. These processes can enable us to question the status quo, expose the practices which shore it up, and help us to identify how we can resist it. Critique of the systems within which social workers practice is a vital part of this process. In Ontario child welfare, the Looking After Children system (OnLAC) is used to guide practice with young people in care in an effort to produce resilient youth. There is a striking absence of scholarly critique of the OnLAC system. Garrett (1999a; 1999b; 2002; 2010; 2015) has provided the most consistent critique and resistance to the LAC system academic research and literature in the U.K. As a result of this absence, and my experiences with the OnLAC system in child welfare, I have chosen to problematize this system through a Foucauldian inspired genealogy.

I have so far explored the role of history in shaping the current discourse on resiliency and young people in care, and the emergence of the concept of resilience in the Looking After Children system in Ontario. In this chapter, I use Foucault’s methods of dispersal, reversal, and critique (Hook, 2005; Tamboukou, 1999) to analyze the Practitioner's Guide (2007) and three versions of the system’s main tool, the Assessment
and Action Record, Canadian adaptation (AAR-C2). My intention is to expose the hegemonic understanding of resilience in child welfare discourse. Dispersal and reversal involve disrupting discourse by identifying knowledge that appears to be self-evident and common sense, and by demonstrating how this discursive knowledge is instead socially constructed and situated within relationships of power. Critique considers how discursive and institutional practices of the past continue to influence practice in the present (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 205).

As I discussed previously, the sources of data I use for this analysis are the *Looking After Children: A Practitioner's Guide* (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) and three versions of the Assessment and Action Record, Canadian adaptation (AAR-C2) used with youth in care ages 16-17: the AAR-C2-2006 (Flynn, Ghazal, & Legault, 2006), AAR-C2-2010 (Flynn, Miller, Desjardins, Ghazal & Legault, 2010) and the AAR-C2-2016 (Flynn, Miller, & Desjardins, 2016). Unless one of these versions of the AAR-C2 is being cited, I refer to them collectively as the AAR-C2. The AAR-C2 is a tool of the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) system and is a dynamic document that is modified every few years, with the copyright retained by the Ontario Association of Children’s Aid Societies (OACAS). During these modifications new questions are added, some questions are removed or “tweaked”, and new instructions, or pedagogical anecdotes have been removed or added. Although not within the scope of this thesis, it is worth noting that embedded in the AAR-C2 are various scales of measurement (i.e. for hyperactivity, prosocial behaviour, anxiety, etc.), which neither the young person completing the questionnaire, nor their worker would necessarily be aware of. As a Children Services Worker I am mandated by the Ministry of Children and Family
Services to administer an AAR-C2 to each child who has been in foster care for one year or more. Each of these versions of the AAR-C2 is notably different than the other. The *Looking After Children: A Practitioner's Guide* (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007) gives a context for the development of the LAC system in Canada, the theoretical framework for the construction of the AAR-C2, how to best administer it, and how to utilize it for good outcomes for young people in care. Unless citing this work, I refer to it as the *Practitioner’s Guide* (2007). In the following sections I delineate my organization of this analysis and my point of departure.

**Defining Resiliency in the Ontario LAC system**

To recall, the *Practitioner’s Guide* (2007) draws on the work of Luthar, Cicchetti, and Becker (2000), and Masten (2001) to conceptualize resilience as having two necessary components. “The first is that resilience is clearly an outcome, an achievement that follows adversity. The second is that the quality of the adversity is serious, severe, or significant” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 44). As a point of departure for this analysis I begin with an excerpt from the *Practitioner’s Guide* (2007) regarding how the notion of resilience has been constructed in the OnLAC system. The Practitioner’s Guide states:

> An interesting dilemma for scientists is how to measure resilience. A few researchers have defined it as thriving, others as normal development, and others as simply doing better than one was doing previously.

Normal development is in a sense culturally relative. There is a social and cultural consensus on what to expect of a five-year-old in our society, which is based on average developmental potential and normative day-to-day experience. Normative development is the baseline for measuring resilience and is the one being used with *Looking After Children*, particularly when one relates LAC data to the findings in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 46).
By applying the practices of dispersal and reversal to this excerpt four key points emerge that inform the framework of my discursive analysis of the AAR-C2 and the Practitioner’s Guide (2007):

1. There is no discussion regarding why the definition of normal development was chosen out of the identified definitions of resiliency. It was not inevitable that normal development became the definition of resiliency in the OnLAC system.

2. The discussion regarding use of data from the NLSCY to delimit normal development is tautological.

3. It implicitly positions resiliency within, and accomplished by, the individual youth in care.

4. Finally, there is no discussion regarding cultural and class variability in conceptualizations of normal development and resilience.

Each of these points enables a discursive analysis, as the OnLAC system pivots around the construction of its notion of resiliency. In this chapter, I analyze the AAR-C2 and the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) using each of these themes as a starting point. The chapter is organized in four sections: “Normal Is The New Resilient” analyzes why the definition of normal development was chosen out of the identified alternate definitions of resiliency; “What is Normal” analyzes the notion of normal in the AAR-C2 and the Practitioner's Guide (2007); “How to Make a Normal Subject” analyzes the disciplinary practices used to produce this desirable neoliberal subject; and “Individualization as a Method of Discipline in the Making of Normal” analyzes how the practice of the AAR-C2 works to individualize young people. This final section is divided into two subsections: “The Outcome of Individualizing Foster Parents” traces how this
individualization occurs; and, “The Outcome of Individualizing Indigenous Young People In Care” analyzes the material effects of this practice with Indigenous youth in care.

**Normal Is The New Resilient?**

The first theme of analysis is the notion of resiliency as normal development. When normative development is positioned as the only definition of resiliency for young people in care, the implicit knowledge is that normalcy is desirable, and therefore what is not normal is undesirable. Considering this, I searched through the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) and the AAR-C2 to see how young people in care are discursively produced. The introductory chapter of the *Practitioner's Guide* notes that international research “gives a negative impression of the population of young people in care” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 1), and the results of 13 selected outcome studies informing this impression are cited in the *Practitioner’s Guide*:

Among homeless individuals, those who were former foster youth were least likely to exit from the condition of homelessness... Substantiated abuse in early childhood was related to alcohol abuse among women... Children with substantiated reports of abuse and neglect had high rates of academic problems... Foster youth (between ages 18 and 24) are more likely to go on welfare compared to general population (30% versus 8%)... Children in foster care display an alarming rate of social, emotional, and health problems... Former wards are 5 times as likely to become future clients of child welfare system as parents (Cited in Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 2).

These outcome studies construct a picture of young people deficient in multiple domains of functioning, unable to live self-sufficiently without the cost associated assistance of child welfare services, or social assistance as adults. The point of reference against which young people in care are compared in these studies is the “general population” of
young people who are not in care, or adults who were not in care when they were younger. A similar theme is found in the AAR-C2, evident in the following quotes:

Young people in care are a high risk group for many kinds of health threatening behaviours, such as smoking and drinking, sexually transmitted infections including HIV/AIDS, and for girls, pregnancy at an early age (Flynn, Ghazal, & Legault, 2007, p. 4a).

Emotional and behavioural problems in adolescence are quite common, but only a small number of young people will need the help of a specialist. However, young people in care are somewhat more likely than others to have some problems of this kind because they have often had more stressful life experiences. It is important to consider whether the feelings or behaviours that trouble young people or their foster parents would benefit from specialized help. Certain types of disorders (e.g. post traumatic stress disorder, anorexia nervosa, bulimia, obsessive compulsive disorders, depression, or suicide attempts) need specific types of help. Any self-harm behaviour should always be treated seriously and appropriate help sought (Flynn et al, 2007, p. 24a).

The above excerpts highlight possible problematic outcomes for young people in care and are narratives meant to be read by the young person in care, their foster parent, and worker during the completion of the AAR-C2. These excerpts imply that serious risks for young people in care exist if they are not ameliorated. Non-normative is not only produced as deficient, but is paired with words such as “high risk group” (Flynn et al, 2007, p. 4a), connoting some form of danger. The embedded suggestion is that poor outcomes can be avoided through professional help, and/or through the development of resiliency. In either case, youth in care are characterized as problematic and managing the risk their condition of being in care poses, becomes a critical part of resiliency work. The work that is done, for example by referring to “types of disorders”, disconnects the concrete/material actions of others (i.e. sexual abuse; poverty) that may have caused these “disorders”. Consequently, the “disorder” is located inside youth in care, effectively detaching them from the context and circumstances in which they arose. Subsequently,
youth in care are transformed into their own source of risk; they cause risk to themselves by being "in care".

There are many questions in the AAR-C2 that infer young people in care are not only deficient but suggest that young people in care are potentially aggressive, emotionally disturbed, and destructive, and that these behaviours just happen, completely separate from all contributing factors (violence, racism, poverty). Consider the following 17 questions that must be answered by selecting one of the following responses:

- Often or very true
- Sometimes or somewhat true
- Never or not true.

B1: I help other people my age (friends, brother, or sister) who are feeling sick.
B2: I am unhappy, sad, or depressed.
B3: I physically attack people.
B4: I am not as happy as other people my age.
B5: I steal at home.
B6: I am too fearful or anxious.
B7: I offer to help young people (friend, brother, or sister) who are having difficulty with a task.
B8: I worry a lot.
B9: I am cruel, I bully, or I am mean to others.
B10: I cry a lot.
B11: I destroy things belonging to my family or other young people.
B12: I feel miserable, unhappy, tearful, or distressed.
B13: I comfort other young people (friend, brother, or sister) who are crying or upset.
B14: I am nervous, highstrung or tense.
B15: I kick, bite, hit other people.
B16: I have trouble enjoying myself.
B17: I destroy my own things.

(Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 24).

Demonstrating that young people in care are situated in a discourse of deficiency in the AAR-C2 and the Practitioner's Guide (2007), makes less obscure why normative development was chosen as a definition of resiliency. By asking the above noted questions of all youth in care, the implication is that these risks are associated with all of
this population. These questions employ words such as, “attack”, “cruel”, “destroy” to describe risk behaviours of youth in care; behaviours which implicitly pose a danger to the rest of society. Thus what is outside of this production of normal is dangerous. The implied danger may not just be a physical one, but a fiscal one in terms of the financial cost to society should these behaviours persist. Consider that the Practitioner's Guide (2007) notes two alternative definitions of resiliency that were not chosen: “thriving... [or] …doing better than one was doing previously” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 46). These options seem to leave substantial latitude for interpretation, and resilient outcomes situated in both these definitions can be found outside of normative development (see Bottrell, 2009; Ungar, 2004).

By producing young people in care as subjects who not only exist outside of normative development, but who are potentially dangerous to themselves or society, youth in care are positioned in a discourse of dangerousness and deviancy. This legitimates their annual surveillance through the AAR-C2, and situates the completion of the AAR-C2 in a discourse of safety. This point of analysis is taken up further later in this chapter under the subsection of “How to Make a Normal Subject”.

The Practitioner's Guide (2007) argues that resilience is a natural genetic response of all humans, and when this response does not occur we should be surprised. Based on the Practitioner's Guide (2007) definition of resilience as normative development, the natural genetic response of young people who have experienced significant adversity should be normative development. Indeed, the Practitioner's Guide states that:

Human resilience should not surprise us. We are tempted to imagine that trauma and adversity are relatively rare and uncommon. However, the history of the
human species... has often been characterized by misery, disease, scarcity, hunger, death, war, and innumerable adversities. But more importantly it has been characterized by the human race’s remarkable capacity to survive, adapt, and grow. One need go back only a hundred years and study the origins of child welfare.... orphans were counted in the tens of thousands and were warehoused in abominable orphanages, but most of those who survived at all were able to thrive and adapt and develop into a contributory citizenry (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 43).

There must certainly be a genetic predisposition to resilience; otherwise, our very species would most probably not have thrived into its position of pre-eminence on the globe.... Thus resilience cannot be viewed as a remarkable event; rather, it should be viewed as common place and expected. Indeed, one should be surprised when it doesn’t occur (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 44).

I have observed that normalcy and resilience are conflated in the OnLAC system and now suggest that the implicit linking of genetics with resilience in this system infers a biological or medical imperative to teach resilience/normalization to young people in care. Thus, becoming normal is, in the medical sense, becoming healthy. In this way, young people in care are represented as objects of knowledge around what is deficient, problematic, or a risk to the functioning and efficiency of society. Foucault (1977) states that norms are used as coercive measures, to discipline subjects into particular ways of being and behaving. When resiliency is genetically expected, that is, understood as what has enabled the survival of our species, then four rationale for intervening emerge when an individual does not exhibit resilience: state intervention is required to mitigate any barrier to the “natural” expression of resilience; and, surveillance is justified and required to ensure this natural evolutionary process moves forward. If an individual does not respond to resilience training, then either the individual is either oppositional and non-compliant/criminal, and/or the individual is genetically deviant. In any of these four rationales the discursive undercurrent of danger implies the need for monitoring these individuals. This is achieved through the panopticon of the AAR-C2.
What is Normal?

The definition of resilience as normative development requires us to know what is normal, and how to achieve it. Troubling the notion of normative as a measure of resilience is my second departure for analysis. The idea of a desirable normative subject, a profile based on select data points of the NLSCY, is central to the OnLAC system. If you recall earlier in this thesis during the discussion of the conditions of possibility, the NLSCY was a household survey that began in 1994 during the early period of neoliberalism in Canada and “followed a sample of about 25,000 children under age 12 over time” (Tambay & Catlin, 1995, p. 33). Young people in care are measured and compared to these data points. The closer to these normative data points they score the more resilient they are understood to be. This is the defining and measuring process of normalcy/resiliency. This leads me to consider the history of the notion of “normal” itself; the historical contextual emergence of the word “normal”; and its material function.

Revisiting a portion of the excerpt that provided my point of departure for this analysis, the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) states that “normative development is the baseline for measuring resilience and is the one being used with Looking After Children, particularly when one relates LAC data to the findings in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY)” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 46). Given the centrality of the NLSCY benchmark for defining what is normal, and the importance of reproducing normalcy, and therein resiliency, in young people in care, I searched the AAR-C2 and the Practitioner's Guide (2007) to understand how the NLSCY and the notion of normalcy are produced discursively. Below, I cite a cluster of excerpts that
draw attention to how the disciplinary function of the AAR-C2 connects with the professional utility for child welfare workers, and the identification of what is normal in order to produce a spectrum of subjectivities; normal/resilient subjects versus abnormal/not resilient subjects.

I begin with excerpts regarding the NLSCY. The *Practitioner’s Guide* describes the NLSCY as having been conducted with typical Canadian youth by an “impressive research team” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 3), which established objective measures of how well children and youth are doing in Canada. We can call this information ‘normative’ since it provides a benchmark against which we can compare how individuals or groups are doing. For instance, a parent viewing the data on school performance will be able to determine whether his or her child is doing as well, worse, or better than the typical ten-year-old... Corporate parents should use the same approach for children and youth in care.... Given their past adversity, children and youth in care are not doing as well as typical Canadian children in some developmental areas [as seen comparatively with measures used in the NLSCY], as we will see in later chapters. It behooves us to close or at least reduce this developmental gap... (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 3).

In the AAR-C2-2010, the NLCSY is mentioned on only one occasion on a page margin:

The Canadianized Assessment and Action Record includes many standardized measures of young people’s behaviour included in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. Using the Assessment and Action Record on a yearly basis allows the child welfare worker, the caregiver and young person to assess the progress of the young person in care over time and compare the development of youths in care with that of their age peers in the general population (Flynn, Ghazal, & Legault, 2010, p. 22a).

There is implicit knowledge when these excerpts are considered together that helps one to understand how the notion of “normal” functions in the OnLAC system. To begin, it is implicit that the notion of a stable normative subject exists, and that information about such subjects can be collected through objective measures exemplified by NLSCY data. More importantly, this normative subjectivity is positioned as desirable for a young person in care despite the fact that “looked-after children and youth are underrepresented
in the NLSCY sample” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 3). Foucault (1980) discusses the importance, when analyzing the construction of subjectivities, to consider power/knowledge, and how it “works at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject our bodies, govern our gestures, dictate our behaviours, etc… We should try to grasp subjection in its material instance as a constitution of subjects” (p. 97). By detailing what constitutes normative development, and the intention of the LAC project to train youth in care to not only be, but desire, to become this particular subject. Desire is achieved by holding this normative subject in a position of status and privilege, a position endorsed and made credible by the authority of the state, of which child welfare is an appendage. Desire is the first step in a technology of the self, such that youth in care desire to present as subjects embodying neoliberal ideas, beliefs, and behaviours. Finally, it is implied that the process of closing any developmental gaps for young people in care will make them more like “regular” Canadian youth who have not experienced adversity.

There is a distinct absence of the voices of youth in care regarding their individual desires (they are not included in the NLSCY and are not noted in the defining of their goals), and the tone of both excerpts is directive in prioritizing normalcy regardless of other factors in a youth’s life. Both excerpts point to the relationship of power that exists between the State and young people in care, wherein young people in care may be able to express their desires and goals, but only in so far as these fall within the constraints of what is considered normal. Thus normal is produced discursively as a responsible and desirable goal.
This notion of normalcy gives professional utility to child welfare workers to act as “corporate parents” by endorsing and facilitating a normative subject so that young people in care grow up to be as similar as possible to typical Canadian youth. In this sense workers are positioned both within a discourse of business through the use of the word “corporate”, and within a discourse of helping, or caring, through the use of the word “parent”. In this way workers are responsibilized for the progress young people in care make toward normative development. Positioning child welfare workers within a helping subjectivity is also noted in the following excerpt from the Practitioner’s Guide, which references “The Hope Scale” immersed in the AAR-C2.

The Hope Scale helps child welfare workers nurture hopeful thinking (which manifests as positive expectancies). The promotion of hopeful thinking in young people in care is important, because it increases the likelihood that positive goals will be attempted and thus achieved. The questions above provide children and youth with ways to distance themselves from negative events. Hopeful thoughts precede skill acquisition, success, and self-esteem (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p.62).

Through the use of the word “nurture,” workers are situated within a discourse of helping and caring parent, who should responsibly facilitate conversation around the 6 questions of the “Hope Scale” to distance the young person from negative events of the past and move them into positive expectancies, which is understood as key to normative development. In this way, the worker takes on a pedagogical role as a corporate parent. Below are the instructions to the youth in care and the questions contained in the Hope Scale.

**QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR GOALS:** The six sentences below describe how young people think about themselves and how they do things in general. Read each sentence carefully. For each sentence, please think about how you are in most situations. Choose the answer that describes YOU the best. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

ID28: I think I am doing pretty well.
Most of the Time  □Often  □Sometimes  □Never

ID29: I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are most important to me.

Most of the Time  □Often  □Sometimes  □Never

ID30: I am doing just as well as other kids my age.

Most of the Time  □Often  □Sometimes  □Never

ID31: When I have a problem, I can come up with lots of ways to solve it.

Most of the Time  □Often  □Sometimes  □Never

ID32: I think the things I have done in the past will help me in the future.

Most of the Time  □Often  □Sometimes  □Never

ID33: Even when others want to quit, I know that I can find ways to solve the problem.

Most of the Time  □Often  □Sometimes  □Never

(Flynn et al, 2010, p. 14)

Although the instruction to youth completing the AAR-C2 states there are no right or wrong answers, the instructions given to child welfare workers offer clear direction to *nurture* a young person’s perspective that their life is hopeful; to *nurture* them to distance themselves from negative past experiences; and to develop skills and self-expectations to be self-sufficient. The role of the child welfare worker in this process may be more accurately described as a coercive pedagogy taught to young people in care regardless of their life experiences and social location, given that there are statistical norms for the Hope Scale that young people in care are said to be able to reach with the right interventions. The child welfare worker also becomes the last stand against the youth in care having future negative outcomes and becoming dependent on the state in the form of homelessness, poverty, drug addiction, or involvement with the child welfare system as an adult.
Critiquing this set of AAR-C2 questions, and the instruction to workers regarding their nurturing role, brings forward Margolin’s (1997) assertion that social workers have historically used “encounters” with clients to develop a trusting relationship in order to gain more information under a guise of *kindness and helping*. Margolin (1997) states social workers reject anonymity in favor of a highly personalized relation with the observed. Gone is the high drama of inspection, where the inequality between the observed and the observers is constantly on display, exaggerated through the administration of tests, roll calls, overt comparisons, restraint, and reward. In its place came a whole technology of obfuscation, variously identified as friendliness, rapport, trust, confidence…. Friendship dramatically improves social workers’ capacity to investigate by convincing the observed that surveillance is not occurring (pp. 24-25).

Margolin's observation is equally applicable to the milieu within which the AAR-C2 is completed. The AAR-C2 is not meant to be merely an exercise in bureaucracy, rather the questions are meant to elicit conversation. Child welfare workers are instructed to provide *nurturing* to a youth in care while, at the same time, surveilling them through the collection of AAR-C2 data, which is later used to develop and implement normalizing technologies upon youth in care. In this sense the AAR-C2 functions as an ongoing annual investigation. Equally important in this analysis is the worker’s use of their personality, and traditional social work skills in developing trusting relationships, so that this form of coercion goes unnoticed, or at least unquestioned. I have had a multitude of conversations with other workers who are aware of this dynamic, and on many occasions hoped the youth in care would call them out on the use of the AAR-C2. Yet they express feeling coerced to comply with the mandate in order to maintain employment. In effect, both the worker and the youth in care seem positioned within the power relations reified since the inception of social work. However, Jeffery and Nelson (2011) trouble how “to
envision a more balanced practice in which power relations and social inequalities are understood to infuse the very core of relationship, rather than as complicated ‘extras’ to be transcended in favour of a comfortable exchange” (p. 248) and the “need for a contextualized, historically and temporarily specific understanding of encounters” (p. 263). Given that youth in care are largely from marginalized communities, this is a necessary approach to practice if we are move toward social justice.

Despite the repeated sentiment in the OnLAC system that the AAR-C2 is not just another exercise in bureaucracy and form filling, rather that it is an instrument to prompt conversation, the latter has rarely been my experience. Over the years that I have administered the the AAR-C2, young people have complied with its completion without delving into conversation prompted by questions in the AAR-C2. Often young people have been confused by the questions because none of the available answers are adequate, or they are offended by the personal nature of some of the questions asked in the AAR-C2. Conversation through the AAR is contrived, controlled, and directed. Indeed, the AAR-C2 has generally been experienced by the youth I have worked with as burdensome and out of touch with what is important to them. Despite these persistent sentiments by the young people in care I have worked with, I cannot help but notice that on most occasions the young person will complete the AAR-C2 form. Through the gaze of the social worker, and the discursive designation of being a deficient foster youth, young people in care become “docile bodies” (Foucault, 1977). As docile bodies foster youth willingly take up the position of a youth in need of intervention, a youth who desires a moral and legitimate subjectivity. Thus, the young person takes up the work of normalization under the discipline of the child welfare worker’s gaze, and the process of
completing the AAR-C2, a process they are compelled to complete despite their verbal opposition to it. This reflects and reifies the power/knowledge relationship between youth in care and their worker. The mandatory annual completion of the AAR-C2 serves to both maintain this disciplinary mechanism, while at the same time monitoring its effectiveness.

**How to Make a Normal Subject**

Defining normal/resilient is only one part of the OnLAC process. Understanding how to facilitate a young person in becoming normal/resilient is another matter. The OnLAC system promotes the use of Social Role Valorization, and the Developmental Model toward this end. If you recall, the Developmental Model and Social Role Valorization were developed by Wolfensberger (1998) and were directed at socially de-valued groups in order to change the way individuals from these groups act, and how they look, so that they are more socially acceptable to the mainstream population. One could say these were methods to help them “fit in”. The *Practitioner’s Guide* states that “the developmental model is an optimistic approach that systematically focuses on an individual’s strengths and relies on the pedagogic power of typical everyday relationships, experiences, and life conditions” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 10). In keeping with the developmental model’s pedagogic method of normalization, the identity of the service provider must also be normative. Wolfensberger (1998) is cited in the *Practitioner’s Guide*:

> The processes of the developmental model include the following:... groupings of people in such a way as to provide positive intra-group modelling, elevate expectations for the members of the group as a whole, and enable servers to adaptively individualize and manage the members of the group; and servers who are
skilled and otherwise have the proper identities to address service recipients’ needs (cited in Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 14-15).

This excerpt makes clear the positioning of the young person in care as deficient prior to intervention, and also identifies the need to have a social worker with the “proper identity” to provide this intervention. Thus, the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) suggests that child welfare workers should embody a normative subjectivity, which makes sense given the pedagogical nature of the AAR-C2. Therefore, people who fall outside the norm are deemed not suitable to be child welfare workers, and certainly I have experienced this discursive sentiment working in child welfare. When former youth in care come into contact with child welfare services, they are noted as a higher risk. Having been a youth in care myself I have often reflected on the danger of sharing this piece of my life story at work. My resistance, for example to the OnLAC system, may be framed as originating from a deviant, or traumatic, childhood rather than emerging from critical thinking in an effort to practice reflexively and forward social justice. I have also considered how having been a youth in care shapes my administration of the AAR-C2. I am concomitantly a deficient former youth in care who may continue to harbour the deficient characteristics and behaviours queried by the AAR-C2, and I am also an educated, middle class, Children Services Worker mandated to personify and discipline the norms promoted by the questions of the AAR-C2. Indeed, my almost paradoxical subject position has evoked surprise by youth in care, that people like “us” are “allowed” to be a Children Services Worker. Such sentiments denote the understanding youth in care have of the discourse within which their subjectivities are produced.

The notion of intervention with youth in care is framed as a “developmental” process. The use of the word “developmental” implies a natural process that occurs over
time. Framing interventions such as, “elevat[ing] expectations for the members of the group as a whole” appears more acceptable and common sense when framed within a discourse of being “developmental”, and makes it more difficult to critically question what expectations are being elevated, by whom, upon which subjects, and for whose benefit.

Being normal in the LAC system is not only related to a person’s achievements (i.e. education, employment, etc) but also how a young person looks. There are questions in the AAR-C2 monitoring that prompt the young person, caregiver, or child welfare worker, to address these possible areas where the young person may not be normative. The following excerpt from the AAR-C2-2010 is taken from the developmental dimension of “Social Presentation”.

This dimension is about making sure that the young person is being helped to understand what sort of impression he/she makes on other people and how he/she needs to adapt to different situations.

During the AAR conversation, the CAREGIVER is to answer the following section with assistance as needed.

P1: Does ... keep himself/herself clean (i.e., body, hair, teeth)?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never/rarely

P2: Does ... take adequate care of his/her skin?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never/rarely

P3: Overall, does ... personal appearance give people the impression that he/she take care of himself/herself properly?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never/rarely

P4: Does ... wear suitable clothes (e.g., at school, home, or parties, etc.)?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never/rarely

P5: Can people understand what he/she is saying?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never/rarely

P6: Is ... polite with friends and adults?
- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Never/rarely

(Flynn et al, 2010, p. 20).
The instruction for this section of the AAR-C2 indicates that these questions are to be answered by the caregiver, even though the young person is present during the AAR-C2 completion. The mere asking of these questions infers that these areas are potential concerns for this young person, and that 16-17 year olds in care may not know basic hygiene skills and that overall they may be severely limited in social skills such that they cannot dress themselves appropriately, or be intelligible when speaking. The presumption of these questions is not the needs of the youth in care, but rather the comfort of those around them to “understand”, gain a good “impression”, and feel respected by the “polite” young person. The focus on social normativity is denoted by the use of words such as, “appropriate”, “adequate”, and “properly”. This recalls my earlier discussion of Wolfensberger’s (1972) work on normalization. This method was developed to train individuals with intellectual disabilities, and “deviant or potentially deviant” (p. 31) people, to integrate into society such that they appeared like individuals without disabilities. The use of this theory with young people in care suggests that they are situated in a discourse of disability, and therefore they cannot fundamentally be changed by the application of social role valourization, they are merely being trained how to appear non-disabled and taught how to be socially presentable. The work that is done, for example by referring to "types of disorders" without connection to the concrete/material actions of others that may have caused these "disorders" (for instance, sexual or physical abuse; poverty) locates disorders inside young people in care and detaches them from the context in which they arose. This transforms youth in care into their own source of risk; they cause risk to themselves by being "in care".
If young people in care are understood as potentially dangerous, and deviant, then the reason the AAR-C2 is required to be completed annually is more evident - resilience is never actually achieved! Young people in care are always in a state of becoming resilient and require ongoing monitoring and discipline techniques used in the AAR-C2. Indeed, citing Maurutto, Brock (2003) notes that “for Foucault discipline is the ‘art of correct training’. It produces citizens who are obedient, law-abiding, industrious, and hard working” (p. 2). The method of ongoing monitoring and discipline in order to produce normal subjects recalls a similar rationale from the late 19th century with the *Ontario Industrial Schools Act*. Ontario Industrial Schools advocated disciplinary practices without corporal punishment designed to, over time, mould young people “into compliant, obedient citizens who would govern their behaviour according to normative social and moral rules” (Maurutto, 2003, p. 7). Similarly, the approach taken by OnLAC and the AAR-C2 aims to valourize activities, behaviours, and beliefs that conform to neoliberal values.

Other questions in the AAR-C2-2010 ask young people in care questions that would identify who they associate with and whether the young person belongs to a deviant peer group. The following questions are located in the developmental dimension of Health.

How many of your close friends do the following:

- H32: Smoke Cigarettes?
  - [ ] None
  - [ ] A few
  - [ ] Most
  - [ ] All

- H33: Drink alcohol?
  - [ ] Always
  - [ ] Often
  - [ ] Sometimes
  - [ ] Never/rarely

- H34: Break the law by stealing, hurting someone, or damaging property?
  - [ ] Always
  - [ ] Often
  - [ ] Sometimes
  - [ ] Never/rarely

- H35: Have tried marijuana?
  - [ ] Always
  - [ ] Often
  - [ ] Sometimes
  - [ ] Never/rarely
H36: Have tried drugs other than marijuana?

☐ Always     ☐ Often     ☐ Sometimes     ☐ Never/rarely

(Flynn et al, 2010, p. 3)

All five questions have a negative connotation when associated with youth, despite that some of the behaviours questioned may have a resilient and positive function in the lives of their friends (see Ungar, 2004; Bottrell, 2009) and the youth in care. To affirm that one has friends who engage in these behaviours will mean the youth in care is choosing friends who are undesirable, therein making poor choices that threaten their health. The job of the caregiver and child welfare worker is to ensure that the young person socializes into a new group of friends, without consideration of the meaning of both the new and old friendships. The grouping of these questions infers that friends who use marijuana may also steal, be physically violent, and use other more harmful drugs. In essence, to endorse one of these questions would also endorse a sense of panic that the youth in care is making poor decisions, and is at an increased risk of poor outcomes.

Poor outcomes could result in a lack of economic utility for the young person. This lack of utility is only significant given their social class, and the desire they not become a drain on the economy through criminality or addictions. A young person from a wealthy family, who is not in care, would not be subjected to these forms of discipline or concerns about their economic utility. My critique is not intended to condone drug and alcohol use, or violence. Rather it is to draw attention to the speed with which these types of questions label and classify youth in care without engaging in conversation and context. Further, it is to draw attention to the training that is occurring through the annual completion of the AAR-C2, a process that is engaging largely non-white youth from lower socio-economic classes (see Wong & Yee, 2010). The result is that these youth in
care lack discursive power in discussions of their life, their friends, and their future. Further, they become trained as docile bodies, obediently answering the questions of the AAR-C2 each year - a process through which they are indoctrinated into a neoliberal rationality that emphasizes “manag[ing] their own risks and demonstrat[ing] self-care” (Liebenberg, Ungar, & Ikeda, 2013, p.3), along with autonomy, and self-regulation. With these characteristics being repeatedly emphasized in child welfare as desirable traits, it is no wonder that Ungar (2004) found that young people in care often feel marginalized and that it is difficult to sustain an influence in the social discourse that defines them (p. 186).

In effect, the AAR-C2 functions as a form of discursive disempowerment, which may lead some youth to push back against these neoliberal notions of resilience, notions that amount to “discursive put downs” (Ungar, 2004, p. 187).

Following the Health dimension is the developmental dimension of Education, in which the following questions are located.

**ACTIVITIES: In the last 12 months, how often have you:**

E57: Played sports or done physical activities without a coach or an instructor (e.g., biking, skate boarding, etc.)?
- Never  [ ]
- Less than once a week [ ]
- 1 to 3 times a week [ ]
- 4 or more times a week [ ]

E59: Taken part in dance, gymnastics, karate, traditional dance, or other groups or lessons, other than in gym class?
- Never  [ ]
- Less than once a week [ ]
- 1 to 3 times a week [ ]
- 4 or more times a week [ ]

E61: Taken part in clubs or groups such as Guides or Scouts, 4-H club, community, church, or other religious or cultural groups?
- Never  [ ]
- Less than once a week [ ]
- 1 to 3 times a week [ ]
- 4 or more times a week [ ]

(Flynn et al, 2010, p.9)

These questions are suggestive of recreational activities that young people in care should be involved in: activities that are pro-social and conforming, the essence of a positive outcome. A youth engaged in such activities on a regular, or even daily basis has
less risk of becoming involved in criminal activities. Reflecting upon this further, they are also less likely to engage in activities that may lead them away from the status quo, or to questioning the structuring of society and where they fit within it. However, when I considered that these questions, regarding recreation, are located in the Educational Dimension, it occurred to me that recreation is also a form of curriculum, embodying structure, accountability for time, competition, and immersion in conforming activities. This has puritanical overtones which recall the curriculum used in the Ontario industrial schools wherein

Recreational activities were highly valued for their contribution to physical health, self esteem, and team work experience and were seen as a way of instilling acceptable leisure pastimes that could be pursued once the boys were discharged. School administrators believed that one of the greatest deterrents to juvenile delinquency was the provision of recreational pastimes…. Religious and moral guidance were of paramount importance in the rehabilitation process (Maurutto, 2003, p. 7-8).

From another perspective, it is difficult to draw attention to a grouping of such questions and critique them, as I ask myself: “What is wrong with these activities? I would want my child to participate in these sorts of things”. My difficulty thinking outside of this sentiment, the struggle to see these questions as classed and raced, their moral milieu, or that these activities might have detrimental qualities to some youth in care, draws attention to the power at play in my own uptake of the AAR-C2. Brock (2003) notes that “power is being exercised when we are so located within a particular vision or way of seeing that we cannot imagine alternatives to it; it shapes our thoughts, preferences, and acceptance of ourselves within the existing order of things” (p. xiv). My critique however, is not directed solely at the individual questions; rather it is also, for instance, concerned with how these questions fit together with those discussed previously
regarding the drug use of close friends, to evoke a judgmental tone toward people, activities, and thoughts outside of those expected for the proper moral individual.

Foucault (1977) notes that

The judges of normality are everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the “social worker”—judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find him-self, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements. The carceral network, in its compact or disseminated forms, with its systems of insertion, distribution, surveillance, observation, has been the greatest support, in modern society, of the normalizing power (p. 304)

Such assessments are used to determine interventions and policy directives meant to shape the behaviour of young people in care. Discussed in the next section are methods of discipline used to ensure conformity to particular neoliberal standards of behaviour and rationales. Foucault conceptualized power as exercised through disciplinary mechanisms and he saw these mechanisms as fundamental to the rise and maintenance of capitalism. This conceptualization of power is exercised through neoliberal techniques of governmentality, such as responsibilization of individuals. Governmentality is a term used by Foucault to describe methods through which populations take up technologies of the self such as forms of self management, and self control. Through governmentality, individuals make themselves into specific kinds of subjects via techniques of discipline such as responsibilisation. “Responsibilisation is understood as the self-management of risk by the autonomous individual” (Kelly, 2001, cited in Liebenberg et al. 2013, p. 3). Citing Bondi (2005), Liebenberg et al. (2013) go on to say that “in this way, concepts of individualism and autonomy are interwoven with ‘highly authoritarian social policies’ that are often regulating of the individual” (p. 3).
Individualization as a Method of Discipline in the Making of Normal Youth

My third point of analysis is that the AAR-C2 individualizes resilience by locating it within the young person in care, their foster parents, and child welfare worker, effectively responsibilizing them to achieve normalcy. Recalling from earlier in this analysis, the following is an excerpt of the definition of resiliency in the OnLAC system:

Normal development is in a sense culturally relative. There is a social and cultural consensus on what to expect of a five-year-old in our society, which is based on average developmental potential and normative day-to-day experience. Normative development is the baseline for measuring resilience... (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 46).

This definition locates resiliency in the individual child’s performance of normative developmental behaviour. While the child welfare worker and the youth’s foster parent are also subjected to the AAR-C2, and through the questions asked of them know what the right things are to want, and the right behaviours to perform, the focus of their involvement is to facilitate normalcy in the youth in care across seven developmental dimensions. However, there is no reference in this definition regarding differences in social and cultural consensus regarding what is “normal development”, nor is there discussion regarding structural factors such as poverty or race, which contribute to marginalization and to young people coming into care in the first place. This is consistent with a neoliberal rationale that depoliticizes an outcome approach to parenting. Jensen (2010) discusses the taxonomies of good parenting; the downloading of poor child outcomes onto parents; and the main concern with troubled families being the character and warmth of parents rather than poverty.

This point of analysis was perhaps the most difficult for me to pin down. Indeed, the effectiveness of a discursive regime, such as the OnLAC system, is in its ability to
seem natural and common sense, so that it is absorbed easily by those it targets, which ensures they become willing subjects to its disciplinary mechanisms. The sparse critique of the LAC system in Ontario may be a testament to its success in this regard. Supporters of the system ask: What is wrong with having expectations of a youth in care, their worker, and their foster parent? Indeed, I have struggled in my critique of this system with similar questions, exposing my own absorption into the neoliberal discourse within which the OnLAC system is situated, and the difficulty at times I have to think outside of this discourse. A neoliberal discourse has seeped into almost every aspect of life in Western society, so that all aspects of life are assessed on efficiency and utility to the financial markets. As Brown (2006) writes,

Neoliberalism converts every political or social problem into market terms, it converts them to individual problems with market solutions… [For instance,] bottled water as a response to contamination of the water table; private schools, charter schools, and voucher systems as a response to the collapse of quality public education… boutique medicine as a response to crumbling health care provision… ergonomic tools and technologies as a response to the work conditions of information capitalism; and, of course, finely differentiated and titrated pharmaceutical antidepressants as a response to lives of meaninglessness or despair amidst wealth and freedom (p. 704).

Through notions of scarcity, austerity, and fear, these rationales make common sense; taking an approach to parenting and living that secures an individual’s position within this paradigm seems responsible. It is the nagging feelings of discomfort in regards to the OnLAC system and the AAR-C2 tool that have prodded me to continue, and to find the source of this discomfort.

There was another layer of problematization of the AAR-C2 that I was unable to articulate until I considered the AAR as a form of panopticism. Foucault (1977) used the term “panopticism” as a metaphor for how power, surveillance, and knowledge work together in a modern society. Literally, a panopticon is an architectural design for a
prison designed by Bentham in late 18th century. The prison was a circular structure which had a tower at the centre of the building enabling a supervisor to see all the prisoners at once, individuated in their own cells. This enabled constant surveillance, through which knowledge gained about prisoners could be used to categorize and alter their behaviour through various disciplinary techniques. Foucault (1977) describes the panopticon:

The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power.... He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principal of his own subjection (p. 202-203).

Bentham describes the benefits of his panopticon design as: “Morals reformed - health preserved - industry invigorated - instruction diffused - public burdens lightened - Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock...” (Bentham cited in Foucault, 1977, p. 207, italics in original). Foucault notes that such systems of surveillance have been infused across our society, particularly in state organizations such as hospitals, prisons, schools, and workplaces. The AAR-C2 functions in this panoptical manner.

The first function of a panopticon is to separate groups into individual objects of knowledge. Consider the Practitioner’s Guide statement that the AAR “from the Looking After Children approach is the first step towards collecting comprehensive data, one child at a time, in order to know who we are caring for, to plan, and then to enact better parenting of this important group of our citizenry” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 2). This comprehensive data is gained through hundreds of questions asked in the AAR-C2, which then produce hundreds more data points and profiles of young people in care. This massive amount of aggregated data is gained through the AAR-C2 surveillance
conducted on an annual basis. In the following section I analyze the individualization of child welfare workers and foster parents as tools in the normalization of young people in care. I then discuss the outcome of this normalization on Indigenous young people in care.

**The Outcome of Individualizing Foster Parents**

The AAR process begins by gathering demographic information regarding three individuals mandated to answer the AAR-C2 questions: the child welfare worker, the foster parent, and the young person in care. In the AAR-C2-2010 some of the questions foster parents are asked are the following:

**BG25:** Main respondent’s gender:
- Male
- Female

**BG27:** Language: What language(s) are spoken most often in the caregiver’s home (Mark all that apply.)
- English
- French
- First Nation or Inuit language
- Other

**BG28:** RELIGION(S)/SPIRITUAL AFFILIATION(S): What, if any, is the caregiver’s religion or spiritual affiliation(s)? (Mark no more than two).
- No religion or spiritual affiliation
- Mormon
- Pentecostal
- Anglican
- Hindu
- Presbyterian
- Baptist
- Islam (Muslim)
- Roman Catholic
- Buddhist
- Jehovah’s Witness
- United Church
- Eastern Orthodox
- Jewish
- Sikh
- FNMI (traditional)
- Lutheran
- Other
- FNMI (other)
- Mennonite

**BG29:** The ethnic/cultural background of at least one caregiver and that of the young person is:
- The same
- Similar
- Neither the same nor similar

**BG31:** DISABILITY: Because of a long-term physical or mental condition, or a health problem (lasting or expected to last 6 months or more), is the caregiver limited in the kind of amount of activity he/she can do at home, in caring for children, or in leisure activities?
- Yes
- No
BG32: SMOKING: At present, does anyone in the household smoke cigarettes in the home?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No

B33: CAREGIVER TRAINING: Has the caregiver received any formal training in the Looking After Children (LAC) program?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No


In the updated AAR-C2-2016 foster parents continue to be asked their gender however, the potential response now includes non-binary; trans; prefer not to answer (Flynn et al, 2016, p. D). It is interesting to note the construction of question BG28 in regards to a caregiver’s religion or spiritual affiliation. For instance, consider the variability in responses for forms of Christianity, however for forms of Islam there is no distinction between the two main belief systems of Shi’ite Muslims and Sunni Muslims. This calls into question what it means when all Muslims are considered the same in their difference. The marker from which this difference is noted is the multiplicity of Christian faiths listed. This subtext suggests that certain types of religious affiliated individuals would make better caregivers to young people in care than others. The answers provided in response to the above questions further the process of identifying and categorizing individuals who are charged with parenting young people in care specifically, tracking and establishing what kinds of people best facilitate resiliency in foster youth. Moving forward, these profiles are used in the selection process of individuals who apply to be foster parents. The Practitioner’s Guide re-affirms this interpretation:

There are also questions about foster parent’s language, ethnicity, religion, disabilities (if any), smoking habits, general health, the foster parent training they have received, and household composition.

It is very important to monitor the information above so that organizations and jurisdictions can describe the people that are involved with caring for children and youth of the State.... Moreover, the data collected will, over time, help us establish
better links between the characteristics of service outputs (including characteristics of people delivering services) and the outcomes of children and youth in care.... In any event, it is clear that child welfare professionals and foster parents do have an impact, and it is important to figure out, over the long term, which characteristics should be sought out and supported in such individuals (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 71-73).

This excerpt from the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) blatantly asserts the imperative of identifying a profile of particular characteristics in foster parents that facilitate resiliency in young people in care. Based on the questions asked of foster parents, the indicators of desirable versus non-desirable foster parents will pivot around gender, language, ethnicity, religion, disabilities, and smoking habits. The paternal subtext is that regardless of the community and culture the young person in care is from, the State will decide what the best type of parenting is for all young people in care. Indeed, a desired individual would be a foster parent who would act as a vehicle for discourse that articulates particular truths. In the case of OnLAC, foster parents must articulate through their parenting, and their behaviours, virtues espoused in the AAR-C2. In this way a foster parent, through the minutia of their daily lives, becomes a form of discipline that acts upon young people in care. As Foucault states “the disciplines may well be the carriers of discourse that speaks of a rule, but this is not the juridical rule deriving from sovereignty, but a natural rule, a norm” (1980, p. 106).

It is important to recall that our reality is “constructed out of language and cultural codes. There is no knowledge that is true in itself, that is independent of the languages and institutions that we create and invent” (Irving, 1999, p. 32). The use of the words “foster parents” and “caring” in the above excerpt are replaced with “people delivering services” as the authors move into a discourse of economics, and logic chains of inputs, services, and outcomes. This de-humanizing discourse legitimizes the development of a
desirable profile of foster parents, so that parenting that enables and strengthens resiliency in young people in care can be advanced. Thus, through the panoptic gaze the AAR-C2 is able to encompass all aspects of a young person in care - including the characteristics of those intended to care for them.

Questions addressed to foster parents/caregivers are the most numerous in the education dimension and the family and social relationships dimension. These questions are pedagogical in that they inform foster parents how they should be parenting and what type of subject they should be cultivating young people in care to be - regardless of their desires, culture, or identity.

How foster parents answer the questions also informs the state about their parenting practices. Consider the following AAR-C2-2010 questions in regards to education and the strong discursive rubric that points to the appropriate response.

**E13:** Overall, in comparison to his/her age group, is...
- [ ] ahead by one or more grades
- [ ] at grade level
- [ ] behind by one or more grade level

**E17:** CAREGIVER’S EXPECTATIONS: How important is it to you that ... have good grades in school?
- [ ] Very important
- [ ] Important
- [ ] Somewhat important
- [ ] Not important at all

**E20:** Will any of the following factors prevent ... from completing his/her education or going to post-secondary education? (Mark all that apply.)
- [ ] None of the following factors will prevent him/her from doing so
- [ ] His/her financial situation
- [ ] No programs available close to home
- [ ] He/she won’t have the requirements
- [ ] Health reasons or disability
- [ ] He/she is not interested enough
- [ ] Other reason(s)

(Flynn et al, 2010, p. 6).

The pedagogic message from each these questions seems clear:
E13: You’re a good parent if youth in your home are ahead of the norm in education.

E17: You’re a good foster parent if good grades in school are very important to you, and the young person obtains good grades.

E19: You’re a good foster parent if you eliminate any and all barriers to a young person continuing to post-secondary education.

These questions in isolation may not clearly indicate the particular parenting discourse of the State. However, when considered in connection with other questions from the AAR-C2 a clear position emerges. Consider the following questions for foster parents from the dimension of family and social relationships in the AAR-C2-2010:

F8: You warn... that you will discipline him/her and then do not actually discipline him/her.
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Almost never ☐ Never

F9: ... fails to leave a note or to let you know where he/she is going.
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Almost never ☐ Never

F10: .... talks you out of being disciplined after he/she has done something wrong.
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Almost never ☐ Never

F11: ... stays out in the evening past the time he/she is supposed to be home.
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Almost never ☐ Never

F12: You compliment ... when he/she does something well.
☐ Always ☐ Often ☐ Sometimes ☐ Almost never ☐ Never

(Flynn et al, 2010, p. 16)

The common sense message from each these questions is implied as:

F8: It is wrong as a foster parent not to discipline if you warn a young person that you will discipline them.

F9: It is wrong as a foster parent not to know where a young person is at all times, even at 17 years old.

F10: It is wrong as a foster parent to let a 17 year old talk you out of being disciplined.

F11: It is wrong if a foster parent allows a 17 year old to be out past curfew.
F12: A foster parent should reinforce desired behaviours in a young person.

These two sets of questions, taken together, suggest the importance of a youth being respectful and responsive to rules, to authority, to expectations, and to complete advanced education. In addition, it suggests that foster parents are responsible for the behaviour of young people in care, and that ultimately they, through their parenting practices, will be responsible for the trajectory the life of the young person takes. Gillies (2010) discusses the hard line the UK government has taken in regards to parenting, stating that “inadequate parenting is the source of serious social ills, driving a cycle of deprivation and generating crime and anti-social behaviour” (p. 838). These notions conjure up current images of an idealistic youth and reflect attributes needed for a young person to take their position in the marketplace. The desired attributes reflected in these questions are also specific to the neoliberal political position of the State to produce a specific type of subject. Ramaekers and Suissa (2012) write that authoritarian parenting, as a form of professionalized parenting, interacts more with the needs of the state than interacting with and seeing the child (p. 31). The OnLAC system and the AAR-C2 operationalize authoritarian parenting. When understood in this context foster parents can be understood as docile bodies targeted for the expression of State power. This power is expressed through the responsibilization of, and coercion of, specific parenting practices asserted upon young people in care. Consider the political climate in the U.K. during the rise of the state's LAC system. Jensen (2010) traced the discursive production of parenting, beginning in the Blair administration, and discusses how good parenting has been constructed as all that is necessary to ensure a child’s life follows a trajectory of positive outcomes regardless of class, poverty, race, or any other multitude of structural
factors. Overall, Jensen notes, that parents are responsibilized with making up for any social inequalities, and indeed parenting is such an pivotal task to the future and safety of the nation that it should no longer remain in the private realm. This perspective legitimates state endorsed “evidence based” parenting practices being taught to ‘problem families’, which youth in care are from.

The faith in good parenting to mediate all other factors of disadvantage forms part of specific social and political agendas surrounding social inclusion and poverty, yet its place within these agendas is made invisible through recourse to a growing ‘evidence base’ which is imagined to be objective and untouched by those agendas. The bulk of the contemporary evidence base is itself funded, commissioned and orchestrated by the same political actors who insist upon the significance of ‘good parenting’ above all other factors and who advise policy makers to those ends (Jensen, 2010, p. 1).

Garett (1999) notes a similar approach to the construction of “reasonable parenting” in the LAC system, wherein the LAC system creators used their own parenting experiences, contextualized within their own social milieu and class, to inform what became constituted a reasonable parent (p. 57). The neoliberal context of LAC endorsed parenting is articulated by Ward (1995), a primary supporter of the LAC system in the UK, in the context of what constitutes reasonable parenting:

We have defined well-being in the context of British society in the 1990s. For instance, in a society where welfare provisions are minimal and survival the over riding preoccupation, helping children to acquire a strong sense of identity may well be regarded as a frivolous side issues compared with the need the ensure they are sufficiently healthy and acquire appropriate skills to take their place in the labour market (cited in Garrett, 1999, p. 57).

Desirable attributes of youth and desirable parenting styles are also historically and culturally specific and situated. In the 1960s and 1970s, anti-authoritarian parenting was popular and

the general feeling was that the world had to change, and that in order to do that people had to be freed from all kinds of authority ... children should be given
radical freedom to liberate themselves from oppressive and conforming societal mechanisms and structures (Ramaekers & Suissa, 2012, p. 30).

When juxtaposed with this position, the neoliberal mechanisms of OnLAC parenting, presented as normative, natural, and common sense, become visible as a form of political maneuvering to ensure that the next generation is fully immersed in a discourse that supports the neoliberalism.

When OnLAC methods of parenting are applied to Indigenous young people in care, normalization becomes a method of colonization. Using this observation as a point of departure, the following section discusses the impact of individualizing young Indigenous people in care and the material impact of this process.

The Outcome of Individualizing Indigenous Youth In Care

As with foster parents, the process of panopticism, assessment and normalization begins with Indigenous young people in care when they answer the multitude of questions and scales in the AAR-C2. An integral aspect of this Foucauldian inspired genealogy is to query the material impact of a practice. Given that Indigenous young people are vastly disproportionately represented in care, and given they have endured the most oppressive child welfare practices by the Canadian state, I have chosen to discuss some of the potential material impacts of this system when applied to Indigenous young people in care. My point of departure is problematizing the use of the AAR-C2 in its application to Indigenous young people in care by showing how the tool is legitimated in this use; how the AAR-C2 can limit available acceptable subjectivities for Indigenous youth in care; and how this limitation can impact their lives in concrete ways. It is
important to again pull forward the notion of resilience as described by the *Practitioner's Guide*:

Normal development is in a sense culturally relative. There is a social and cultural consensus on what to expect of a five-year-old in our society, which is based on average developmental potential and normative day-to-day experience. Normative development is the baseline for measuring resilience and is the one being used with Looking After Children, particularly when one relates LAC data to the findings in the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 46).

This excerpt makes an argument for normal development as culturally relative, and then uses data averages from the NLSCY to determine what would be normal for all youth in Canada. In other words, the OnLAC system takes the position that children in Canada are more or less homogeneous in culture, and the average from this whole can be applied across individuals and families. When I considered this in regards to Indigenous young people in care it recalled my earlier discussions about the data from the NLSCY, in which data from the Northern Territories was not released for analysis, and First Nation reserves were excluded from the NLSCY study altogether (McIntyre, et al., 2000, p. 962). These exclusions raise numerous concerns: Why were these communities excluded? Why was the data from an entire territory withheld for analysis? There is no mention in the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) of any FNMI youth in care. There is no questioning of the norms established in the OnLAC system and how applicable they are to Indigenous communities that were completely excluded from the NLSCY. These gaps indicate a dismissal of Indigenous child development, and epistemology, as legitimate, and alternately positions the OnLAC system as an answer to the “Indian problem”. The absence of formally addressing these concerns suggests that these concerns are of little consequence and the data mined from the AAR-C2 regarding Indigenous young people in
care will be understood as valid. Numerous scholars, advocates, and communities have repeatedly raised serious concerns regarding: the use of unquestioned norms in work with minoritized children and youth (deFinney, Dean, Loiselle, & Saraceno, 2011); the cultural inappropriateness of applying the AAR-C2 to Indigenous young people in care (Mackenzie et al., 2009); and the paramount importance of using Indigenous methodologies when working with Indigenous families and children (Carriere, 2008). None of these tenets have been addressed by OnLAC and the AAR-C2.

It is important to situate these concerns in the history of residential schools and ongoing over-representation of Indigenous children and young people in care. Indeed, the in care placement of Aboriginal children is 6-8 times higher than non-Aboriginal children (Auditor General of Canada, 2008, cited in Blackstock, 2011, p. 38). Carriere (2008), citing Bennett and Shangreaux (2005), notes that “non Aboriginal social workers often do not understand the depth of feelings and the impact that past historical policies and practices have on First Nation peoples today” (p. 68). Given these concerns, and their historical context, the AAR-C2 can be understood as a colonizing tool and its aggregated data a measure of colonial success over time.

Consider for example, the following set of questions from the AAR-C2-2006 addressed specifically to Indigenous young people:

**FIRST NATION YOUNG PEOPLE:** IF you are a First Nation young person, THEN please answer questions ID11 to ID14. If not, go to question ID15.

**ID11:** If your ancestors were members of a “First Nation”, to which band, community, or nation did they belong?

**ID 12:** Overall, do you have enough opportunities to visit your own First Nation’s community?

☐ Yes  ☐ No
**ID13:** Overall, do you have enough opportunities to learn about traditional teachings, customs, or ceremonies?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

**ID14:** Overall, do you have enough opportunities to participate in your own First Nation’s community events, activities, or ceremonies?

☐ Yes  ☐ No

(Flynn et al, 2006, p. 13).

These questions appear dropped into the AAR to address cultural deficiencies, such as those I have just discussed, and to claim cultural sensitivity, and recognition of the unique needs of Aboriginal youth in care. This led me to consider whether the OnLAC system, which encourages conformity through methods such as social role valourization and openly desires particular subjects to be foster parents and child welfare workers, could ever be appropriate in practice with Indigenous youth and their families. This led me to consider cultural sensitivity, and notions of cultural competence in more depth.

Lewis (2000) discusses that in social work, cultural competence focuses on how the needs of a cultural group differ from a universal structuring of needs (p. 120). Thus, culture is understood relative to clients not marked as culturally different and able to have their needs met through a universal system (p. 120). The notion of universal developmental norms used in the OnLAC system is comparable to the notion of universal needs discussed by Lewis (2000), in that both are positioned as neutral and natural positions. Considering this, I pondered the use of the words in the above AAR-C2 excerpt: “do you have enough opportunities to...” learn about, visit, and participate in activities related to Indigenous culture. This suggests that these questions have been added specifically to meet the cultural needs of Indigenous youth in care, different as they are from a universal structuring of needs. However, this cultural difference must not be too different - it must be able to exist within the larger ontological framework of the
OnLAC system. The implication is that the tool then can be understood as cultural competent. This practice maintains the social work profession's long history of managing difference, with difference being located in the other, and measured according to its distance from the desired neutral and normal (see Margolin, 1997; Wong & Yee, 2010). This simplistic, and hegemonic, approach to practice is a dangerous one, as it ignores the ongoing issues of racism and colonization of Indigenous people, while at the same time proclaiming this is the path to improving outcomes. Reid (2005) wrote of the pressure and pain First Nation child welfare workers experience working “under delegated models within their communities where they are dealing with the ongoing ‘impacts of colonization’ and do not want to be seen as ‘perpetrators of colonialism’ within their own people” (cited in Carriere, 2008, p. 68).

The AAR-C2 can be understood as continuing the colonization process through the desire of the OnLAC system to influence the personality characteristics of young people in care, their education, their ways of living and being; accomplishing this through the pedagogy of the AAR-C2 upon foster parents, child welfare workers, and youth in care. This is a form of disciplinary power. Wang (1999) describes this below.

In Foucault’s view power functions best not by directly imposing force on people but by indirectly constituting the subjectivity of the individuals. Power can influence people’s behaviour because it shapes the ways people understand and interpret reality and knowledge. Power reaches its effect because it produces “truths” for people - not because it hides "the Truth" from people. Power maximizes life because it provides subjectivities for people to assume in their daily lives instead of depriving people of their subjectivities (Wang, 1999, pp. 191-192).

Indeed, there is no mention in the Practitioner Guide (2007), or the AAR-C2, of the history and ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous children in the care of the state. It is not that this history is denied in the Practitioner Guide (2007) or the AAR-C2, rather it
is not stated - it is not presented as a legitimate form of knowledge and truth that is
critical, or even relevant, to Indigenous youth in care. Rather, they are encouraged to
embrace the subjectivity of a resilient youth in care, while it is suggested that they
maintain sufficient opportunities to practice their culture.

A collective cultural identity and speaking the language of one’s Indigenous
community are critical aspects to resilience in Indigenous young people (see Lalonde, 2006; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). Considering this further, I asked myself what the
outcome would be if Indigenous youth ticked the “yes” box and affirmed they have
“enough opportunities” to access and practice Indigenous culture? During my experience
administering the AAR-C2 over the past ten years, young people are hesitant to check off
answers that would come across as complaining, getting them into trouble, or
inconveniencing people. Would this data be used to support a notion that Indigenous
foster youth have sufficient access to Indigenous culture and language, despite assertions
from Indigenous communities that Indigenous children and youth in care need
Indigenous cultural immersion, not conformity to neoliberal developmental standards
promoted by the OnLAC system? As I will discuss later in this section, a discourse
minimizing the importance of Indigenous culture in favour of the continued panoptic
approach and methods of normalization is evident in how AAR-C2 data is applied to
Indigenous young people in care.

As the AAR-C2 tool evolved the 2010 version provided a context for why questions
are specifically addressed to Indigenous youth in care and no other racial or ethnic group:

NOTE TO THE CHILD WELFARE WORKER: While it is essential for those who
are providing child welfare services to ethnically diverse communities to consider the
unique traditions and heritage of all cultures, the Child and Family Services Act
emphasizes the importance of paying particular attention to the provision of services to FNMI young people (Flynn et al, 2010, p. 13).

This version of the AAR-C2 also instructs the child welfare worker to “recognize the importance of having a FNMI [First Nation, Metis, Inuit] Band representative or community members present to assist” (Flynn et al, 2010, Introduction) in the completion of the AAR-C2. This instruction, and the previous rationale for the inclusion of these questions, does not provide a context for why particular attention to services is needed for Indigenous youth in care. This points to the discourse these questions are immersed within: the socio-historical context of why Indigenous youth are over represented in care is not important for the purposes of the AAR-C2. This rationale also insinuates that these questions have only been added due to instruction from the Ministry of Child and Family Services and that in functionality the addition of these questions is not needed to produce positive outcomes.

In 2007 the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) set the framework for individual compensation to former students of residential schools, an additional Individual Assessment Process for compensation to survivors of physical and sexual abuse, and the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)” (Nagy and Sehdev, 2012, p. 68). Although not within the scope of this thesis, it is interesting to note that the discourses of the IRSSA are also situated in individualism, assessment, and the assigning of a market value for cultural genocide, and trauma compensation. Curiously, the TRC mandates are in conflict with this neoliberal discourse.

The TRC is mandated to acknowledge the residential schools system, its impact, and its consequences; to provide a culturally appropriate and safe environment for survivors to come forward; to witness, support, and promote truth and
reconciliation events at the national and community levels; to educate the public on the intergenerational and systemic effects of residential schools, including through a report and the creation of a National Research Centre; and to support the commemoration of former Indian Residential School students and their families (Nagy & Sehdev, 2012 p. 68).

Given the high profile of the TRC in Canada over the past several years, these handful of questions and the encouragement to include a band member to participate in the completion of the tool, can hardly be understood as creating a tool that is culturally appropriate. de Finney, Dean, Loiselle, and Saraceno (2011) argue that these types of approaches create the impression of a culturally competent approach and “offers an illusion of competency centred on reifying problematic, superficial notions of culture rather than on addressing systemic issues such as those that contribute to racialization, sexualization, and heteronormativity” (p. 363). In regards to the suggestion that a band member should be encouraged to participate in the completion of the AAR-C2, it is worth re-stating here Kovach’s (2005) assertion that, “Indigenizing a Western model of research without critical reflection can result in the individualistic approach of a principle investigator determining the question, methodology, and methods and asking an Indigenous person to act as the “front” (Kovach, 2005, p. 26). Kovach's (2005) observation is particularly interesting in this context as I note that on the back side of the AAR-C2 (2010) is a list of authors who assisted in revision of the AAR-C2, which is followed by a list of contributors, some whom I am familiar with as participants on the Ontario Anti-Oppressive Roundtable, at least one being Indigenous. However, given I could find no literature indicating Indigenous communities were included in the conception and construction of the AAR-C2 epistemology, nor is there mentioned in the Practitioner's Guide (2007) of Indigenous peoples, this notion seems applicable here.
Nagy and Sehdev (2012) cite Battiste (1998) in a discussion of the cognitive imperialism that has subjugated Indigenous knowledge systems:

> It has been the means by which the rich diversity of peoples have been denied inclusion in public education while only a privileged group have defined themselves as inclusive, normative, and ideal. Cognitive imperialism denies many groups of people their language and cultural integrity and maintains legitimacy of only one language, one culture, and one frame of reference (p. 70).

As discussed previously, the AAR-C2 is a tool constructed within a neoliberal ideology which emphasizes and esteems individuality, independence, self-reliance, and financial security of the individual. Divergently, an Indigenous worldview emphasizes interconnectedness and prosperity of the community (Carriere, 2008). It is the characteristics desired within a discourse of individual rights and individual financial prosperity that is being taught and sanctioned through the questions of the AAR-C2. The very function of a panoptic probe, such as the AAR-C2, is to individuate the object of knowledge, to know intimate details about them, to judge them, and use these assessments to alter and normalize behaviour through the very process of assessing (Foucault, 1977, p. 184). Thus in the very asking of the AAR-C2 questions, the Indigenous youth is at once being mined for data, and being asked to think as an individual separate from their community and social context. Consequentially, they are then encouraged to act as an autonomous individual, which is the desirable subjectivity of the OnLAC system, and neoliberal states overall. This progression can be seen in the questions of the AAR-C2. Consider the following excerpt and sample of questions from the Identity dimension of the AAR-C2-2010:

> This dimension is about the identity of the young person. The questions in this section are designed to make sure that the young person knows something about his/her family and his/her culture, understands and accepts the reasons why he/she is
in care, and is being helped to feel increasingly confident about himself/herself and about the way he/she makes decisions.

**ID1:** Would you like to know more about your birth family?
- Yes
- Uncertain
- No

**ID2: BEING IN CARE:** Would you like more information about why you are in care?
- Yes
- Uncertain
- No

**ID3:** Would you like any assistance dealing with questions about your birth family, where you live, or why you are in care?
- Yes
- Uncertain
- No assistance required

**ID7:** Overall, do you have enough opportunities to practice your religion (including religious services, festivals and holidays, prayers, clothing, diet, fasting, traditional sweat lodge, pow wow, drumming, etc)?
- No
- religious or spiritual affiliation
- Yes
- No

(Flynn et al, 2010, p. 12).

Foucault’s method of reversal enables the identification of what is not present in the discourse of these excerpts. In this case, there are no questions related to a young person’s knowledge or understanding of structural factors related to why they are in care. This is a repeated theme in the AAR-C2. Without questions related to the structural and social context of why a young Indigenous person is in care, questions ID1, ID2, and ID3 suggest a causal relation between a young person’s Indigeneity and the reason they are in care. The notion that a young person’s identity is a function of why they are in care, and that this reason is attached to information “about” their birth family negates the importance of structural causes, the impact of colonization and colonialism, and it individualizes responsibility for why a young person is in care upon their birth family. Question ID7 furthers the process of individuation by suggesting that having opportunity to learn and practice one’s religion can occur for as an individual regardless of the religious affiliation, race, or culture of the young person’s foster family. Without context, these questions pathologize individuals, families, and communities.
Consider the following sample of questions from the same identity dimension that relates to how a young person conceptualizes and responds to problems.

**ID34:** I do things to make my problem better  
- [ ] Most of the time  
- [ ] Often  
- [ ] Sometimes  
- [ ] Never

**ID35:** I think about different ways of solving my problem.  
- [ ] Most of the time  
- [ ] Often  
- [ ] Sometimes  
- [ ] Never

**ID36:** I take action to improve the situation.  
- [ ] Most of the time  
- [ ] Often  
- [ ] Sometimes  
- [ ] Never

**ID37:** I try to learn more about what is causing my problem.  
- [ ] Most of the time  
- [ ] Often  
- [ ] Sometimes  
- [ ] Never

(Flynn et al., 2010, p.14)

In conjunction with the rationale for this dimension, which states that “the questions in this section are designed to make sure that the young person knows something about his/her family and his/her culture, understands and accepts the reasons why he/she is in care, and is being helped to feel increasingly confident about himself/herself and about the way he/she makes decisions” (Flynn et al., 2010, p. 12), these questions suggest the desirability of an autonomous subject who can move towards “acceptance” of the past and become a confident goal setter and problem solver. Through this emphasis, the circumstances and impact of what brought the young person into care is minimized. This discursive sentiment is affirmed in the Practitioner’s Guide, which states that the LAC system emphasizes the promotion and provision of positive and valued life* conditions and experiences (including participation in mainstream society and community life) rather than merely treatment or therapy.... The developmental model proposes that a positive present can remove the negative effects of past disadvantages... (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 10).
Using Foucault’s method of critique, which “criticize[s] the present by reflecting upon the ways the discursive and institutional practices of the past still affect the constitution of the present” (Tamboukou, 1999, p. 205), I note three points from this excerpt that repeat and reaffirm child welfare’s colonizing practices. First, this excerpt infers that an individual’s past disadvantages will no longer exist as a result of living a mainstream life. This implies the second point, that disadvantage is located within differences found in the margins of society. These arguments collude with the status quo through the refusal to acknowledge the impacts of structural inequity, and colonization. Thirdly, moving forward without healing, simply by having a “positive present” runs counter to and devalues Indigenous philosophy. As Absolon (1994) notes:

> Healing as practice, using the Medicine Wheel is an expression of a First Nations world view that supports emotional, spiritual, mental and physical bodies of healing and the corresponding medicines that foster balance. This approach reflects a holistic and earth centred philosophy of life and healing - applicable to a variety of systems, such as, the individual, family, community, society, and environment (p. 2).

In these ways the Practitioner Guide (2007) and the AAR-C2 function as colonizing tools, despite the assertion that the only intention of OnLAC is to improve outcomes.

The practices I have discussed in this section may lead to the aggregated data from the AAR to be misunderstood in the context of Indigenous lives. For instance, a study by Filbert and Flynn (2010) utilized AAR-C2 data compiled from Indigenous young people in care to enable “a better understanding of how to promote resilience... [in order] to alleviate the persistent adversities that continue to threaten the well-being of many Aboriginal families and children” (p. 560). The authors noted a study by Chandler and Lalonde (1998) which indicated that cultural assets for young Canadian Indigenous people are very important for positive outcomes. Filbert and Flynn (2010) also cited
several studies indicating that developmental assets leads to positive outcomes or resiliency. Based on data accumulated from AAR-C2s completed by Indigenous youth in care, the authors found that a greater number of developmental assets produced positive outcomes in Indigenous youth (which was similar for non-Indigenous youth), but found no relation between cultural assets and positive outcomes. They postulated that perhaps “cultural assets function more as a protective factor in the face of risk... [rather] than to promote positive outcomes such as prosocial behaviour, self-esteem, or education performance” (p. 563). The authors recommended continued utilization of the AAR-C2 with Indigenous young people in care in order to continue to improve their positive outcomes/resiliency, and noted that “further research is needed to determine to what extent and how easily developmental and cultural assets can be increased in First Nations youth and the impact of such action on resilient outcomes” (2010, p. 564). In analyzing and critiquing these conclusions three implicit discursive formations emerge. First, the authors endorse the continued surveillance of Indigenous youth to gain information in order to manage their resilience. Secondly, the cultural context and definition of resilience as noted in LAC is understood to be appropriately applied to Indigenous young people and communities. Thirdly, that Indigenous epistemologies are not required to define what is resilience/positive outcomes. Given that the analysis of data from the AAR-C2 directly impacts Canadian child welfare policy these recommendations have a material effect on the lives of Indigenous youth in care.

Conclusion

In this analysis I employed Foucault’s methods of dispersal, reversal, and critique (Hook, 2005; Tamboukou, 1999) to reveal five central findings. Although these findings
are presented textually as discrete points, they are inherently connected to and form each other.

1. Youth in care are discursively positioned as deviant and potentially dangerous, and overall embody a position outside of normative development. Resiliency is understood as a positive outcome within normal development and life experiences, which necessarily conform to a neoliberal rational. Thus, resilience and normalcy are constructed as behaviours and attributes that epitomize self-care, self-sufficiency, self-regulation and self-discipline.

2. The AAR-C2 has professional utility for both foster parents and child welfare workers through their responsibilization for outcomes. The Practitioner's Guide states that “the AAR has been described by some child welfare workers and foster parents as ‘highlighting and clarifying what’s expected of them in order to make their job easier’” (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 111-112). By providing specific guidelines to foster parents and child welfare workers on how to give service to youth in care, they are responsibilized for the progress youth in care make toward the outcome of normative development. This responsibilization mobilizes a discourse of being a good, efficient, and helpful worker but it also obscures structures that contribute to the marginalization of youth in care.

3. Resilience is never actually achieved by youth in care. They are always in a state of becoming resilient, and require ongoing monitoring and techniques of discipline to ensure the subjectivities available to them are being defined by the state. This justifies the finding below.
4. The AAR-C2 is what Foucault refers to a system of surveillance, and it enables the production of neoliberal subjects. The AAR-C2 functions in a panoptic manner and works to individualize foster parents, workers, and youth in care. The questions on the AAR-C2 are pedagogic in that they are suggestive and instructional. The questions are surveilling in that aggregated data accumulated from the answers enables the periodic adjustment to policy and practice to ensure the ongoing production of a desirable subject. This is accomplished through techniques of discipline in the AAR-C2 and forms of discipline by foster parents and child welfare workers. But also, and perhaps most importantly, a desirable subject is produced from the technologies of the self, wherein a youth in care disciplines their own self; alters their view of the world; and alters their desire, such that, they desire to be and live within a neoliberal rational. This finding is perhaps the most salient in the study of power. The shaping of a person’s desires is an example of “power at its extremities, in its ultimate destinations… where it becomes capillary” (Foucault, 1976, p. 96). It is at these capillaries where Foucault (1976) states that the study of power is needed “…at the point where it is in direct and immediate relationship with that which can provisionally call its object, its target, its field of application, there - that is to say - where it installs itself and produces its real effects” (p. 97). These material effects of power are noted in the following fifth finding.

5. The OnLAC system and the AAR-C2 are a method of colonization of Indigenous youth in care. Colonization is being asserted when power is exercised to produce Indigenous youth as neoliberal subjects, to the exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous subjectivities. Indigenous epistemologies are not incorporated into the definition of resilience/positive outcomes. Despite research indicating that the cultural
context and definition of resilience is critical for the development of Indigenous youth (Absolon, 1994; Carriere, 2008; Chandler & Lalonde, 1998), and that the use of the AAR-C2 is not culturally appropriate when applied to Indigenous communities (McKenzie et al., 2009) the state persists, through the work of child welfare workers, in the application of the AAR-C2.

In the following closing chapter I restate my thesis question and the approach I took to answering these questions. I then use my findings from analysis as a starting point to consider how this notion of resilience, and the AAR-C2, are implicated in material outcomes beyond the three individuals who are engaged in the completion of the AAR-C2. Finally, I reflect on my own processes of critically taking up how completing this genealogy has impacted my practice.
Chapter 5: Contextualizing My Findings Within A Bigger Picture

_Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs outsiders as surplus people_  

- Audre Lorde

In this closing chapter I provide a brief overview of my research question, the methodology I used to complete my genealogy, and key elements of the conditions of possibility which enabled the emergence of the OnLAC system. I then briefly summarize the core findings of my analysis. Using these findings as a point of departure, I consider how the OnLAC system, and the use of its AAR-C2, are implicated in the material effects of power at the levels of the child welfare organization, communities, and across the globe. I end this chapter with thoughts on methods of resistance with an ethics of the self as a centre.

In this thesis I completed a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis of the notion of resilience in the Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC) system. My sources of data were twofold: The _Looking After Children: A Practitioner's Guide_ (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007), and three versions of the Assessment and Action Record, Canadian adaptation (AAR-C2). I sought to answer the following questions: How has child welfare come to this notion of resiliency? What were the contingencies and complex set of practices that enabled this specific notion of resilience to emerge? What does this notion of resilience accomplish and what does it do? What understandings of resilience have been excluded, and how have these inclusions and exclusions shaped the available subjectivities to youth in care?
Using a poststructural feminist epistemology and methodology, I employed my unique form of genealogy to answer these questions and expose the discourses within which knowledge about resilience has been constructed. Genealogy problematizes a practice in the present and traces the historical and social contexts and contingencies from which the problem emerged (Koopman, 2013). I began with problematizing the emergence of the OnLAC notion of resilience, and tracing the conditions of possibility for this notion of resilience to emerge onto the social and political landscape.

Conditions of possibility are a set of limits for what is possible to emerge as a truth in our society. Tracing these conditions made clear the post-positivist epistemological position of the resiliency research underpinning OnLAC. The understanding of resilience in this system was established as a set of social and developmental norms located within the individual. And, although it was noted that there is a strong genetic component to this form of resiliency, resilience was also presented as teachable through social role valorization and normalization. This notion of resiliency was advanced through neoliberal ideals emphasizing individual responsibility; that problem populations, such as youth in care, become resilient individuals able to care for themselves, be independent, and self-regulating. Resilience, conformity, and positive outcomes became conflated for youth in care. Critical groups of people (i.e. Indigenous communities) were excluded in the formation of this rationale. This version of resilience was espoused in child welfare as credible and natural, and alternate perspectives regarding resilience, and the thought systems within which these perspective are located, were devalued. In the context of youth in care, the most salient of these subjugations was Indigenous understandings and knowledge of resilience. With an understanding of the
conditions of possibilities, and a critical curiosity, I questioned what this version of resilience was accomplishing materially.

Using Foucault’s methods of dispersal, reversal, and critique (Hook, 2005; Tamboukou, 1999) I analyzed the Practitioner’s Guide (2007) and three versions of the system’s main tool, the Assessment and Action Record, Canadian adaptation (AAR-C2). Through my analysis five main findings were revealed:

a) Youth in care are discursively positioned as deviant and potentially dangerous, and in that they embody a position outside of normative development. Conversely, the desired position for a youth is care is a resilient individual who epitomizes self-care, self sufficiency, self-regulation and self-discipline.

b) The AAR-C2 has professional utility for both foster parents and child welfare workers through their responsibilization for the outcomes of youth in care. This responsibilization mobilizes a discourse of being a good, efficient, and helpful worker but it also obscures structures that contribute to the marginalization of youth in care.

c) Resilience is never actually achieved by a youth in care.

d) The AAR-C2 is a system of surveillance which enables the production of neoliberal subjects. This is accomplished through techniques of discipline, and most importantly, a desirable subject is produced from the technologies of the self wherein a youth in care disciplines their own self by altering their view of the world, altering their desires, such that they desire to be and live within a neoliberal rational.

e) The OnLAC system and the AAR-C2 are a method of colonization of Indigenous youth in care. Colonization is being asserted when power is exercised to produce
Indigenous youth as neoliberal subjects, to the exclusion and marginalization of Indigenous subjectivities.

**Connecting OnLAC and the AAR-C2 to Global Practices**

Using these findings as a point of departure, I drew back the lens and considered the larger picture, and how the OnLAC system is not only implicated materially at the individual level (youth in care, child welfare workers, and foster parents), but it is also linked to material consequences at the level of the organization, in communities, and indeed globally. Aggregated data from the AAR-C2 can provide outcome measures for child welfare organizations - a sort of report card in regards to how well organizations produce resilient youth in care, or to be clear, how well they produce neoliberal subjects. Audits of organizations are completed to ensure accountability to such mandated practices (such as the completion of the AAR-C2). The Ministry of Children and Youth Services audits child welfare agencies for the annual completion of the AAR-C2 and also inspects the outcome plan for each youth to ensure there is incorporation of the AAR-C2 rationality and goals in each plan.

Although the process of audits in child welfare is not the focus of this thesis, I raise the topic as audits intersect with the OnLAC system to not only ensure effects of governmentality on the level of the individual, but also at the organizational level and globally. Audits are the “evaluating of services and products based on models of economic efficiency” (Chomsky, 1999, p. 58). Audits produce an outcome report for individual workers, managers, and for an organization. In my experience, both workers and managers desire good audit report cards. Indeed, it seems that a significant portion of my time as a children services worker is spent preparing for audits, making the job of
the auditor easier, and worrying about my report card. In my experience, this process uses up a vast amount of valuable time and energy proving a worker’s compliance to state mandates, regardless of the context or usefulness of the mandate. Workers, managers and executives are disciplined by the audit as a form of governmentality, such that they all desire to have to have a good outcome - a good report card. As the link from the worker connects to manager, to executive, to organization, to community, and subsequently spans out across the social in non-linear, multidimensional ways, we can conceptualize a matrix of technologies, such that the disciplining of particular subjects is ongoing. The function of the audit and the function of the AAR-C2 interlock through their common neoliberal rationale in that both tools are designed to insert a neoliberal rationality at all levels of the organization and across populations. Munro (2004) states that although audits are generally represented as neutral, this is far from the case, as “auditing is a dynamic process that interacts with the service being audited with far-reaching results” (p. 1075).

The intersection of the AAR-C2, and the audit (to ensure the completion and implementation of the AAR-C2) exposes how the OnLAC system is implicated in material effects at the level of the social work profession in child welfare. Munro (2001) states that “the rise of managerialism and a consequent decrease in professionalism seem to limit the power of social workers to respond to children's individual preferences” (p. 130). This decrease in professionalism has subsequently impacted the use of independent, critical thought and judgement (Pollack & Rossiter, 2010, p. 160). Pollack and Rossiter (2010) write that “under the guise of rhetoric about ‘best use of resources’ or ‘the objectives of the program’, the neoliberal professional subject is the target for
distrust and obsessive lust for control” (p. 160). This “obsessive lust for control” inserts itself through the rubric of the AAR-C2 as a job description for child welfare workers. Thus, the possibility of taking up a critical practice in child welfare to lend resistance to techniques of discipline, such as the AAR-C2 and the OnLAC system, becomes more difficult and potentially dangerous.

Consider the following excerpt from the *Practitioner's Guide* (2007) in regards to the implementation of the LAC system in a child welfare organization:

The current focus on psychopathology and negative developmental outcomes has left many employees and foster parents dispirited and cynical about the child protection endeavour. Unfortunately, some of these individuals burned out by the daily experience of systemic deficiencies, may be obstacles to change. We all know of child welfare professionals who have left the field because they feel they are unable to make a positive contribution (Lemay & Ghazal, 2007, p. 111).

Here we can observe how “burn out” is individualized to the worker, who is then subsequently constructed as an obstacle to the implementation of OnLAC - a resource that has been used up and is no longer an asset. This individualization signals the discursive location of this excerpt within neoliberalism. Burned out workers are constructed as “obstacles” to efficiency. This leaves little space for conceptualizing burnout as a form of resistance to the power systems within practice is situated.

Alternately, Rossiter (2005) discusses the use of critical reflection, through discursive analysis of practice, as an approach to alleviate burnout. These processes can open up other possibilities for practice and social justice.

Considering the effects of power in this way exposes how the use of the AAR-C2 with a youth in care is only one point in a matrix of discourses and subjects, in which both the discourses and the subjects are vehicles of power re-asserting neoliberal rationales and technologies of the self. This matrix stretches over and between people,
and institutions. The tightness of the matrix, of which the AAR-C2 is one component, leaves little room for resistance to the insertion of neoliberal rationales, and I wonder if we are existing in a time wherein finding cracks for resistance, and expression of alternate and legitimate expressions of knowledge, is not only exceedingly difficult, but also a potentially dangerous endeavour.

This led me to consider the possible impacts of the AAR-C2 on Indigenous communities when child welfare practice occurs within this matrix of neoliberal rationality, and it is dangerous for workers to resist this tool or the neoliberal discourse it is situated in. This pulled forward Cindy Blackstock’s (2011) notion of “emancipating moral courage” (p. 35) in child welfare to resist practices in “child welfare [which] stifles change and innovation in a system that desperately needs it by promoting conformity and awarding subordination to bad ideas” (Blackstock, 2009, cited in Blackstock, 2011, p. 35). Connecting the dots to the use of the AAR-C2 with Indigenous youth in care, I recalled that this tool has been experienced as not culturally appropriate to use with Indigenous young people or their families (McKenzie, et al., 2009). Despite this assertion, the AAR-C2 continues to mine data from Indigenous youth in care, and as Blackstock notes, promote conformity. Regardless of research regarding Indigenous knowledge claims that culture is integral to Indigenous understanding and experience of resilience (see Carriere, 2008), and that cultural assets are integral to positive outcomes for Indigenous youth (see Chandler & Lalonde, 1998), some researchers (see Filbert & Flynn, 2010) continue to apply the OnLAC version of resilience to Indigenous young people in care. Filbert and Flynn (2010) maintain that the AAR-C2, as a measure of resilience, should continue to be used until more information can be gathered regarding
the claim that Indigenous culture improves outcomes, as this claim did not bear out in their research based on data from the AAR-C2. Thus, Indigenous epistemologies are not given equal weight to the knowledge produced by scholars using a post-positivist epistemology. This is an example of Foucault’s notion of power/knowledge, wherein mainstream dominant ideals are mobilized through privileged methods of epistemology and produced as knowledge. This simultaneously marginalizes and subjugates Indigenous epistemologies, knowledge, and ways of living and being. Jackson (2007) lays this point out clearly, “when people assume that they have the right, and ability, to define what is worthy and real, and then impose that upon someone else, while distorting or dismissing any contesting views, they are colonizing at an especially primal level” (p. 178). Colonizing is a form of violence that destroys cultures and languages emerging out of ways of living and being that western knowledge systems continue to subjugate. As I have laid out in this thesis, this continues today in the context of child welfare under the guise of improving outcomes for Indigenous youth.

I then considered how this form of colonization, which “work[s] at the level of on-going subjugation, at the level of those continuous and uninterrupted processes which subject out bodies, govern our gestures, dictates our behaviours, etc”. (Foucault, 1976, p. 97) impacts humanity across the globe and the natural environment within which we live. Wade Davis (2003) states that “ethnocide is celebrated as part of the development strategy”. He maintains that “a web of cultural and spiritual life is just as important to the earth as the bio web of life to the well being of the planet.... [Further, that cultural] metaphors define the relationship between the individual and the natural world, and these metaphors create very different kinds of human being” (Davis, 2003). Davis goes on to
challenge how worldviews and knowledge creation, in other words our ontology and epistemology, can have dire material consequences in the destruction of cultures and languages.

Indigenous cultures are not failed attempts at modernity, let alone failed attempts to be us. They are unique expressions of the human imagination and heart, unique answers to a fundamental question: What does it mean to be human and alive? When asked this question, the peoples of the world respond in 7,000 different voices, and these collectively comprise our human repertoire for dealing with all the challenges that will confront us as a species over the coming centuries (Davis, 2003).

Davis (2003) suggests that we will need this vast knowledge and understanding for the continued survival as a species.

What I am pointing to is that neoliberal political rationale is not only privileging certain knowledge systems but rather, through the use of methods of governmentality across generations (such as with Indigenous people of Canada residential schools, to foster care, to the AAR-C2), this rationale is homogenizing the world’s cultures. In effect, culture will exist only within the confines of a moral neoliberal citizen. Culture and ethnicity will be reduced to a “spice” to “liven up the dull dish that is whitestream culture” (hooks, 1991, p.21). Such are the material effects of power and knowledge, within a neoliberal rationale, that limit the range of subjectivities available.

**Moving Forward Differently**

> education was about the practice of freedom.

— bell hooks, Teaching To Transgress

These final points of analysis left me initially with a sense of hopelessness that little could be done to advance social justice. I felt burnout and despair setting in, connected to the notion that I would always be a cog in the wheel of the status quo, of
conformity, of the establishment. Further, I was caught up in the idea that we cannot escape the neoliberal power/knowledge matrix that exists, and the violent insertion of this rationale into every aspect of life across the globe. I recognize this insertion in my own self as a capillary of power.

This is a position that, thankfully, I did not remain stuck in. Connecting to other people committed to social justice, and invested in thinking outside of a neoliberal rationality, helped me to move out of this position and become re-vitalized. This infusion of energy, in my experience only gifted through a connection to others, was critical to exploring frameworks that may sustain my practice moving forward. I found the writings of Foucault (1994) on the practice of an ethics of the self valuable here. Foucault suggests that we make visible to ourselves the production of our own subjectivity. In other words, I can only know and understand my self by “turn[ing] the gaze back upon [myself]” and recognizing the truths that my subjectivity has authorized (Foucault, 1994, p. 285). This involves critically asking myself questions such as: How does meeting with a youth in care, as a worker, make me a particular kind of subject? How is the way I am listening and responding to this youth constituting both myself and them? Who am I as I write the case note from this meeting? What discourses and assumptions must be accepted as a truth in order for this moment of meeting to occur? In other words, I must conduct genealogies of the continual ways in which I take up producing my own subjectivity, and how, through this, I re-inscribe certain relations of power/discourse/knowledge. The “how” of this process being taken up is also important. For instance, Foucault (1994) states “what is ethics, if not the practice of freedom, the conscious [reflechie] practice of freedom?... Freedom is the ontological condition of
ethics. But ethics is the considered form that freedom takes when it is informed by reflection” (p. 284). I interpret this notion of freedom, within “conscious reflection”, to necessarily involve a space without continual self-reprisals, fear, and guilt in response to the answers that are exposed, and what I may see when I turn the gaze back upon myself. Becoming stuck in self-reprisal, and despair will obscure the small spaces where alternate notions of subjectivity, and alternate relations of power, can be taken up by being and acting differently.
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