

“Canada has no history of Colonialism.”  
Historical Amnesia:  
The Erasure of Indigenous Peoples from Canada’s History.

by

Rebecca Shrubbs  
B.A., Brock University, 2010

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

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Department of Sociology

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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Dr. Martha McMahon (Department of Sociology)  
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## Abstract

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Over the past decade, the Ontario Ministry of Education has committed to increase relevant teaching material for Indigenous students. While seemingly significant, a mere “increase” in “Indigenous content” is not enough to combat the racist and colonial mentality inherent within the Ontario history curriculum. Canadian history is steeped with idealistic, imperialist discourses organized around keywords such as peacekeeping and multiculturalism, as well as progress, development, identity, and nation building. The latter serve to not only erase, but also to legitimize the atrocities of Canada’s colonial past. At the 2009 G20 meeting, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated, “Canada has no history of colonialism.” In keeping with scholars such as Smith and Alfred and Corntassel, I argue that not only does Canada have a history of colonialism, but the mainstream curriculum must be decolonized if Canada is to move towards an equal and just society. The theory guiding this research is decolonial theory. In addition, Fairclough’s conceptualization of Systematic Textual Analysis provides the methodological basis for this project. I analyse three textbooks approved by the Ontario Ministry of Education for the grade ten history curriculum, as well as supplementary curriculum documents. Considering two objectives, *change* and a *colonial mentality*, I find only modest change between 2000, 2006, and 2008 in Indigenous content in the curriculum. Further, a colonial mentality continued to be deeply entrenched within all three textbooks and the history curriculum itself. This research seeks to open up the questions and responsibilities pertaining to the wrongs of the past and contribute to the burgeoning field of decolonized knowledges and education.

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## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to all the decolonizing researchers and Freirean educators who continue to forge ahead, continuously challenging colonial, racialized, oppressive, and normative pedagogies and epistemologies.

This thesis is also dedicated to Nora; keep on fighting.

## Forward

In an effort to come to terms with the injustices of “Canada’s” past, and based on my own experiences of being educated in the Ontario education system, in this thesis I endeavoured to critically analyze the Ontario grade ten history curriculum. I noted that the Ontario Ministry of Education had released numerous mandates and policies, which reflected a desire to “increase Indigenous content”. In a preliminary analysis of the updated curriculum, I did not note much *change*. What *was* visible in the curriculum however, was an overwhelming presence of what Alfred (1999) calls a *colonial mentality*. Therefore, I decided to analyze the curriculum looking at two objectives: first was a longitudinal analysis of three grade ten history textbooks to ascertain whether or not (positive) *change* had occurred over time. Second was to identify whether or not there was evidence of a *colonial mentality* within the curriculum.

By the time I finished my analysis and wrote up my findings, it was apparent that my methodological approach was reifying numerous problematic concepts and indeed the very things I intended to challenge. As I, and many others who now live in the state called Canada, struggle to come to terms with the past, and the past in the present, a litany of issues surface that are not easily resolvable. In confronting my own location of privilege, and in trying to make visible the invisible, I reproduced harmful hierarchies, inverted dichotomies, and perpetuated stereotypes.

Opening up the curriculum proved to open up far more than was manageable for a Master’s thesis. I attempted to address racism and colonialism by taking on hundreds of years of issues, spanning social, economic, political and geographical accounts. Besides reifying some of the problematic concepts I intended to challenge, the abundance of data



limited my discussion and conclusion, only allowing me to scratch the veritable surface of each important historical event.

Initially it appeared that this revelation meant I needed to go back to “the drawing board”. Upon further reflection however, it became apparent that this discovery pointed out some important things for those working outside of normative modes of analysis. Therefore throughout this thesis, where appropriate, I will identify areas where I reify what I am in fact trying to problematize.

The kinds of changes this thesis seeks to explore cannot be found in the history curriculum, however, to borrow Dorothy Smith’s (1996) term, I do want the history curriculum to make *relations of ruling* visible. While this thesis does not address what was initially intended, it does open of the discussion for *who* should address these issues and *how* can we move forward together? Further, we need to ask who is the *we*. *We* are all coming from very distinct locations, and while I took this project on as my own personal issues to resolve, it is not at all something I am capable of coming to terms with on my own.

What this thesis *can* do is to identify some of the challenges that arise when different historical accounts are presented. This thesis can begin to open up the questions and responsibilities of disrupting hegemonic narratives of Canada. It can also begin to help us think about how we can live respectfully with justice and awareness of the past, and the past in the present.

## Introduction

The “national consciousness” of many Canadians ignores racialization and colonialism in the past and present. Francis (2011) argues that most Canadians emphasize “hyper-icons” such as the peaceful beaver, stoic Mounties, and the triumphant settler. National emblems of politeness, hockey, peacekeeping, and multiculturalism are imbedded in “Canadian-ness”. While seemingly unproblematic in their own right, this sleight of hand with hyper-icons distracts from acknowledging a colonial past, and present.

“Canadiana” or the perceived “Canadian History,” is in fact riddled with strategic absences, particularly when it comes to Indigenous peoples in history. The careful selection, omission, and alteration of stories, have altered *the* story (Francis, 2011). We are left with a progression of historical myths. Historical myths have normalized, justified and legitimized colonization and the subsequent oppression, exploitation, and subordination of “minority groups”. For individuals who now live in the state called Canada, the matter of interrogating and coming to terms with the past, in the present, is extremely challenging.

In my desire to address the wrongs of history I looked to the mainstream education system to open up the discussion on the questions and responsibilities surrounding coming to terms with historical narratives of “Canada”. I found that multiculturalism has been used as a catchall discourse to address issues of racism and cultural discrimination. Additionally, in 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education (Ministry) produced *Aboriginal Perspectives: A Teacher’s Toolkit*, “a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom” (Ministry, 2009). While

seemingly positive in its endeavour, the toolkit is largely focussed on integrating Indigenous perspectives for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis students. Quite obviously, this focus is of high importance, however, *non*-Indigenous students should *also* engage with a decolonized curriculum.

This thesis would like to open up the discussion that the Ontario history curriculum brings the experiences of Indigenous peoples into the curriculum in a way that is not at all adequately responsible or respectful to the past, present, or future. Multiculturalism is used as a panacea to lump all “racialized others” into one celebrated *multi*-cultural group, thus escaping any real need to address racialized inequality stemming from colonization. Further, an attempt to bring Indigenous content in the classroom or to increase “Indigenous content” in many ways ends up reifying what the Ministry seeks to challenge.

Decolonial theory provides the theoretical framework to guide this research. If colonialism is “a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption,” (Alfred and Corntassel, 2005, p. 601) then decolonization requires a shift in thinking and action. De Lissovoy (2010) argues decolonial theory denaturalizes or exposes epistemological norms; it problematizes normative knowledge production; and it is active in its pursuit to emancipate education from colonialism.

This project is a longitudinal text analysis of the following three textbooks and supplementary curricular documents from the Ontario Ministry of Education grade ten history program:

1. Bain, C.M., DesRivieres, D., Flaherty, P., Goodman, D.M., Schemenauer, E., & Scully, A.L. (2000). *Making History: The Story of Canada in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.
2. DesRivieres, D., & Bain, C. M. (2006). *Experience History: Canada Since World War I*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
3. Freeman-Shaw, E., & Haskings-Winner, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Canadian Sources: Investigated 1914 to the Present*. Toronto: Edmond Montgomery Publications Limited.

Using Fairclough's (1992, 2003), Systematic Textual Analysis (STA) in conjunction with decolonial theory, this study examined *change* in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, and whether or not a *colonial mentality* existed in the history curriculum.

## 1. Situating My Voice

### 1.1 My Relationship to this Research

A wise teacher once told me that the difference between an Indigenous person fighting for Indigenous rights and a non-Indigenous person fighting for Indigenous rights is that at the end of the day, the non-Indigenous person can go home and hang up their “Indigenous rights cap” and take a break from the fight. An Indigenous person can never “hang up their cap”; they are born political, the fight never ends.<sup>1</sup>

As a non-Indigenous researcher contributing to discourses of decolonized research, knowledge, and education, it is imperative to situate myself within this scholarship and to identify from which position I speak. Smith (1999), and Abolson and Willett (2005) amongst many other scholars, stress the importance of researcher responsibility and positionality. Abolson and Willett (2005) argue that within Indigenous research methodology, locating oneself as a researcher is “one of the most fundamental principles...Identifying at the outset, the location from which the voice of the researcher emanates is an Indigenous way of ensuring those who study, write, and participate in knowledge creation are accountable for their own positionality” (97).

This exercise is not exclusive to Indigenous research; however, within emerging Indigenous research, it is acknowledged as a method ensuring one’s accountability. I find it particularly important, considering the history of colonial research and my self identity as a non-Indigenous researcher.

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<sup>1</sup> While all classifications of Indigenous peoples are arguably problematic, Alfred and Corntassel (2005) contend the Canadian Governments label of ‘Aboriginal’ is “a state construction that is instrumental to the state’s attempt to gradually subsume Indigenous existences into its own constitutional system and body politic.” For the purpose of this thesis, the term Indigenous will be used except when quoting or paraphrasing an author.

In this thesis I do not speak *for* or *on behalf* of Indigenous peoples. I will never be able to identify with the struggle, and systematic oppression, assimilation and discrimination faced by Indigenous Nations in Canada. I can however, comment on the current up-swell of discussion surrounding the need for fair and accurate representation of Indigenous peoples within Canada's history curriculum.

I can see the apparent irony in the project itself, my being a non-Indigenous researcher. To "tell the Indigenous version of the story" is to continue to essentialize Indigenous peoples, thus perpetuating settler colonialism. Further, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) remind us: "the legacy of the helping Western colonizing Other must be resisted...as agents of colonial power, Western scientists discovered, extracted, appropriated, commodified, and distributed knowledge about the Indigenous other." (p. 5). Thus, arguably, situating my voice within this scholarship does not preclude me from perpetuating colonial research. However, for me, inaction is not the answer. I proceed with caution and respect, examining my relationship to this research, Indigenous theories, and Indigenous methodologies and indicating when and where I have reified concepts I intended to problematize.

## **1.2 Where I Stand**

I was educated in the mainstream Ontario education system. I lived 40 minutes away from one of the biggest First Nations reserves in Ontario, the Six Nations of the Grand River, yet my knowledge of Indigenous issues and peoples both in the present and past, was limited. Racialized and discriminatory remarks towards the Six Nations were extremely common, especially during and since the Douglas Creek Estates dispute in

2006.<sup>2</sup> It was not until I attended University that my electives began to illuminate a shameful, concealed, and complicated relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers to Canada. As it turns out, “settlement” did not occur as portrayed in my history books.

My initial reaction to this fabrication was anger. I felt I had been lied to, and that I did not know the “truth” about the history of *my own* country, whatever that meant. I felt complicit in the myths and the lies, and I began to investigate. I discovered an overwhelming lack of knowledge and an inaccurate portrayal of the relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers in Canadian history. This led me to investigate the mainstream education system and ultimately inspired this project.

This thesis is but one component of the critical analysis that must be conducted on the Canadian history curriculum. While this project illuminates the colonial silencing and erasure of Indigenous voices, indeed I must also acknowledge the “other” underrepresented voices that shaped the nation we now call Canada; such as that of women, black Canadians, Japanese Canadians and Chinese Canadians. I would also be remiss if I did not point out that a similar analysis such as this, conducted by another individual, could, and likely would yield slightly different results. This reflects the position from which I speak, the limitations of a Master’s thesis, but also leaves space for future research.

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<sup>2</sup> In 2006, Indigenous members from the Six Nations of the Grand River clashed with Ontario Provincial Police over the proposed Douglas Creek Estates (DCE) – a housing development. As stated by Aboriginal Affairs (AANDC, 2009), the Six Nations Chief at the time, expressed concern regarding moving forward with the development, as it was on disputed land. Individuals from the Six Nations and Mohawk Warriors began to occupy the DCE construction site in February of 2006. Since then, various members of the Six Nations and residents of neighbouring Caledonia have been engaged in a series of confrontations, including: multiple blockades, standoffs, discriminatory and racist hate speech, marches and rallies. For the most part, as Christopher Moore (2010) explains, the “journalists” covering this story, such as Christie Blatchford, write about the DCE dispute as a horror story for the innocent non-Indigenous folks living in Caledonia, while Indigenous voices are all but erased.

It is important to state that this is not *just* an Indigenous issue; this is an issue that affects all Canadians. Inaction is intolerable, and indifference inexcusable. “Canada” cannot claim to be a “nation” that cares about peacekeeping, human rights, and “multiple-cultures” when across the country suffer Indigenous Canadians on reserves with some of the most deplorable conditions, with improper sewer systems, no access to clean water, and an ever mounting housing crisis. Clearly something is amiss. The purpose of this project is not to identify people as good or bad; this dichotomy is unproductive, but to reveal the silences, omissions, and distortions that exist in the curriculum due to a colonial mentality that persists today.



## 2. Colonialism and Education

In this chapter I focus on four topics that serve as the foundation for my subsequent analysis. I begin discussing colonization and nationhood, introducing the history of colonization in Canada and the specificities of racialization or “the creation of race” in North America. This is followed by a brief discussion theorising the notion of nations. Second are some reflections on colonialism and racism, examining the presence of racism in Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and then considering colonialism and racism separately. Third is a discussion on the use of multiculturalism as a tool to address racism and cultural inequality in Canada, highlighting scholars who argue that multiculturalism is inadequate to address nuanced forms of white supremacy. Finally, in the last section I consider the argument that although the education system reinforces normative definitions of race, class, gender and (hetero)sexuality, it is also a possible site for decolonization.

### 2.1 Colonization and Nationhood

#### 2.1.1 A Brief History of Colonization

Colonization of the Americas spanned several centuries. While the relationship between early European “explorers” and Indigenous peoples of (what is now referred to as) Canada<sup>3</sup> was initially cordial<sup>4</sup>, it became clear to some settlers that Indigenous peoples posed a significant obstacle when it came to acquiring the land and extracting its

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<sup>3</sup> Helin (2008) argues that Indigenous peoples do not always agree upon current geo-political names and the act of belonging to a particular area, such as British Columbia or Canada. However, following the tradition of Helin, for the purpose of my research they will be referred to as their current geo-political names, rather than stating “what is *now* called British Columbia” (p. 18).

<sup>4</sup> It is argued that the first years of contact were peaceful. Indeed, European Settlers would not have survived the harsh seasons had it not been for the generosity of the Indigenous peoples. However, this relationship did not last, as is explained below.

resources. Indigenous peoples did not “own” the land, in the European sense of the word; rather, the land was embedded in their relations (LaDuke, 1999). McNally (2006) argues that with Britain leading the way, in order to conquer and “settle” the land, a justification was needed for the genocide, ecocide, rape, and assimilation. He states: “the imperialist powers of the age [between 1880 and 1914] had an ideology ready-made for the justification of colonial conquest and plunder: racism” (p. 164).

McNally (2006) explains that prior to the late eighteenth century, heathens “could be raised to the level of European-Christian civilization” if they accepted Christianity (p. 157). The Christian doctrine held that the enslavement and terrorization of “barbarians” was acceptable as long as it was done in order to civilize. However, a different doctrine of inferiority was needed, one whereby minorities remained inferior. The doctrine of racial inferiority offered a new justification for oppression; “the ideology of racism was systematically created in order to provide ‘the means of explaining slavery to people whose terrain was a republic founded on radical doctrines of liberty and natural rights.’” (p. 161).

Whereas discrimination based on religion defined power and domination in the past, Bush (2006) describes the creation of race as a scientific classification to justify white superiority and legitimize so-called Western<sup>5</sup> imperialism. Indeed, science played a major role in the establishment of racial inferiority. Bush argues, “racism was a product of the Enlightenment, applying the principle of biological unfitness, previously applied to women and the insane, to racialized groups” (p. 29). It was not long before anatomical

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<sup>5</sup> In her article on *Western Epistemic Dominance and Colonial Structures*, Kerr (2014) provides a helpful definition for working with the term “Western”: “The term *Western* in relation to knowledge exceeds the geographic use of the term, and is meant to refer to knowledge practices that emerged from peoples and historical events in Western Europe, and through colonial practices have become instituted not just in the geographic *West* but also in places across the globe influenced by multiple forms of colonialism” (p. 84).

differences in “racial minorities” was linked to “fundamental differences in moral character” (McNally, p. 162). Lund and Carr (2010) argue that such “scientifically validated narratives” reinforced racist hegemonies. In this way, discrimination based on religion was seen as a set of beliefs, not an inherent trait, such as race; therefore, hypothetically, religious minorities could change their status, but racial minorities could not.

The example of the ethno-racialization of the Irish illustrates how race and racism have been socially constructed and also challenges the association between racialization and skin colour or physical appearance. Indeed McNally argues that “European capitalism invaded Ireland, the Americas, Asia and Africa, exhibiting a barbarity and cruelty that is almost incomprehensible.”(p. 137). McNally quotes the 1880 *Times of London* which wrote, “allow no occasion to escape them of treating the Irish as an inferior race – as a kind of white negroes” (p. 146). McNally argues this passage is significant for two reasons: “first, for what it tells us about the racial oppression of the Irish and, second, for the light it sheds on the social construction of race and racism” (p. 146).<sup>6</sup>

The racialization of Indigenous peoples in North America convincingly postulated their status as backwards, uncivilized, and savage-like, thus setting the stage for their exploitation and oppression. While Indigenous peoples were initially seen as “whites at a lower stage of social evolution” their characterization as “redskins” became increasingly popular (McNally, 2006, p.162). Colonialism “had little to do with religion or culture, and everything to do with systems of exploitation” (p. 144). Indeed Indigenous peoples of

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<sup>6</sup> Indeed the constructed concepts of race and racialization are arguably not merely about “the colour of one’s skin” or white supremacy. Various historical atrocities call into question this oversimplification and contribute to the debate on whether or not such massacres were based on racializations. Some examples include the racialization of the Irish, as briefly touched on above; the Rwandan genocide between the Hutu and the Tutsi; and the anti-Semitism experienced by Jewish peoples.

North America were racialized in order to secure domination, arguing that savages were not capable of becoming Christians.

The idea that racial oppression came to fruition to satisfy systems of power is often met with scepticism. McNally notes that this sentiment is common, as prejudice towards various groups and societies has existed throughout history (p. 156). Historically however, this discrimination, referred to as heterophobia, did not involve colour or biology. McNally argues that “the idea that there are physically distinct races of humans with radically different characteristics and attributes” was new to the modern world (p. 156).

The rhetoric of racial inferiority served as the basis for the mass genocide, rape, pillage, assimilation and (attempted) conquering of a land.<sup>7</sup> The taking of land and erasure of Indigenous histories and cultures are not *effects* of colonization, rather the removal of Indigenous peoples physically and ideologically is *inherent* in colonization. Smith (2010) argues that colonialism has always been about the justification of land seizure: “‘America’ itself can exist only through the disappearance of Indigenous peoples” (p. 5).

It is this continued attempt at erasure that reifies the settler colonial project. We need only to look to the 1969 Government of Canada White Paper<sup>8</sup> or even Bill-S8, the

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<sup>7</sup> While the word “conquer” has several meanings, such as to take control of a people or place, it can also insinuate a “win”. A win would suggest that Indigenous peoples “lost”. Alfred and Corntassel (2005) discuss how being Indigenous has come to be synonymous with being conquered. Ted Gurr is so bold as to exclaim “being conquered and being dominated by another group are preconditions for being considered Indigenous”. This is obviously quite problematic, but beyond the scope of this paper. As Indigenous Nations, cultures, traditions, languages and peoples continue to thrive, I use this term with caution.

<sup>8</sup> The 1969 White Paper, officially titled “Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy” was proposed by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and then Minister of Indian Affairs, Jean Chretien (Battiste, 2013, p. 60). Touted as a document which would create equality among all Canadians and “remove all legislative and constitutional bases of what he referred to as forms of

Proposed Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act<sup>9</sup> to see that Indigenous identities are constantly in danger of erasure in the name of “progressing a nation.” Henderson and Wakeham (2009) quote the Deputy Superintendent General of the Department of Indian Affairs Duncan Campbell Scott addressing the House of Commons committee in 1920: “the object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department” (p. 8).

### **2.1.2 Nationhood and Nationalism: ‘In the Way of Development’, ‘If You’re Not With Us, You’re Against Us’**

What is now referred to as the nation-state of Canada, was at first simply “a colony” of France and then Britain; however it became increasingly important for Canada to develop and expand. Discussing “the civilizing mission and justificatory ideologies” of empires over time, Bush (2006) notes how dominant groups justified colonialism by appealing to the concept of wasted land, which was unexploited by a ‘backward’ culture (p. 23). Blaser, Feit and McRea (2004) argue that Indigenous peoples’ *lack* of development, has long been viewed as backward. They contrast Indigenous “life projects” with non-Indigenous “development projects,” arguing that when it comes to “nation building” Indigenous peoples have always been seen as “in the way of development.”

Indeed Indigenous peoples are *still* framed as being in the way of development. In 2007, and illustrating a complete disregard for Inuit peoples living in the North, Prime

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‘discrimination’”, the White Paper in fact was an attempt to eliminate “Indian” as a distinct legal status (p. 61).

<sup>9</sup> *Bill S-8, Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act*, was introduced into the Senate of Canada in February 2012. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) argued the Bill did “not recognize the inherent jurisdiction of First Nations over their lands and resources.” (AFN, 2012). Further, AFN (2012) argued Bill S-8 contained a derogation clause, which detracts from “existing Aboriginal and treaty rights guaranteed to the Aboriginal peoples of Canada under section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982* (AFN, 2012).

Minister Stephen Harper expressed a similar justification of wasted land in reference to the Canadian Arctic:

Canada has a choice when it comes to defending our sovereignty in the Arctic; either *we use it or we lose it*. And make no mistake, this government intends to use it. Because Canada's Arctic is central to our identity as a northern nation. It is part of our history and it represents tremendous potential of our future (CBC, 2013) (emphasis added).

But what does it mean to be a Nation? What is Nationhood and Nationalism? Do imaginary borders define a nation? Benedict Anderson (2006) questions the notion of a nation, stating, "it is an imagined political community... because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each, lives the image of their communion" (p. 6). Thus, while a nation is fundamentally imagined, to its citizens, it appears real.

Ultimately, Anderson (2006) sets out to disrupt the dominant narrative of a nation. Instead of taking for granted that we belong to nation states, he questions the emergence of the nation and views nationalism as a cultural artefact. Discussing everyday representations of the state, such as the national flag, or national anthem, Billig (1997) characterizes these as instances of "banal nationalism". He implies there is a hidden political agenda behind forms of banal nationalism; even the most innocent of symbols have the potential to promote powerful nationalist sentiment.

Francis (2011) borrows Billig's notion of banal nationalism to examine iconic Canadian images that fashioned the Canadian imaginary –such as the beaver, the Canadian Pacific Railway, Banff National Park Rangers, and the stoic Indian. She illustrates how "Canadian emblems have articulated elements of an ideological struggle

between European settlers and those who were marginalized from the nation-building project” (p. 12). She notes that perhaps the most ghastly spectre of banal nationalism manifests itself in the colonial settler impact on Indigenous peoples.<sup>10</sup> Whereas the Canadian identity is committed to endorsing a nation built on the tenets of democracy, Francis (2011) points out the contradiction of “devastating forms of legal exclusion, forced assimilation, and mass death for *others*” (p. 9).

One of the most iconic symbols of progress for the building of Canada as a nation-state is the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Yet Francis points out that “from a Foucauldian perspective, the railway symbolizes the decentred strategies of imperial rule and is an emblem of what Cole Harris calls “the capillaries of colonial appropriation”” (62). The CPR’s role in securing land in the West is heralded as a victory for Canada; however, in CPR settlement literature, the people who suffered the most are mentioned the least. Francis (2011) notes the virtual absence of Indigenous people’s struggle, the loss of game, livestock, land and of course “a swarming influx of settlers, resulting in the irrevocable marginalization of Indigenous peoples to the confines of the reserves” (p. 66).

In a way, colonization has always been about the building of a nation or using the fiction of a nation to build a state, and whether or not the nation is imagined is of little importance. According to Anderson (2006), the nation is viscerally materialized: citizens *believe* they belong to a nation, and it exists in a collective consciousness.

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<sup>10</sup> Francis (2011) argues that the ghostly Indian is “both acknowledged and refused in the Canadian imaginary” (p. 12).

## 2.2 Colonialism and Racism

### 2.2.1 Racism in Canada in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Many Canadians pride themselves on having attributes such as tolerance and diversity, and “in theory, no one is denied the right to full and equal participation because of their visibility” (Fleras, 2005, p. 42). Carr (2008) argues “Canada has long perceived itself to be a country in which multiculturalism, and a concomitant respect for diversity, is a unique and defining feature of its identity” (p. 4). Despite this perception, scholars argue that racism is still highly prevalent in Canada. To be sure, Carr (2008) posits that “Canada has been home to a litany of racist events, actions, policies and legislation” and “Canadians generally know [little] about racism in Canada” (p. 9).

Examining and participating in anti-racism education for over two decades, Lund and Carr (2010) observe that *whiteness* is often taken for granted. While the study of race commonly only points the magnifying glass at those who are racialized, they argue that with whiteness comes a responsibility to understand its complexities and how it affects others (p. 229).<sup>11</sup> They refer to this practice as exposing privilege, whereby those who benefit from white privilege are asked to see themselves as racialized and to confront how this translates into privilege (p. 231). Contesting the category of whiteness, Lund and Carr endeavoured to explore racism in Canada by deconstructing race, racialized identities, and whiteness.

Lund and Carr explain that before their edited collection on whiteness was even published, a vociferous backlash ensued. One newspaper editor stated: “spot-the-

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<sup>11</sup> Lund and Carr (2010) acknowledge the oversimplified characterization of “White”, noting various examples of oppression concerning “white people”. For further reading on exposing white privilege, see: Lund, D. E. & Carr, P. R. (2010). Exposing Privilege and Racism in The Great White North: Tackling Whiteness and Identity Issues in Canadian Education. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 12(4), 229-234.



oppressor is a tricky game to play these days. Identity politics can get ugly. Anyone who wants to throw ‘whiteness’ in the mix needs to proceed with caution” (p. 231). Another critique came from the *Globe and Mail*; the article was titled: “White people need to face role in racism, academics say”. Within twenty-four hours over 160 comments were posted to the online forum, most of which Lund and Carr assert were racist and xenophobic. Here is a sampling of comments:

Hardly a day goes by that the *Globe* doesn’t print some article about how the white race should feel guilty about something! It’s getting pretty sickening.

More white guilt nonsense. I can't change the colour of my skin any more than anyone else can, And I’m not going to feel guilty about it. Nor am I going to feel guilty about this country’s distinctly WESTERN heritage.

In Canada every race blames their problems on the white racists...if any race is being discriminated against in Canada it is the white race. (p. 231)

The backlash that Lund and Carr received from their work points to a discomfort with confronting issues of race. As Carr (2008) explains, goodness and racism are often viewed as polar opposites of a dichotomy. The comments received by the researchers reflected racist and xenophobic viewpoints, but interestingly, many other responses expressed not wanting to be blamed nor to have feelings of guilt.<sup>12</sup> As Lund and Carr (2010) posit, some Canadians like to think that they can be colour-blind. Thus, they argue

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<sup>12</sup> This sentiment of avoiding feelings of blame or guilt is very intriguing, but is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. For further reading see: Young, I. M. (2003). From Guilt to Solidarity: Sweatshops and Political Responsibility. *Dissent*, (Spring 2003), 39-44.

that much of the scholarly research on anti-racism and multiculturalism is met with denial and resistance (p. 229).

It is important to acknowledge that in discussing race, racism, and racialization this thesis does not intend to reify a scientific or biological interpretation of race. Rather, I see race and racism as socially constructed forms of discrimination and as Carr (2008) posits, I wish to “elucidate the problematic of racism in society” (p. 6). Second, it is crucial to examine literature pertaining to racism (not just colonialism), as various scholars point out the education system commonly frames discrimination faced by Indigenous peoples under the umbrella of racism. Additionally, one cannot bring up systems of power without addressing the various *forms* of power that exist. While colonialism and racism are central to this thesis, it is important to acknowledge that gendered notions of power cannot be separated from systems of power at large. This will be taken up in greater detail throughout this thesis.

### **2.2.2 Systems of Power: Intersections of Racism and Colonialism**

What is the relationship between racism and colonialism? Is colonialism a *form* of racism, or does colonialism occupy a different system of power altogether? As previously discussed, race and racism are social constructions that were based on biological difference and inferiority in order to achieve and legitimate power. Colonialism, as defined by Alfred and Corntassel (2005), is “a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome of perspective on that power.” (p. 601). How then, can we begin to discuss the similarities and differences between the two, and why is this distinction imperative?

Apple and Gillborn (2008) argue “one cannot adequately understand this society, its history, or how it functions today without placing the dynamics of racial exploitation and domination and their accompanying logics and power relations at the heart of one’s analysis.” (p. 652). Colonialism, Smith (2010) states, is but one “pillar” under the umbrella of white supremacy; racism and orientalism comprise the second and third pillars.<sup>13</sup> She argues that “the consequence of not developing a critical apparatus for intersecting all the logics of white supremacy, including settler colonialism, is that it prevents us from imagining an alternative to the racial state” (p. 6). Placing the struggles and discrimination faced by all “racialized minorities”, immigrants, and Indigenous peoples under the umbrella of racism essentializes the uniqueness of each group, whilst simultaneously simplifying the logic of white privilege.

Various scholars have sought to transcend the black-white divide, only to further problematize the politics of multicultural representation.<sup>14</sup> Smith (2010) examines this attempt to confront the cleavage between racism and colonialism, noting various outcomes: scholars refusing engagement with Critical Race Theory or Ethnic Studies, and scholars stating Indigenous concerns have primacy over other “racial minorities”. Intersectional theorists such as Andersen and Collins (2004), and Symington (2004) would argue that multiple forms of discrimination do not “add up” nor do certain types takes primacy over others. For example, a black woman’s gender and race does not mean she is oppressed twice as much as a black man. Rather, from an intersectional perspective

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<sup>13</sup> Orientalism is a term coined by Edward Said (1978), whereby he exposes the Western world’s exoticized and romanticized perception of Asia and the Middle East. Constructed as a negative inversion of the West, “the Orient” justified colonial and imperial power. For further reading on orientalism, see: Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. New York, Toronto: Random House.

<sup>14</sup> Multiculturalism will be discussed further in the next section of this chapter

we must understand how being black and being a woman intersect and mutually inform one another.<sup>15</sup>

Indigenous scholars such as Coulthard (2007) however, caution against the recognition of colonialism turning into a politics of recognition. Coulthard (2007) argues that in striving for the acknowledgment of “Indigenous issues”, we enter an era of a “politics of recognition”. Instead of achieving reciprocity, “the contemporary politics of recognition promises to reproduce the very configurations of colonial power that Indigenous demands for recognition have historically sought to transcend” (p. 437). Coulthard quotes the Hegelian tradition whereby the master/slave narrative suggests that “the realization of oneself as an essential, self-determining agent requires that one not only be recognized as self-determining, but that one be recognized by another self-consciousness that is also recognized as self-determining” (p. 440). In this way, it is colonized versus colonizer and the colonized exists and is self-determining if and when the colonizer recognizes them as such.

How then, can we examine racism and colonialism as separate and distinct pillars of white supremacy, while avoiding a politics of recognition? What is important to recognize about the difference between the struggle of Indigenous peoples and the struggle of racialized minorities is Indigenous people’s relationship to the land. Richardson (2012) reminds us, “we must not obscure the complexity of the legal and political difference of Native Americans” (p. 478). When we do not acknowledge the historical significance of Indigenous peoples to this land we reify the colonial project.

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<sup>15</sup> For further reading on intersectionality see: Andersen, M. L. & Hill Collins, P. (2004). *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Henderson and Wakeham (2009) suggest acknowledging diverse ontologies. Avoiding “the question of culture is to avoid questions concerning the ways in which we see the world.” (p. 15). hooks (1990) explains that we must not be preoccupied with the recognition of ‘the Other’, instead we should be recognizing ourselves and [then seeking to] make contact with all who would engage us in a constructive manner” (p. 22). This thinking is aligned with decolonial scholars such as Linda Smith (1999), Andrea Smith (2010), Maldonado-Torres (2007) Kovach (2009) and Lawrence and Dua (2005).

Decolonial theory asks us to reconceptualize our thinking and reposition the periphery to the centre. Colonialism and decolonial shifts of thinking will be discussed further in the next chapter. First I want to explore how the education system has sought to address issues of race and racism in the curriculum, with the integration of multiculturalism and multicultural studies.

### **2.3 Discourses of Multiculturalism**

*“It was not by coincidence that at the time of a substantial increase in the racialized population that the multicultural policy was introduced” (Simpson, James and Mack, 2011, p. 301).*

Multiculturalism and multicultural studies came to fruition in Canada in the seventies. Originally a political strategy introduced by the Trudeau Government, multiculturalism was intended to reduce the nation-claims of both Quebecois and First Nations to the status of ethnic groups. Prior to the induction of multiculturalism however, the Canadian government officially declared Canada a bilingual and bicultural nation. Commonly known as the Bi and Bi Commission, this new national identity was constructed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

Jenson (1993) explains that the Bi and Bi Commission was established in response to mounting pressure by French speaking Canadians. Canadians with French backgrounds argued that Canada had *two* founding nations. They were also tired of “Canadian” being synonymous with speaking English and British cultural norms. French speaking Canadians were in numerous provinces across Canada, but because a larger population settled in Quebec, Quebec Nationalists and Quebec Separatists soon emerged. For French speaking Canadians, having the autonomy to be an “us” rather than an “other” was of high importance (p. 338).

Drawing on Anderson’s (2006) “imagined communities”, Jenson (1993) explains that “the naming of one’s choosing is a crucial component of social movement politics” (p. 339). In the 1970s and 80s Nationalist and neo-nationalist movements by Quebecois and Indigenous Nations in Canada became increasingly common. Thus, once again, in response to mounting pressures by various “ethnic” and “othered” cultures and in an effort to avoid nation claims, the Canadian government officially implemented a policy of multiculturalism. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act passed in 1988, although multicultural policies and ideologies emerged all throughout the 1970s and 80s.

Kymlicka (2003) states that Canada, the only Western country to do so, enshrined multiculturalism in statutory legislation and in section 27 of the Constitution. He goes on to say “while the actual practices of accommodation in Canada are not unique, Canada is unusual in the extent to which it has built these practices into its symbols and narratives of nationhood” (p. 375). Multiculturalism, as defined by the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, recognizes

The importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canada...the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as

a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed...to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada. (Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988).

Within the Canadian education system, classes focus on multiculturalism, peacekeeping and respect for other cultures (Battiste, 2002). Indeed, St. Denis (2011) argues that “public schools are defended as neutral multicultural spaces where all participants are equally positioned, irrespective of racism and colonialism” (p. 313). Thus, theoretically, the celebration of multiple, diverse cultures is a step in the right direction.

The term multiculturalism however, can be used in two different ways. One way is to literally describe the plural or multiple cultures, religions, and ethnicities that together comprise Canada. The second, Bickmore (2006) argues, implies something quite different; multiculturalism means the emphasis of harmony, the marginalization of conflict and critical viewpoints, and the presentation of injustices as past or virtually resolved. Numerous scholars highlight the shortcomings of multiculturalism as a discourse inadequate to unpack the complexities of colonialism and racism. Simpson, James and Mack (2011) argue that discourses of multiculturalism are highly problematic and systematically deny, reject and minimize “the need for an anti-colonial approach” (p. 287). Multiculturalism replaces an analysis of white supremacy with a politics of multicultural representation and fails to “address the nuances of how white supremacy is structured, such as through distinct logics of [racism and colonialism]” (Smith, 2010, p. 6).

St. Denis (2011) also examines multiculturalism as a problematic discourse, noting that it “helps to erase, diminish, trivialize, and deflect from acknowledging Aboriginal sovereignty and the need to redress Aboriginal rights...it is dependent upon the deep structures of colonial discourse” (309). St. Denis was invited to join a provincial discussion about the high school social science curriculum contemplating combining social studies, history, and native studies. Aware that this “could easily result in the erasure of native studies” (p. 306), St. Denis suggested native studies should be a starting point and foundation for students’ studies. St. Denis was confronted with a recurring sentiment: “Aboriginal people are not the only people here” (p. 306).

The response incurred by St. Denis very accurately illustrates the ramifications of multicultural studies. There is comfort in keeping all ethnic/racial minorities under one neat umbrella. There is discomfort, however, with confronting and unpacking the complex details that emerge with each specific and distinct “othered” group in Canada. This speaks to the massive diversity in Canada and its complex and nuanced colonial past.

A large part of the difficulty with multiculturalism is the reduction of injustice, inequality and the practice of power to “cultural difference”. As Bannerji (2000) notes, “we demanded some genuine reforms, some changes – some among us even demanded the end of racist capitalism – and instead we got ‘multiculturalism’” (p. 89). Simpson, James and Mack (2011) add that while multiculturalism “tolerates”, “accommodates”, “appreciates”, and “celebrates” difference, “it allows for the preservation of the cultural hegemony of the dominant cultural group...[and fails] to deal with the problems of systematic racism in Canada” (p. 289).



## 2.4 Canadian Education System: Problem and Solution?

### 2.4.1 Problem

As previously discussed, the education system has been identified as a site which reinforces systems of power rooted in colonialism and racialization. Chambers (2003) argues that the Canadian curriculum is an inherently political text which “reinforces normative definitions of gender and (hetero)sexuality as well as racial categories, stereotypes, and distinctions, and perpetuates racial/class distinctions in the society at large” (p. 223). Difficulties with multicultural discourses have now been addressed, but what happens when the education system attempts to address a lack of “Indigenous content”? Is it possible to “integrate Indigenous content” without reifying problematic stereotypes and conceptualizations? Several scholars such as Pohl (2002), Kanu (2011) and Harrison and Greenfield (2011) discuss the difficulties that arise when educators attempt to “incorporate” Indigenous content into the curriculum. Not only do many perpetuate what decolonial theorists are in fact fighting to dismantle, but they are also met with much hesitancy and a lack of overall knowledge.

Pohl (2002) explains that there is a lack of scholarship available on the topic of addressing issues about First Peoples, which is a possible reason why teachers often have difficulty incorporating it into lesson plans<sup>16</sup>. She states that when some instructors have the option to include an Aboriginal studies unit, more often than not, the unit is skipped over altogether. The issue is largely attributed to teachers’ discomfort or ineptitude towards the topic, as many teachers “panic at the thought of mangling some sensitive issue about First Peoples” (p. 241).

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<sup>16</sup> The discussion on “incorporating” “Indigenous content” into curriculum is fraught with problems and indeed reinforces the primacy of dominant institutional knowledges and perspectives. This reification of colonial thought will be briefly discussed in the following section as well as in the reflective afterword.

Harrison and Greenfield (2011) examined twelve schools in New South Wales, Australia with the intent to differentiate between the often confused concepts of *Aboriginal perspectives* and *Aboriginal knowledge*. Although their research was conducted in Australia, the outcomes of their analysis may help us think about the Canadian context. They looked at how far schools can go in “including Aboriginal perspectives in their curriculum before they unconsciously begin to perpetuate the objectified narratives and stereotypical discourses that they are trying to interrupt” (p. 68). Overall they found mixed results; some schools were doing “fine”, some were curious about what other schools were doing, and others needed explanations. Many teachers were reaching out for assistance only to find minimal resources to help them. Some teachers expressed difficulties connecting with their local community and wanted *the researchers* to provide contacts and links to Aboriginal people (2011).

Kanu (2011) notes the difficult task educators have in dispelling racist attitudes. “Textbooks and other curriculum materials may no longer carry overt racist portrayals of Aboriginal and other non-European peoples, but negative images of Aboriginal peoples are still prevalent in the minds and attitudes of the mainstream” (p. 185). Kanu worked extensively with teachers and educators who strived to integrate Indigenous content into the mainstream curriculum in a meaningful way. The range between success and failure for different educators was vast, however, substantial information emerged from the process.

The interviews revealed several issues which the teachers perceived as challenges/ impediments to the meaningful integration of Aboriginal perspectives in their schools and classrooms. These issues can be described as: teachers’ own lack of knowledge about Aboriginal culture / issues and an accompanying lack of confidence to integrate

Aboriginal perspectives; the exclusion of teachers from discussions pertaining to integration; the lack of classroom ready Aboriginal resources; the racist attitudes of some non-Aboriginal staff and students; school administrators' lukewarm support for integration; and incompatibility between school structures and some cultural values of Aboriginal peoples (Kanu, 2011, p. 176).

According to St. Denis (2011) "what happens to Aboriginal teachers in Canadian public schools as they attempt to include Aboriginal content and perspectives is a microcosm of what happens at the political and national levels in regard to Aboriginal peoples' claims to land and sovereignty in Canada" (pp. 306-307). So where can we go from here? Is there optimism for decolonizing the mainstream education system and making relations of ruling visible in the history curriculum?

#### **2.4.2 Solutions**

Alfred and Corntassel (2005) argue that decolonial shifts in thinking and action are not found in institutional processes; "institutional approaches to making meaningful change in the lives of Indigenous people have not led to what we understand as decolonization and regeneration; rather they have further embedded Indigenous people in the colonial institutions they set out to challenge" (pp. 611-612). The idea of "incorporating Indigenous ideas" arguably reaffirms the prominence of colonial thought and the subordination of Indigenous knowledges and perspectives. Further, Chambers (2003) posits that education and curriculum are "explicit tools of colonialism, essential elements in European imperialism, through which Western notions of race, language, and nation were constructed, exported, and continue to be reproduced in classrooms throughout the world" (p. 240). However, according to Chambers, what was constructed can be deconstructed.

Integrating Aboriginal perspectives into the mainstream curriculum is no easy feat, as expressed by both Pohl (2002) and Kanu (2011); however, they are adamant that it is key to curbing the racism and discrimination towards Indigenous peoples that is highly prevalent in mainstream Canadian society. While numerous scholars posit that *change* within the education system is a necessity, not all critiques can be operationalized.

Neegan (2005) provides several helpful recommendations to consider:

- Curricular planning must always take into consideration existing power relations and the multiple centres of power involved in the process of decision-making and implementation.
- Government, schools and institutions of higher learning must be committed to meeting the rights of Aboriginal peoples.
- Full support should be offered, through curriculum reform, to addressing the specific needs of Indigenous peoples including the introduction of Aboriginal languages.
- Schools need to collaborate and consult with Elders and the community so that Aboriginal worldviews and epistemology can be integrated in the producing and the transmitting of knowledge.
- Aboriginal worldviews and ways of learning should be fostered both in classroom and the community based learning.
- Courses on Aboriginal peoples as well as other marginalized groups should be incorporated into the core curriculum rather than serving as an add-on.
- Everyone should be viewed as a learner/teacher, ie. both student and teacher. (p. 13)

Pohl (2002) and Kanu (2011) highlight the importance of Indigenous history, not to rehash the gruesome details of the past but rather to understand the past, and the past in the present. Numerous scholars, including, Smith (1999), Kanu (2011), Kovach (2009), Helin (2008), Dion (2009), and Pohl (2002) argue that the way Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues are currently viewed is directly based on a particular understanding of

historical events. In an address for the launch of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, Georges Erasmus stated, “The roots of injustice lie in history and it is there where the key to regeneration of Aboriginal society and a new and better relationship with the rest of Canada can be found” (quoted in Dion, 2009, p.3).

Indeed all citizens of what we now call Canada play a role in the learning and un-learning of Indigenous histories, cultures, languages and knowledges. Battiste (2013) writes that one of the most important educational reforms is “to acknowledge that Canadian schools teach a silent curriculum of Eurocentric knowledge that is not accommodating to other ways of knowing and learning” (p. 66). Thus, it is important for research on decolonizing education to focus on larger systems of oppression and relations of ruling, not teachers or their methods.

Famous for his work in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and his adage “there is no such thing as a neutral educational process”, Freire (1970) argued for an educational system free from paternalism, power relations and oppression. He envisioned praxis, an education system which combined intellect, activism and reflection. He went on to say that the education system can only function in one of two ways: as an instrument to “integrate the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or as ‘the practice of freedom,’ the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world” (p. 16). It is a Freirean voracity for an equal and just education system that carries this work.

### 3. Decolonial Theory

#### 3.1 Introduction/Historical Progression

The conquest of the Americas began five-hundred years ago, yet the systems of power and dominant colonial epistemologies remain strong today. Despite various revolts, this process of domination continues (Quijano, 2007). Hundreds of autonomous and self-governing nations lost their freedom under colonization (Alfred, 1999). Indigenous epistemologies, ways of knowing, and world-views were pushed to the periphery. As a result, Indigenous voices are “excluded from the larger social and political discourse” (p. xviii). Simply put, these are all inherent in, and integral to the colonial project. As a theoretical perspective then, decolonial theory asks us to resist colonization, challenge hegemonic epistemologies, and bring Indigenous voices in the periphery to the centre.

It is important to understand where decolonial theory stems from, in order to situate it as an appropriate theoretical framework for this research. Having said this, the historical progression of decolonial theory could be a paper in itself and could easily reach beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, this section will briefly consider how decolonial theory came to fruition and why the *decolonial option* is best for this thesis.<sup>17</sup>

There are three points of departure I would like to discuss when it comes to the roots of decolonial theory; each will be discussed, in turn. First, Mignolo (2011) posits that decolonial thinking materialized throughout the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, when a colonial matrix of power was set up. Second, decolonial theory is said to draw from

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<sup>17</sup> For a more comprehensive look at anti-oppressive and critical perspectives see: Moosa-Mitha, M. (2005). Situating Anti-Oppressive Theories within Critical and Difference-Centred Perspectives. In L. Brown & S. Strega (2005) (Eds.), *Research as Resistance: critical, indigenous, & anti-oppressive approaches* (37-72). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

anticolonial, postcolonial, and critical and anti-oppressive theories. Third, the tradition of decolonial thought goes back to most notably, Frantz Fanon.

### **3.1.1 Decolonial Thinking in the Sixteenth Century**

Quijano (2007) explains that Eurocentered colonial power<sup>18</sup> began with the domination of the Americas, moving then to Asia and Africa. This formal system of political domination was succeeded by Western Imperialism. Quijano explains that Eurocentered colonialism refers to the political, social and cultural domination of conquered continents, which was established by Western European societies. Western Imperialism then, is an extension of this political and economic domination, to the Western world.

Quijano (2000) and Mignolo (2011) argue that from the moment colonization materialized, so too did *decolonial thought*. According to Quijano (2000) a reorganization of Indigenous peoples occurred in the middle of the sixteenth century, after the vast plagues, violence, conquest, and genocide of Indigenous peoples. While this reorganization did not necessarily advance the status of the Indigenous peoples under the colonial matrix of power, it did enable their resistance to colonial domination (p. 540).

Quijano explains that in the process of asserting Western or European hegemony, colonizers needed to accomplish several objectives to assert dominance. First they needed to “expropriate the cultural discoveries of the colonized peoples”; second, they needed to repress “as much as possible the colonized form of knowledge production, the models of the production of meaning, their symbolic universe, the model of expression and of objectification and subjectivity”; and third, the colonized were forced to learn the dominant culture “in any way that would be useful to the reproduction of domination” (p.

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<sup>18</sup> Quijano (2007) uses Eurocentered colonialism “in the sense of a formal system of political domination by Western European societies over others” (p. 168).

541). The sheer fact that Indigenous Nations' cultures, knowledges, traditions, symbols, and languages continue to flourish despite every attempt at erasure, illustrates the initial and ongoing existence of the resistance rooted within decolonial thought.

Indeed Mignolo (2011) posits that “decolonial thinking materialized at the very moment in which the colonial matrix of power was being put in place, in the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries” (p. xxiv). The beginnings of decolonial thinking however, differ vastly from the *decolonial theory* that emerged centuries later; not in Canada and the United States within the Civil Rights movement “but in the Third World burgeoning with histories, sensibilities and still open wounds of global coloniality” (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2009, p. 142).

### **3.1.2 Anticolonial, Postcolonial, and Critical/Anti-Oppressive Theories**

The precise starting point for decolonial *theory* is difficult to pinpoint, but it is said to have underpinnings from the anticolonial project, postcolonial studies, and critical and anti-oppressive theories. Maori scholar Graham Smith (1997) observes that the capacity for a decolonial approach to analyse power imbalances is built upon critical theory. From the anticolonial project, decolonial theory borrows considerations from the domains of being and knowing. From postcolonial studies it “draws from the complex account of cultural discontinuity and imposition” (De Lissovoy, 2010, p. 280). Decolonial theory is a vast field that draws on numerous disciplines including philosophy, literature, sociology, science studies and ethnic and gender studies (p. 280). Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009) are careful to point out however, that decolonial theory is trans-disciplinary, not inter-disciplinary. By this they mean that decolonial theory goes *beyond* existing disciplines and *rejects* the normative politics within said disciplines.



As Moosa- Mitha (2005) points out in her review of various critical and anti-oppressive theories, there are positive and negative aspects to all theories. Marxist theory for example, has been criticized by some feminists for not taking gendered differences into consideration; similarly, some Indigenous scholars argue that Marx's analysis is entirely Eurocentric (p. 48). The purpose of Moosa-Mitha's exercise was to clarify the assumptions of anti-oppressive theories by examining their ontological and epistemological assumptions from two orientations: critical/mainstream and difference-centred/normative.<sup>19</sup> While alluding to the fact that no theory is without limitations, the characterization is helpful in situating decolonial theory within other critical/anti-oppressive theories.<sup>20</sup>

Drawing on Fanon and Horkheimer's critical theories, Mignolo (2011) discusses *body* and *mind* in relation to decolonial theory. He states that Horkheimer argued it is impossible to detach the knowing subject from the known object. Mignolo argues however, that Horkheimer "still assumed that the knower is a disembodied subject beyond location" (xxiv). Additionally, the problem with Horkheimer's analysis is he is working with a modern subject that is de-racialized, de-sexualized, and gender-neutral (xxiv). Horkheimer fails to acknowledge that his modern subject does not necessarily dwell in Europe, but could instead live in Singapore, La Paz, or Tehran (xxiv). Mignolo explains that questions must be explored from the body, and that *place* matters. "The questions that Fanon's Black body asks are not prompted because the body is Black, but

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<sup>19</sup> By 'mainstream' Moosa-Mitha (2005) means theories that view knowledge in positivist terms or use universalist language to characterize their ontological visions. 'Critical' refers to theories that view knowledge in social constructivist terms. 'Difference-centred' refers to "theories that situate their ontological visions in the particular and in ways that are rooted in the specificities of experiences that are differential on the basis of difference (p. 68).

<sup>20</sup> The limitations of decolonial theory is discussed at the end of this chapter.

because Black bodies have been denied or questioned Humanity in the imperial rhetoric of modernity” (xxiv). Fanon contributed much to the decolonial project and will be the subject of discussion in the following section.

### **3.1.3 Frantz Fanon and the Decolonial Turn**

According to Roberts (2010) Frantz Fanon ushered in *the* decolonial turn in critical theory. However, according to Grosfoguel (2007), Maldonado-Torres ushered in the *notion* of the decolonial turn. Thus it seems Maldonado-Torres gave a name to Fanon’s emerging politics. What then, does the decolonial turn refer to? According to Maldonado-Torres (2007) the decolonial turn refers to “a shift in knowledge production...it introduces questions about the effects of colonization in modern subjectivities and modern forms of life as well as contributions of racialized and colonized subjectivities to the production of knowledge and critical thinking” (pp. 261-262).

Fanon’s major work is centred in two widely read books. *Black Skin, White Masks* was an analysis of the colonial subjugation of Black people, while *The Wretched of the Earth* is said to be the classic on decolonization (Ciccariello-Maher, 2010). Fanon was intellectually stimulated by thinkers such as Césaire, Sarte, Lacan, and Hegel. His contribution to decolonial theory stems from his commitment to action and resistance to colonial forms of power; he is said to have brought the non-being into being (2010, unpaginated).<sup>21</sup> While some scholars have dismissed Fanon as an advocate of violence, Ciccariello-Maher (2010) argues this interpretation stems from oversimplifications and improper translations of his work.

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<sup>21</sup> In his first book *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon discusses what he believes is the fundamental barrier to inter-racial recognition, that racialized subjects exist but are not human in the eyes of the white man. Lewis Gordon deems this “the hellish zone of non-being”. Ciccariello-Maher (2010) argues that Fanon created the necessary groundwork for entry into being.

While Fanon had a major influence on the postcolonial, anticolonial, and/or decolonial movement, his work, as well as other antiracist theorists, has been criticized for excluding Indigenous difference. In particular Simpson, James and Mack (2011) note “a central point of tension between anti-racist and anti-colonial work has been the question of how critical anti-racism integrates Indigenous perspectives and takes up issues that are central to Indigenous sovereignty, including land” (p. 291).

In *Decolonizing Antiracism*, Lawrence and Dua (2005) claim that “theories of race and racism exclude Indigenous existence”. Simpson, James and Mack (2011) look at racism and colonialism using critical anti-racism, critical race theory, and intersectionality. As previously discussed in this thesis, they argue that racialized and colonial legacies are complex and indeed intertwined; their critiques are strengthened when these complexities are acknowledged and viewed within the colonial matrix of power (p. 291).

### **3.2 Decolonial Theory and Postcolonial Theory**

The lines between decolonial research/theory and postcolonial theory are often blurred. Opinion varies among scholars as to whether or not this blurring should be viewed as problematic. Kovach (2009) for example, states “Postcolonial? There is nothing post about it. It has simply shape-shifted to fit the contemporary context” (p. 76). Similarly, Smith (1999) cautions against the ‘post’ in postcolonialism, noting that some academics take it to mean that colonialism is over. Smith goes on to say:

There is compelling evidence that in fact this [the end of colonialism] has not occurred. And, even when they [colonizers] have left formally, the institutions and legacy of colonialism have remained. Decolonization, once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power. (p. 98)

Postcolonial scholar Homi Bhabha (1994) also gives consideration to the (mis)understanding of ‘post’ in postcolonialism. He calls postmodernity, postcoloniality, and postfeminism “the jargon of our times” and argues that the ‘post’ does not indicate sequentiality (p. 4). Bhabha goes on to say, “these terms that insistently gesture to the beyond, only embody its restless and revisionary energy if they transform the present into an expanded and ex-centric site of experience and empowerment” (p. 4). While the contemplation of the ‘post’ in postcolonial is of importance to this project, decolonial theorists point to other areas of consideration when it comes to differentiating between postcolonial and decolonial theory.

Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009) trace the differing genealogies of postcolonial and decolonial theories and thinking. They explain the emergence of radical theories such as women studies, Queer studies, ethnic studies and African-American studies in the 1970s. They argue that the geopolitics of knowledge and the decolonizing of imperial knowledge was the concern in the “Third World”, whereas the US was concerned with the body-politics of knowledge. Stated differently, it was *mainly* postcolonial theories that emerged in the US among scholars and academics, and decolonizing research that emerged from the “Third World”.

Grosfoguel (2007) looks at the emergence of postcolonial and subaltern studies and the debates between the two; ultimately he notes that studies make it clear that both the aforementioned need to be decolonized. The problem with the emergence of subaltern studies and postcolonial studies is that they reproduce the epistemic schema from which they wish to break free. He argues that with few exceptions, they produce studies *about* these groups rather than studies *with* these groups (p. 211). Mignolo (2011) explains that

both theories (decolonial and postcolonial theory) “drink from the same fountain, although they are grounded in a different genealogy of thought and different *existentia*. By this I mean that geo-historical and bio-graphical genealogies of thoughts are at the very inception of decolonial thinking” (p. xxiii). De Lissovoy (2010) goes on to further differentiate between decolonial and postcolonial theory, noting that in contrast to the postcolonial, the decolonial emphasizes the “ongoing process of resistance to colonialism, while also connoting a wider field of application – one which extends from material projects that challenge the hegemony of capital to philosophical projects aimed at reconstructing fundamental understanding of ethics and ontology” (p. 285).

While various scholars provide critiques of postcolonial theory and research, as evidenced above, postcolonial theory has provided many critical researchers with the tools and space to rethink homogenous cultural representations and epistemologies. Postcolonial theorist Bhabha (1994) for example, celebrates cultural hybridity or a multiplicity of cultural meanings. He states:

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement... The postcolonial perspective – as it is being developed by cultural historians and literary theorists – departs from the traditions of the sociology of underdevelopment or ‘dependency’ theory. As a mode of analysis, it attempts to revive those nationalist or ‘nativist’ pedagogies that set up the relation of Third World and First World in a binary structure of opposition. The postcolonial perspective resists the attempt at holistic forms of social explanation. It forces a recognition of the more complex cultural and political boundaries that exist on the cusp of these often opposed political spheres” (pp. 172 - 173).

It is here, the transnational as the translational, Bhabha goes on to state, where a hybridity or multiplicity of cultures is celebrated; homogenous classifications of cultural ‘others’ are resisted; multiple forms of resistance flourish; and “the postcolonial intellectual attempts to elaborate a historical and literary project” (p. 173). Alexander (2008) supports Bhabha’s construction on the ‘emergence of the postcolonial perspective’ noting that it not only calls into question the master(‘s) or colonial narrative, but also gives space and voice to the marginalized and minoritized groups.

Mignolo (2011) argues that both projects, postcolonial and decolonial theory, have come to take on the *meaning* of “decolonization”. With this in mind, how then should one proceed, when as Smith states: “Indigenous peoples have been, in many ways, oppressed by theory” (p. 38). The final section of this chapter aims to operationalize decolonial theory and substantiate the “decolonial option”.

### **3.3 The Decolonial Option**

Smith (1999) argues that methodologies, methods of research, and the theories that inform them need to be decolonized before being critically applied. She goes on to say however, that decolonization “does not mean... a total rejection of all theory or research or Western knowledge. Rather, it is about centering our concerns and world views and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (p. 39). In effect, when applied critically and centred around multiple knowledges and worldviews, Western theories can offer much to the decolonial project.

If, as Alfred and Corntassel (2005) state, colonialism “is a narrative in which the Settler’s power is the fundamental reference and assumption, inherently limiting

Indigenous freedom and imposing a view of the world that is but an outcome of perspective on that power”, then decolonization requires action and a shift in this thinking (p. 601). This shift in thinking, or a *decolonial conceptualization*, is more than an *alternative* to colonial conceptualizations. It exposes hypocrisies within dominant traditions such as political and ethical philosophy and democracy building (De Lissovoy, 2010). Additionally, decolonial theory acknowledges colonialism as an historical and contemporary process and “is concerned with confronting, challenging, and undoing...the cultural and epistemological Eurocentrism that underwrites it” (p. 280).

De Lissovoy goes on to argue that conventional assumptions and normally uninterrogated notions of colonialism are challenged by decolonial theory (p. 281). It denaturalizes or exposes epistemological norms; it problematizes normative knowledge production; and it is active in its pursuit to emancipate education from the talons of colonialism. When applied to the curriculum, decolonization “means understanding the processes of material and cultural conquest that construct some places as ‘peripheral’ and some as ‘central’, and it means decentering the apparent author of this history.” (De Lissovoy, p. 287).

Kovach (2009) argues that when using a decolonizing lens within Indigenous research frameworks, the lens can be positioned at least three different ways. The first approach she labels a *tribal methodology*, whereby tribal epistemologies guide the research. The second approach uses decolonial theory as its central epistemology. Third and finally is a combination of the first and second position, whereby a tribal-centred methodology is paired with a decolonizing lens (p. 80).

Based on Kovach's description of each position, this thesis uses the second lens: it employs decolonial theory as a central epistemology. This approach, Kovach goes on to say, is easily associated with transformative research and given its basis in critical theory, is more aligned with Western research methodologies (p. 80). For Kovach, no matter how it is positioned "a decolonizing agenda must be incorporated within contemporary explorations of Indigenous inquiry because of the persisting colonial influence on Indigenous representation and voice in research" (p. 81).

Mignolo (2011) and Tlostanova and Mignolo (2009) frame decolonial theory as the decolonial *option*. It is framed as an option as to not assume one (accurate) view point, as western thought often does. Mignolo (2011) notes that it was Arturo Escobar who shifted the language from an *alternative* to an *option*. Here, all perspectives are at the same level, one perspective is not privileged over the other (xxviii). Using modernity as his example, Mignolo explains that an *alternative* to modernity presupposes that modernity and development are the norm and nothing but alternatives exist. In contrast, viewing modernity as an *option*, places it at the same level as other perspectives. Mignolo argues that seeing decolonial theory as an option instead of an alternative is already one step toward decolonization.

The decolonial option places the *problem*, not the object or objects to be studied, at the forefront of the analysis and it is but one *option* among many pre-existing options that struggle against European colonial domination and the matrix of colonial power (Tlostanova and Mignolo, 2009). To de-colonize means to de-modernize, but to "de-modernize does not mean to go back in time, which is the typical misunderstanding" (p. 143). Instead, it is a "de-linking from...the belief that there is only one game in town" (p.



144). Mignolo (2011) argues in fact, there are multiple benefits to having theoretical options; each approach brings something new to the table and reinforces an acceptance of diversity among critical theoretical viewpoints.

Why then, opt for decolonial theory over postcolonial theory, anti-colonial theory, or other critical and anti-oppressive theories? I argue that decolonial theory provides the most appropriate theoretical framework for conducting a critical textual analysis of the Ontario curriculum. While other perspectives are critical of dominant power relations and their influence and impact on Indigenous epistemologies and ways of knowing, I appreciate three central characteristics within decolonial theory. First, I value its commitment to action. Swadener and Mutua (2008) for example, argue that activism and performativity are inherent within decolonizing theory. Part of the activism within decolonizing research means constantly interrogating the outcomes of postcolonial, anti-colonial, and critical race theories for instances of a reification of hegemonic epistemologies<sup>22</sup> (p. 33).

Second I value decolonial theory's avoidance of a static adherence to a specific set of rules or methodologies. Swadener and Mutua (2008) are sure to point out that Indigenous scholars such as Linda Smith have indeed offered lists of minimal criteria, yet there is no common definition. They contend that "decolonizing research is defined by certain themes and defining elements and concepts that arise when researchers engage in what they describe as decolonizing research versus research that studies coloniality or postcoloniality" (p. 33).

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<sup>22</sup> Indeed an active interrogation of my findings illuminates that normative and hegemonic concepts were reified in this thesis.

Third, I value decolonial theory's commitment as a critical standpoint, to the resistance of domination, which assists in clarifying how colonial and imperial power is exercised, thus achieving a cognitive advantage over "value free" approaches. Decolonial theory may not abide by strict guidelines or rules, yet it does not claim to be value free, as do various sociological analyses such as a Weberian analysis. Decolonial theory and decolonizing theorists know where they stand when it comes to colonial and imperial systems of power and domination and are not reticent when it comes to saying so. Indeed as Fuller (2004) states: "No research ever changes society in and of itself: it does so only through its effects on the actions of people. Thought must be translated into action" (p. 91).

As Moosa- Mitha (2005) alluded to in the previous section however, no theoretical framework is without its limitations. Swadener and Mutua (2008) point out that there are complexities and (im)possibilities of "a truly decolonizing endeavour" (p. 32)<sup>23</sup>. To think of a truly decolonized text, a decolonized curriculum, and the shaping of an entirely new cohort of decolonial thinkers, means a complete emancipation and indeed re-writing of the Ontario History curriculum. But do we stop there? What about other subjects? Surely they would all need to be decolonized.

This is precisely what Swadener and Mutua (2008) mean when they refer to the complexities and (im)possibilities of a truly decolonizing endeavour. Colonization manifests in multiple nuanced ways, and is not always easy to identify, nor easy to dismantle. These oppressive and limiting constructions and categories are difficult to

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<sup>23</sup> The notion that there are complexities and (im)possibilities of a truly decolonizing endeavour will be revisited at the end of this thesis.

break down, especially when they are rooted so firmly and deeply within epistemologies, histories, and national symbols.

Swadener and Mutua (2008) also argue that decolonizing research can be contradictory in nature. Questions arise, such as: “whose agenda is it to decolonize research”, “who holds the power to name how such power reifies existing power relations”, “who and how [is] ‘scholarship’ legitimized” and what are the “tensions between ‘indigenous insiders’ versus etic researchers” (p. 34). When the silencing and erasure of voices is a symptom of colonialism, and “an Indigenous perspective” is established and disseminated by non-Indigenous researchers, is there space for the voice of the well-intentioned, non-Indigenous, decolonizing researcher?

Many decolonial scholars, such as Smith (1999) and Swadener and Mutua (2008) answer affirmatively, because decolonizing research is indeed multi-faceted. In this thesis therefore, I use decolonial theory as the theoretical framework to guide my analysis. The complexities and impossibilities of a truly decolonizing endeavour will be taken up further in the reflective afterword of this thesis. Next I will outline the details of Fairclough’s systematic textual analysis.

## 4. Methodology: A Systematic Textual Analysis

### 4.1 Introduction

In 2009, the Ontario Ministry of Education produced *Aboriginal Perspectives: A Teacher's Toolkit*, “a collection of resources designed to help Ontario educators bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom.” (Ministry, 2009). Further, after being officially adopted by the Government of Canada, St. Denis (2011) argues that the mainstream education system uses multiculturalism as a catchall discourse to address racism and cultural discrimination. Thus, the education system addresses racism and discrimination in two ways: first, by committing to increase the amount of Indigenous content and second by focussing on multicultural studies.

While seemingly positive in their endeavours, both strategies fail to unpack and disentangle the complex colonial history between Canada and Indigenous peoples. I argue that multiculturalism fails to address the nuances inherent in racism and colonialism. Further, an attempt to *integrate more* “Indigenous content” is insufficient to address the racism, colonialism and ignorance surrounding Indigenous issues in Canada, and often reifies stereotypical and simplistic stories. By conducting a systematic textual analysis of the Ontario grade ten history curriculum, I will substantiate these claims.

This project is a longitudinal textual analysis of the following three textbooks and supplementary curricular documents from the Ontario Ministry of Education grade ten history program:

1. Bain, C.M., DesRivieres, D., Flaherty, P., Goodman, D.M., Schemenauer, E., & Scully, A.L. (2000). *Making History: The Story of Canada in the Twentieth Century*. Toronto: Prentice Hall.

2. DesRivieres, D., & Bain, C. M. (2006). *Experience History: Canada Since World War I*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
3. Freeman-Shaw, E., & Haskings-Winner, J. (Eds.). (2008). *Canadian Sources: Investigated 1914 to the Present*. Toronto: Edmond Montgomery Publications Limited.

All three textbooks have been approved for use in the Ontario education system, according to the Trillium List. The Trillium List is a list of textbooks that have been approved by the Minister of Education for use in Ontario schools. According to the Ministry website the Trillium List came into effect in 2002. Prior to 2002 and dating back to 1846, Ontario also had a list of authorized textbooks; this list was called Circular 14 (Ministry, 2014).<sup>24</sup>

In addition to the Grade Ten History textbooks, I examined supplementary curriculum documents made available through the Ontario Ministry of Education. These documents include but are not limited to: the curriculum guide for grades 9 and 10 Canadian and World Studies; the curriculum guide for Social Studies Grades 1-6 and History and Geography Grades 7 and 8; the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework; Building Bridges to Success for First Nation, Métis and Inuit Students; The Teacher's Toolkit for brining Aboriginal perspectives into the curriculum; and Ontario's

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<sup>24</sup> While extremely interesting and illuminating, analysing the *production* of textbooks for the Ontario education system would easily go beyond the scope of this thesis. The guidelines and requirements for approval of textbooks in Ontario could itself be a paper. However, it is important to note the capitalist and colonial relations that are a part of the production of textbooks in Ontario. Many of the publishing companies (who publish textbooks for the Canadian education system) are not Canadian, thus textbook guideline documents must explicitly state that the content must have a "Canadian Orientation" (Ministry, 2006c). This idea of a "Canadian Orientation" is problematic in its own right, but alludes to the politics intertwined in textbook publication. Looking at the three textbooks analyzed for this thesis: *Making History* (2000), was published by Prentice-Hall, now Pearson, and originated in the United States. *Experience History* (2006) was published by Oxford University Press, of Oxford, United Kingdom. And finally, *Canadian Sources: Investigated* (2008) was published by Edmond Montgomery Publications Limited, located in Toronto, Canada. Thus, while this thesis does not delve into the textbook production process, I acknowledge the corporate capitalist relations of ruling in which it is intertwined.

Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy. The supporting documents complement my analysis of the history textbooks and provide a more complete representation of the grade ten history curriculum and the Ministry's efforts to incorporate "Indigenous content".

The textbooks were read in their entirety once, focussing separately on "Indigenous passages" and "Non-Indigenous Passages". Additionally my analysis focussed on two aspects: change and a colonial mentality. Using various features of textual analysis, as presented by Fairclough and explained below, I analyse internal and external relations of text used to chronicle stories where Indigenous peoples evidently *were* and *were not* present during particular historical moments.

#### **4.2 Methodological Basis**

This thesis employed a specific version of discourse analysis, as outlined by Norman Fairclough. I conducted a systematic textual analysis (STA), comprised of both *linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis*, which will be explained in further detail in the following sub-section. When analysing text, Fairclough (2003) argues we are doing two interconnected things: first we are looking at the text in terms of three aspects of meaning (action, representation and identification) and how these are realized in the texts, such as semantics and grammatical analysis. Second, we are "making a connection between the concrete social event and more abstract social practices by asking, which genres, discourses, and styles are drawn upon here, and how are the different genres, discourses and styles articulated together in the text?" (p. 28).

Janks (1997) reminds us that a critical discourse analysis (CDA) is about asking how a text is positioned, "...whose interests are served by this positioning? Whose interests are negated? What are the consequences of this positioning?" (p. 329). Asking these

questions involves looking beyond the text at hand, and taking social events and social theory into consideration. Indeed, Fairclough (2003) explains a division in analysis which he seeks to transcend, whereby on the one hand research inspired by social theory tends not to analyse text, and on the other hand, research focussed on the analysis of text tends not to engage with what he calls social theoretical issues (pp. 2-3). For Fairclough, research is strengthened when there is a deep connection and discussion between critical text analysis and social theory.

Fairclough explicitly acknowledges the limitations of textual analysis (p. 15). In order to take part in text interpretation and exercises of meaning-making, text analysis must be coupled with research that looks at interpretations of texts, texts themselves, and casual and ideological effects of texts (p. 15). Fairclough argues that “text analysis is a valuable supplement to social research, not a replacement for other forms of social research and analysis” (p. 16). Further, he refutes the notion that text analysis should occur before social analysis and critique. He objects to this claim on the basis that text analysis is a transdisciplinary process within which the relationship between text analysis and social analysis and critique is cyclical; they are always contributing to one another back and forth (p. 16).

Thus, for this thesis, a decolonizing lens was most compatible with Fairclough’s methodology of a systematic textual analysis (STA). Decolonial theory highlights making the invisible visible, in that, it assists in illuminating how Indigenous epistemologies, worldviews and ways of knowing are pushed to the periphery. Decolonial theory also stresses challenging normally *unchallenged* assumptions and identifications about culture, history, ontologies and epistemologies. The features of analysis provided by

Fairclough's STA allow for this marginalization to be apparent. Looking at assumptions, intertextuality, semantic relations, and grammatical relations inherent within the text, this thesis is able to challenge that which normally goes unchallenged.

As Alfred (1999) reminds us, colonialism or a colonial mentality "prevents people from seeing beyond the conditions created by the white society to serve its own interests" (p. 70). Fairclough's text analysis therefore, and more specifically the *systematic* nature of STA, allows the researcher to look beyond the text at hand, and take social events and relations of ruling into consideration. In analysing the grade ten history curriculum, my conceptual framework and method of discourse analysis highlight the normative ontologies and epistemologies as well as the colonial mentality that are structured into the texts.

### 4.3 Method

A systematic textual analysis (STA) is comprised of both *linguistic analysis and intertextual analysis*. Linguistic analysis focuses on how texts selectively draw upon linguistic systems; this includes grammar (at the sentence level), and semantics.

Fairclough notes that linguistic analysis is *form*, or of how things are being said, and is an *internal* relation of text (internal and external relations are expanded on below).

Intertextual analysis on the other hand, focuses on how texts selectively draw upon orders of discourse, such as external resources that are made available and social and societal assumptions that are made.<sup>25</sup> Intertextual analysis is an external relation of text and is *content* or what is being said and what is *not* being said. Fairclough argues STA

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<sup>25</sup> The three textbooks analysed for this thesis contained a plethora of images that, when analysed, would have provided rich, robust data. Many of the images in the textbooks perpetuated problematic and stereotypical conceptualizations of Indigenous peoples and what "being Indigenous" *looks* like. However, due to restrictions of space and time I chose to only analyze text for this thesis.



combines the analysis of content and form and that the two are inherent in one another, never able to be separated (p. 194).

An external relation of text is based on the premise that a given body of text does not exist in isolation. Intertextuality and assumptions, as analyses, critically examine text in relation to additional, external discourses. On the other hand, an internal relation of text will analyze more nuanced forms of discourse. This would include, as mentioned above, semantics, grammar, and vocabulary and how words, phrases, sentences, and clauses are selected to draw attention to what *is* present, and what is *not* present. Fairclough notes that internal and external relations of text are used conjointly with one another; often semantic and grammatical relations are embedded within intertextuality and assumptions. The following section will outline the details of each feature and situate their importance within my research.

Fairclough's STA offers social researchers specific methods to conduct their research. He notes that "textual analysis can focus on just a select few features of texts, or many features simultaneously" (p. 6). For the purpose of this thesis I will be looking at four features, for which Fairclough has provided some direction. These four features include: intertextuality, assumptions, and semantic and grammatical relations between sentences and clauses.

### ***Intertextuality***

The first feature, *intertextuality*, is an external relation of text and is a matter of recontextualization. In this sense, recontextualization refers to the author appropriating, transforming, and or colonizing a text in order for the author to substantiate their argument or point of view. At any given time, an analyst can assume that there is a set of

*other* texts and *other* voices that are incorporated into the text but not necessarily mentioned. Intertextuality involves “a movement from one context to another, entailing particular transformations consequent upon how the material that is moved (or recontextualized) figures within that new context” (p. 51). The most obvious form of intertextuality is direct reporting or a direct quote, and less obvious is indirect reporting or paraphrasing or a selection of the text to substantiate authorial claims.

Fairclough states that intertextuality allows us to ask which texts and voices are included, and which are *significantly* excluded? Are *other* voices included? Are they attributed, specifically or non-specifically? Non-specific attribution would include phrases such as, “some say”, and “others disagree.” Were the excluded texts and voices simply not present at the event, or were they excluded from the summary of the event and thus the telling of the story? One might suggest the voices that are excluded are the ones that don’t comply with the hegemonic meaning making. When analysing a text using intertextuality, Fairclough explains that the researcher can look at framing, ordering of voices, representation, structuring, sentence connectors, and hedging throughout the text.

### ***Assumptions***

The second external feature for STA is the analysis of *assumptions*. Fairclough notes that many researchers may consider analysing assumptions to be far too obvious. However, when done systematically, assumptions can reveal much about a given text. Assumptions often shape what Fairclough refers to as “the common ground”. He goes on to say “the capacity to exercise social power, domination and hegemony includes the capacity to shape to some significant degree the nature and content of this ‘common ground’” (p. 55). There are three main types of assumptions: existential, propositional,

and value. Existential assumptions allow us to ask what exists, what is taken for granted, and what classificatory categories are unexamined. Propositional assumptions are assumptions about what is or can be or will be the case. Finally, value assumptions are assumptions about what is good or desirable (p. 55).

### ***Semantic Relations***

The third feature of text involves examining *semantic relations*, or looking at “meaning relations between words and longer expressions, between elements of clauses, between clauses and between sentences, and over larger stretches of text” (p. 36). Semantics is an internal relation of text and allows us to examine two areas specifically: *legitimation* and *equivalence and difference*. Fairclough notes that “every system of authority attempts to establish and to cultivate the belief in its legitimacy” and according to Berger and Luckman “legitimation provides the ‘explanations’ and justifications of the salient elements of the institutional tradition” (p. 88). Fairclough argues that people are extremely concerned with legitimacy in social life; therefore text is the perfect location to explore issues of legitimation. There are four main strategies of legitimation: authorization, rationalization, moral evaluation, and mythopoesis.

Fairclough describes authorization as “legitimation by reference to the authority of tradition, custom, law, and of persons in whom some kind of institutional authority is vested” (p.98). Rationalization refers to the institutionalized action and the knowledge society has constructed to endow said institutions with cognitive validity (the clearest and most explicit form of legitimation). Moral evaluation references particular value systems, however it must be taken into consideration separately from the other three strategies.

Finally, mythopoesis is legitimation conveyed through narrative (p. 98). This thesis is concerned primarily with the first three strategies of legitimation.

The second area of analysis within semantic relations is equivalence and difference or what Laclau and Mouffe (1985) identify as ‘a logic of difference’ and ‘a logic of equivalence’. One is a propensity toward ‘creating and proliferating differences’ between objects and groups of people, the other is about ‘collapsing’ or ‘subverting’ differences by representing objects or groups of people as equivalent to each other (p. 88). Fairclough calls this classification of how people think and act “an aspect of the continuous social process of classification” (p. 101). He goes on to explain that “setting up such relations of meaning equivalence amounts to backgrounding” or ‘building up the background’ (p. 101). Backgrounding is often crucial and extremely effective for hegemonic meaning-making and determines how successfully alternatives are excluded (p. 101).

### ***Grammatical Relations***

The fourth and final feature is *grammatical relations*, or “the relationship between ‘morphemes’ in words, between words in phrases, between phrases within clauses, and between clauses in sentences” (p. 36). Also classified as an internal relation of text, Fairclough argues that “semantic relations are realized in a range of grammatical features of text...[and] there is a range of textual makers of these relations” (p. 92). Within grammatical relations there are three types of clauses. For the purpose of this project I will focus on two: grammatical relations that are either paratactically related or hypotactically related. Parataxis are clauses that are grammatically ‘equal’ or ‘coordinate’. Hypotaxis occurs when one clause, the ‘subordinate’ clause, is subordinate to another, the ‘main’ clause.

There is a range of textual markers used to identify whether or not there is a paratactic, or hypotactic grammatical relationship. These include: but, however, because, so that, the purpose of this, in order to, and, which in this case, although, and though. Fairclough is careful to mention however, that these textual markers do not necessarily and automatically insinuate parataxis or hypotaxis. The context between words, in phrases, in clauses, and in sentences, must always be taken into consideration.

#### **4.4 Method of Analysis**

Using coding systems, symbols, colour-coordinated stickers, colour-coordinated highlighting, and underlining I analysed the three aforementioned textbooks as well as supplementary curriculum documents provided by the Ontario Ministry of Education. During my actual analysis I had five different coloured highlighters in hand. Four of the highlighters corresponded with four of the features described in Fairclough's STA: blue represented assumptions, pink represented intertextuality, yellow represented semantic relations, and finally green represented grammatical relations. The fifth highlighter, orange, was reserved for sentences or sections that were undoubtedly problematic, but it was not immediately apparent to me *which* feature it represented and thus further analysis was required. Upon completing my analysis I revisited each orange section to figure out *why* the sentence was problematic.

Interestingly, it turned out that most of the orange sections seemed to be more difficult to immediately identify, because multiple features of Fairclough's text analysis were evident. For example one section or sentence would include: multiple forms of assumptions, such as existential and value; intertextuality, where Indigenous voices were significantly excluded; and semantic relations whereby the text is legitimated by

authorization. Indeed these multi-layered sections proved to be some of the most interesting and revealing components of my analysis.

Once all my data was categorized using the four features of text analysis as outlined by Fairclough, I typed up all my findings in three separate documents, one for each textbook. The process of typing up all my findings allowed me to see patterns and themes from one textbook to the next and I was also able to easily identify examples of change. Thus, I then identified whether or not each example could be classified as *change* or a *colonial mentality*. Again, this differentiation proved more difficult than originally anticipated; my idealistic expectations that my findings would fit into neat categories were quickly challenged. Many of the instances exemplified both change *and* a colonial mentality.

The textbooks were read in their entirety once, but with a separate focus on “Indigenous passages” and “non-Indigenous passages”. For the purpose of this thesis, Indigenous passages refer to all sections where Indigenous peoples *were* included in the discussion of the historical event. The remainder of the textbook then, or sections that did *not* include Indigenous peoples in the specific historical event are referred to as non-Indigenous Passages. These two sections were further broken down to examine *change* and a *colonial mentality*.

In the non-Indigenous passages, I examine *change* within particular historical events to determine whether or not there was positive change, negative change, or no change. In the Indigenous passages, *change* refers to whether or not there was an increase or decrease in the amount of “Aboriginal content” in the history curriculum. By first examining the textbook published in 2000, followed by the textbook published in 2006,

and finally examining the textbook published in 2008, a longitudinal analysis considers if the Ontario Ministry of Education “increased Aboriginal content” (Ministry, 2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2009e). It is important to note however, that an increase in Indigenous content does not necessarily signify positive change. Some instances of increased content were extremely problematic and indeed reinforced dominant epistemologies; this issue will be taken up further in the following chapters. Additionally, it is important to note that at the beginning stages of this thesis, all three textbooks were approved for current use by the Ministry of Education’s Trillium List. That means that even though the latest textbook was published in 2008, a teacher could opt to use the textbook from 2000 or 2006. Part of this thesis is a longitudinal text analysis tracking change over time; however, instead of placing a higher importance on the 2008 textbook, the findings from all three textbooks will be weighted equally.

The second component of this analysis was to ascertain whether or not a *colonial mentality* was present throughout the text. Alfred (1999) discusses the notion of the colonial mentality, noting it is a harmful internalized form of oppression. He goes on to say “the ‘colonial mentality’ can be thought of as a mental state that blocks recognition of the existence or viability of traditional perspectives: it prevents people from seeing beyond the conditions created by the white society to serve its own interests” (p. 70). A colonial mentality may be present in Indigenous passages and non-Indigenous passages.

Finally, when a page of a textbook contained anything on Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues, I placed an ‘A’ in the corner, signifying “Aboriginal”. After my analysis, ‘A’ pages were further broken down into “mentions” (M), or “sections” (S).

This distinction is significant as “mentions” and “sections” varied drastically. This will be taken up further in the following chapters.



## 5. Findings

### 5.1 Introduction

When looking at *change* between 2000, to 2006, to 2008, the Canadian History textbook has *improved* in certain areas. Interestingly, the 2008 textbook has also omitted or decreased the amount of information regarding certain events which *were* present in 2000 and 2006. For example, while the 2008 passage on “Land Claims” has improved from 2000 and 2006, the importance of Indigenous soldiers in WWI and WWII, specifically Cree code-talkers was minimized. Additionally, there is more information on the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in 2008, but the “extinction” of the Beothuk, mentioned in 2000 and 2006, is not present in 2008. *Change*, therefore, is differentiated between positive change, negative change, and no change.

It is also important to note that many historical events in the textbooks fell under multiple forms of text analysis: intertextuality, assumptions, semantic relations and grammatical relations. While Fairclough (2003) advised that this multi-level analysis is common in text analysis, it added a level of complexity not expected. With this in mind, where relevant, due to restrictions of space and time, I will highlight the analysis of highest importance for a given historical event. Similarly, as this project has indeed yielded an abundance of robust data, all of which is significant and relevant, the findings section of this thesis will highlight only those of highest importance.<sup>26</sup>

### 5.2 Quantitative Findings

In addition to qualitative measures of change, I tracked quantitative change from one textbook to the next. As previously mentioned, when a page in a textbook contained

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<sup>26</sup> This subjective valuing of “highest importance” refers to data that I believe is most important for this thesis based on decolonial theory and the relevant literature from chapter 2.

anything on Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues, I placed an 'A' in the corner signifying "Aboriginal".<sup>27</sup> 'A' pages were further broken down into "mentions" (M), or "sections" (S); these categories varied drastically. For example in the 2000 textbook, a mention occurs in the section titled "The "Youthquake"", the only reference to Indigenous peoples is in the sentence: "Some participated in the women's, Aboriginal, and environmental movements" (p. 292). In 2006, a mention occurs on page 79 where under "Words to Know" the student will find "League of Indians" and "residential schools" (p. 79). In 2008, "First Nations" are mentioned in a graph, where the student is asked to prepare an organizer to summarize observations on: First Nations, Chinese Immigrants, Workers, and Black Canadians (p. 37).

On the other hand, "sections" included far more information on Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues. Sections were usually several sentences, multiple paragraphs, or a page long, where Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues were discussed. Therefore, it was important to differentiate between mere mentions and sections. Sections were counted on a "per page" basis. This means, when a "section" covered two pages, this counted as "2 sections".

The 2000 textbook had 401 pages of content (this excludes: introductory pages with roman numerals, appendices, additional materials, index, glossaries, and credits). Of the 401 pages, the textbook had 36 mentions and 23 sections for a total of 59 pages overall. Thus 15% of the textbook contained pages where Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues were present. In the 2006 textbook, of the 345 pages, the textbook had 24 mentions

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<sup>27</sup> Constituting what content counted as pertaining to Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues posed various problems; this matter will be addressed further in this thesis. Additionally, the symbol 'A' for Aboriginal was used instead of 'I' for Indigenous only for logistical reasons. During my analysis many of the pages were extremely marked up, and an 'I' could easily be mistaken for a dash or a scribble.

and 19 sections for a total of 43 pages overall. Thus 12% of the textbook contained pages where Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues were present. Finally, in the 2008 textbook, of the 263 pages, the textbook had 17 mentions and 21 sections for a total of 38 pages overall. Thus 14% of the textbook contained pages where Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues were present.

In addition to the actual amount of Indigenous content in the history textbooks, I also examined when Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues first appear in the textbooks. Curiously, in the 2008 textbook, it is not until page 38 that “First Nations” peoples are mentioned at any length. By page 38, the student has already finished chapter 1, which chronicles the years 1914-1919, and is now learning about 1920-1929. In the 2006 textbook, minus a small write-up about Aboriginal men volunteering for the War on page 11, and several token mentions throughout, “Aboriginal Peoples” are not included at any length until page 87. By page 87, the student is already in Unit 2, Chapter 4, and is learning about the 1920s -1939. In the 2000 textbook, “Aboriginal Nations” are discussed on page 6 and again on page 12 at some length.

This curious absence in the 2008 textbook is mirrored in the “timelines” available at the beginning of each chapter. The timelines are a snapshot of the decade which highlight significant historical events. In the timelines, Indigenous peoples are not present from 1914-1919; the Indian Act is mentioned between 1920-1929; between 1930-1939, 1940-1949, 1950-1959, and 1960-1969 Indigenous peoples are not represented on the timeline; and finally between 1970-1979, 1980-1989, and 1990 – 21<sup>st</sup> century, Indigenous peoples are represented. With regard to intertextuality it is evident that Indigenous peoples’ histories are significantly excluded in these historical snapshots. This omission

perpetuates the silencing and erasure of Indigenous peoples from the narrative of Canadian history.

In my quantitative findings, it is important to note, that *more* or *less* information does not automatically imply positive or negative change. While these statistics are revealing, they alone cannot be interpreted as reflective of positive or negative change in a longitudinal analysis. Additionally, any effort to quantify or put a number on an adequate amount of pages containing “Indigenous content” is to reify the very colonial systems of power this thesis wishes to confront. Therefore while the quantitative findings of this thesis are interesting and revealing in nature, they indeed pose their own substantive problems when it comes to my methodology. These statistics, along with my systematic textual analysis and findings based on a *colonial mentality* will be taken into consideration when looking at the change in textbooks overall.

### **5.3 “Non-Indigenous Passages”**

#### **5.3.1 Change**

Overall, the 2008 textbook showed improvement in how stories were framed, worded, and the assumptions that were made in the “non-Indigenous passages”. The textbook still had a focus on the economy, it was still a largely white-male version of history, and a teleological progression of time was often assumed. However the text itself was presented in a way that encouraged much more critical thinking from the reader. This shift in format to a much more “critical” look at history, although not enough to address the deeply entrenched colonial and racialized perspectives, is an encouraging step in the right direction.

In the 2008 textbook, it seemed as though an attempt was made to present information in a more neutral way. Even the title of the book “*Canadian Sources: Investigated*”

insinuates that the student will be investigating the material, rather than consuming and regurgitating. Much of the content is primary sources, such as direct quotes from speeches, extracts from news sources, extracts from governmental documents, diary entries, and letters, all of which are presented as “evidence”. The student is expected to read various pieces of evidence, assumedly from varying perspectives, and decide what they think about a particular historical event.

### ***“The Roaring 20s”***

One example of positive change in the 2008 textbook is “The Roaring 20’s”. In 2000 and 2006, the initial discussion of the early 20’s focuses on “good times” returning to “most” Canadians. In the 2000 textbook, fads, increased income, telephone entertainment, radio, movies, art, sports, and the automobile are highlighted. “By the mid-1920s, many Canadians had enough income to participate in the good life that caused the decade to be known as the “Roaring Twenties” (p. 113). In the 2006 textbook, the twenties is referred to as an era of “Growth and Change”, marked by inventions, better employment, consumerism, sports, pop culture, radio, and political reform.

For both textbooks it is not until later on in the chapter that students learn “not everyone faced hopeful prospects” (2006, p. 84). In the 2000 textbook, among the groups labelled as disadvantaged, included are “women”, “immigrants”, and “Aboriginal Nations”. In 2006 the disadvantaged expands to include “Maritimers and Newfoundlanders”, “workers”, “visible minorities”, and “Aboriginal Peoples”. Curiously, following the brief write-up on Aboriginal Peoples in the 1920s, is a section on Residential schools which states that “starting in 1920, all First Nations children aged 7

to 15 were required to live most of the year in one of 80 government funded schools” (p. 88).<sup>28</sup>

Fortunately, the 2008 textbook is more successful in its effort to problematize the classification of the 20s as an era that “roared”. The section begins by stating: “The 1920s have often been described as the “Roaring Twenties,” but whether this is truly an appropriate catch phrase is for you to decide as you study the evidence in Chapter Two” (p. 22). The textbook goes on to outline prohibition, women’s political rights in the 1920s, and then marginalized groups such as First Nations, Chinese Immigrants, Workers, and Black Canadians (pp. 22-41). Arguably the groups that are labelled as not benefitting from the roaring twenties are still framed within a gendered, racialized lens, minus “workers”. However, overall, the 2008 textbook was more effective in illuminating the 1920s as an era that did not necessarily roar.

Other titles throughout the 2008 textbook are also presented in a much more critical tone, calling into question some common historical assumptions that are present in the 2000 and 2006 textbooks. Some include: “Billy Bishop: A True Canadian Hero?” (p. 16); “Did the War Really Change the Role of Women in the Workforce?” (p. 18); “The Massey Report: Necessary for the Survival of Canadian Culture?” (p. 112); “Did Women’s Status Change in the 1970s?” (p. 180); and “Canada: Peacekeeper? Peacemaker? Peacebuilder? Canada: A Peacekeeping Nation – Myth or Reality?” (p. 254).

On the other hand, some of the titles in the 2008 textbook are problematic, such as “Was Canada’s Response to Black Soldiers Racist?” (p. 10). Racism and racialization

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<sup>28</sup> Indeed this is the only time residential schools appear in the 2006 textbook. Residential schools existed from 1857-1996 (AANDC, 2014). This issue will be taken up further in the “Indigenous Passages” section of my findings.

were a prominent feature of Canadian society during World War I, as acknowledged in the textbook: “In 1914, Canadian society had a fairly rigid racial, linguistic, religious, and ethnic structure” (p. 10). It seems odd therefore, to ask whether or not racism existed; there should be no room to answer that racism did not exist, or that Canada’s response was *not* racist. As Battiste (2013) quotes the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965): “Any doctrine of superiority based on racial differentiation is scientifically false, morally condemnable, socially unjust and dangerous, and there is no justification for racial discrimination, in theory or in practice, anywhere...” (p. 125).

### ***British Influence/Dominance***

One *slight* positive change is the de-emphasis of British cultural norms and British ties in Canada over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. I say slight because the 2008 textbook still naturalized an original alliance and allegiance to Britain, however it is slightly reduced from 2000 and 2006. Again, measuring this difference as evidence of overall positive change is problematic and naïve; this will be taken up further in the discussion.

The 2000 textbook highlights the King and Queen’s visit to Canada, describing the royal couple’s trip in great detail and including a picture of them being admired in their car (p. 161). The 2000 textbook also focuses on France and French ties to the country. In response to Hitler’s rise to power, the textbook states that when Canada considered allowing Jewish refugees into the country, many responses centred around the desire to

keep Canada English and French<sup>29</sup>. Indeed the 2000 textbook begins with the title: “French and English – The Two Solitudes” (p. 2).

The 2006 textbook, while slightly more subtle in its allegiance to British norms, still frames English and French as universal, while others are just that: “othered”. In discussing Chinese contributions to community war efforts, the textbook states, “But it wasn’t just ethnic communities that were involved” (p. 162). Here, Chinese Canadians are pushed to the periphery, and English and French remain in the centre, as the point of reference. The textbook also states: “minority groups had simply been expected to assimilate – to fit into majority ways and learn English or French” and goes on to quote Prime Minister Trudeau saying “there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other” (p. 242).

In the 2008 textbook, the focus on Canada’s ties to Britain had lessened. The first page of the textbook presented the front-page of the Saskatchewan *Morning Leader*, with the words: “War: Britain Gives Word” in large, red letters (p. 2). In addition, the first event on the timeline highlights a Canadian Expedition to Britain. Overall however, the 2008 textbook places a smaller importance on British ties. Having said that, when it came to the subtle mentioning of *colonies*, the 2008 textbook showed no measurable change from 2000 and 2006.

In all three textbooks there is a tendency to casually mention British *colonies*. Absent from these sections is any contextualization or problematization of this occurrence; this serves to naturalize imperialism and colonization. Francis (2011) argues that “most nations, once they are established, depend on a general amnesia about the often brutal

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<sup>29</sup> The denial of the Jewish refugees aboard the St. Louis liner to the safety of Canada’s shores illustrates that racism is not solely based on skin-colour, thus illustrating the complex and constructed nature of racism and systems of oppression.



methods through which unity has been established” (p. 11). One example in 2000 is during the discussion of the Boer War: “Britain was at war in South Africa, one of its colonies” (p. 46). In addition, chapter 4 is titled “A Growing Colony”, with subtitles “Empire-Building”, and “Canada and British Imperialism” (pp. 42-43). The sections go on to define imperialism as “empire-building, or the control of overseas territories” and states that “many Britons at that time believed that their nation was superior, and they also saw imperialism as a way of bringing their own civilization and religion to people they considered to be “lesser races”. What role was Canada, one of Britain’s oldest colonies, to play in this age of imperialism?” (p. 43).

The omission of any context or further discussion is an example of an existential and propositional assumption. The classificatory category goes unexamined, and assumptions are perpetuated as to what *is* the case. The 2008 textbook also mentions Hong Kong and Egypt as former British *colonies* (p. 94) (p. 133). In addition, France is discussed as attempting “to regain its hold over its colonies of Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam in Indochina. It had little difficulty establishing control in Laos and Cambodia, but met strong resistance from the communist party in the north part of Vietnam” (p. 161). In all three examples no contextualization is given, thus normalizing colonization. A lack of contextualization was an issue throughout all three textbooks; this matter will be taken up further in Chapter 6: In Absentia.

### ***The Italian Campaign***

Not all change over time however, was positive. While seemingly positive in its endeavour, the inclusion of the Italian Campaign in the 2008 textbook is an example of negative change over time. It appears that the textbook is deviating from classic historical

material usually present in history textbooks, thus providing the student with a new, rarely included historical story. Indeed as previously mentioned, this “critical look at history” seems to be the tone for the 2008 textbook in general. However, this so-called “forgotten” version of history still perpetuates a largely male, white, war-centric version of history; one that still contributes to the erasure of Indigenous peoples.

The section on the Italian Campaign in the 1940-1949 chapter is titled “The Italian Campaign: The Forgotten War”. This chapter is also one of the chapters that does not include any Indigenous peoples in its timeline, as previously discussed in the Quantitative Findings section of this chapter. The chapter begins by stating: “Most history students know of Canada’s contribution to the D-Day landing at Juno Beach in France on June 6, 1944. But did you know that Allied troops fighting in Italy, including Canadians, captured Rome from the Germans two days earlier, on June 4?” (p. 76). The chapter continues to chronicle the war in Italy, providing black and white pictures of troops in battle, maps, quotes from individuals who were involved with the Italian Campaign, and charts comparing data with Normandy and the Second World War overall. It states that breaching the gothic line in Italy “has been referred to as one of Canada’s finest feats” (p. 83).

A plethora of perspectives and evidence are presented, and the students are asked to compare the Italian Campaign with other battles and gauge whether or not they think this battle was justifiably forgotten. At first, it appears that the textbook has taken a critical look at history and will subsequently present information that “most history students” are not aware of. Upon analysing the chapter however, it is apparent that while the Italian Campaign may indeed be a forgotten war story, insofar as it is not *usually* included in the

grade ten history textbook, its inclusion is still written in the same problematic manner as the rest of the textbooks.

Using intertextuality and existential assumptions as tools of analysis, we can see that the chapter on the Italian campaign in the 2008 textbook takes for granted that war stories take historical primacy. There are multiple other significant historical events which occurred during this time period that are not reflected in the chapter. The inclusion of the Italian Campaign, in and of itself is not problematic, but what it insinuates and alludes to for the textbook at large *is* problematic. The reader could potentially extrapolate that the entire text is much more critical in its presentation of history, while assuming that they are reading stories that have been “forgotten”. Unfortunately, when looking at this example with a decolonizing lens this is not the case. Indigenous peoples are still grossly underrepresented in this textbook, and the information that is present is still largely written from a colonial mentality.

### **5.3.2 Colonial Mentality**

#### ***Push/Pull Factors***

One example of a colonial mentality present in non-Indigenous passages is the proliferation of the push and pull factors in explaining immigration to Canada at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century. In the 2000 and 2006 textbooks there is an idea that immigrants to Canada would arrive to an abundance of vacant, unused land. In the 2000 textbook, pull factors are explained as “free land”. The textbook states: “Canada offered freedom to many. It also offered free land...to those who could pay a small registration fee and live on the land for three years” (p. 14). It also states: “As ‘Canada’s century’ dawned, Aboriginal Nations in the West had been moved

onto reserves in order to make room for a wave of immigrants to settle and farm the West” (p. 57). Similarly, in the 2006 textbook, there is a figure that represents factors affecting immigration (p. 64). The image states that “new lands” was a pull factor, and shows a farmer with an abundance of crop and land.

Several areas are problematic and can be analysed using intertextuality and existential assumptions. First of all, using intertextuality, it is apparent that the voice of Indigenous peoples is not present in this event; they are significantly excluded from this discussion on land. Additionally, the fact that many Indigenous peoples were murdered by settlers in order to acquire, and be able to subsequently advertise this abundance of “unused” land, is excluded from this write-up. Indeed the textbook is not *inaccurate* when it states that immigrants arrived to an abundance of vacant land; at this point the land likely *was* vacant. What makes this section highly problematic is the omission of any discussion on *why*, *when* or *how* the land became vacant. This absence or omission of information has been used to *frame* the push-pull factors without having to mention Indigenous peoples. Battiste (2013) quotes one tribal newspaper:

Success in maintaining the anti-indigenosity enterprise depends not upon day-to-day racism, but rather upon vigilant maintenance of a convincing historical narrative which justifies the taking, which implies that “native people” didn’t “own” the land and resources which nourished their survival, while at the same time glorifying the virtues of “owner-ship of private property” within the settler society. (p. 129)

Second, there are a number of assumptions going on in this event. The idea that the land is unused is a propositional assumption that can be attributed to perceptions of development. As Blaser, Feit, and McRae (2004) describe in their book *In The Way of Development*, some see unused land in a negative way, signifying a lack of development,

progress, and civilization. To *use* land, in the sense of manipulating, cultivating, and extracting from it, is to move forward, to contribute economically, and to build a nation. On the other hand, what the authors describe as *Indigenous life projects* are not seen by all as valuable forms of development. As is evident in the quote by Stephen Harper in reference to the Arctic, “if you don’t use it you lose it”, this representation of land use still persists.

The second assumption that exists in this event is of an existential nature. By stating that the land is vacant, the presence of Indigenous peoples is denied despite the fact that vast Indigenous populations had inhabited it since time immemorial. This blatant example of a colonial mentality has rendered an entire population invisible. In her poignant discussion of erasure, Francis (2011) states “ghostly Indians” are those who “are both acknowledged and refused in the Canadian imaginary...[and] are paradigmatic of the public secrets that continue to haunt Canadianness” (p. 12).

### ***Building the National Identity / Nation Building***

Francis (2011) argues that “Canadian emblems have articulated elements of an ideological struggle between European settlers and those who were marginalized from the nation-building project”. The themes of building a national identity and nation building are prominent throughout all three textbooks and indeed represent a colonial mentality<sup>30</sup>. In the 2000 textbook, “identity” is acknowledged as being a central feature that “weaves together to create an understanding of how Canadian identity has developed through the twentieth century” (p. vii). Each unit also highlights “The Up Close”, where individuals who contributed to the Canadian identity are featured. Finally, at the end of

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<sup>30</sup> Arguably, “Canada” is better understood as a nation-state, not a nation. However for the purpose of this analysis, I use language such as nation, national identity, and nation building in keeping with how Canada is understood and framed in the grade ten Canadian History textbooks.

every unit, the student is asked to continue developing a “report card” on the Canadian identity using what they have learned in each chapter.

Identity is also a common theme in the 2006 textbook. The first unit titled “Emerging Identity”, outlined key contributions made to Canadian identity and specified how Canada differentiated itself from Britain and the United States. Distinctiveness from other nations seems to be a matter of utmost importance in this textbook. It states: “Before a nation can play a major role in world affairs, it must have a strong sense of its own distinctiveness. In other words, it must understand what its strengths are, and how it differs from other nations” (p. 265). Multiculturalism is also cited as being “a key feature of Canadian identity today” (p. 239).

In concurrence with the ‘identity’ theme, the 2008 textbook also features identity although it is presented far more covertly. In a chapter on “Canadian Innovation” the 2008 textbook states: “Self-effacement (avoiding drawing attention to oneself) has long been considered a Canadian trait; inventiveness has not” (p. 42). In the chapter on the great debate over the new Canadian flag, the textbook states that Prime Minister Lester Pearson “wanted a symbol that would help unify the country and give all Canadians a shared sense of identity” (p. 155). The textbook also asks students to “draw up a list of symbols that Canada uses to promote Canadian nationalism and identity” (p. 154).

The 2000 and 2006 textbooks also celebrate identity in relation to war and conflict. Present in these textbooks is the idea that the nation *matured* from war. In the write-ups on World War I and II in the 2000 textbook, the titles appear respectively as: “An Emerging Identity” (p. 77), and “Building an Identity” (p. 204). The textbook states: “World War II became a defining event in the development of Canada’s identity” (p.

204). The 2006 textbook states: “Canada had matured in the four major battles at Ypres, the Somme, Vimy Ridge, and Passchendaele” (p. 18). Here, war and maturity are grammatically equal. Subsequently, the violent and horrific act of war comes to signify the maturation of a nation.

Embedded within the building up of the Canadian identity, is the idea of the development and progress involved in “building a nation. As previously mentioned, Blaser, Feit, and McRae (2004) discuss this dichotomous relationship in their book *In the Way of Development*, where Indigenous peoples and Indigenous life projects are placed in opposition to development projects. Themes of development, progress, and nation building run throughout all three textbooks. Overall, identity and nation building are strong themes throughout the textbooks. While identity in and of itself is not a problematic category, it becomes a concern when it is inclusive or exclusive based on racialized and hetero-masculinist classifications.

### ***Multiculturalism***

The presence of multiculturalism throughout the textbooks is interesting. As stated in Chapter 2 of this thesis, multiculturalism became an official policy in Canada, which many Canadians now pride themselves on and consider a defining element of their national identity. Multiculturalism however, was preceded by the Bi and Bi Commission whereby Canada *officially* became bilingual and bicultural. Interestingly, one of the first times multiculturalism is mentioned in the 2000 textbook is in reference to immigrants, particularly Ukrainians.

The 2000 textbook begins by explaining how Ukrainian immigrants were mocked and scorned because of their dress and cuisine, and that they were labelled ignorant peasants.

Eventually however, “Canadians” “soon came to appreciate the Ukrainians for their hard work and progress in their new land” (p. 18). The textbook goes on to state: “The Ukrainians adapted to Canadian ways, but they managed also to preserve their own traditions and religion. They are often credited with paving the way for multiculturalism to flourish in Canada” (pp. 18-19).

Similarly, the 2006 textbook associates Ukrainian immigrants with the recognition of multiculturalism. Going back to the Bi and Bi commission, it states: “the commission was also told to consider the contributions of other ethnic groups to the culture of Canada. At the time, it was little more than an afterthought, but it soon became as important as the rest of the study” (p. 241). It continues to say “pioneer ethnic groups from Western Canada – the Ukrainians, for example – wanted their contributions as *founding peoples* in the new region recognized alongside the English and French” (p. 242) (emphasis added).

In contrast to 2000 and 2006, the 2008 textbook does not mention Ukrainian immigrants, but does reference the Bi and Bi Commission, “which had reported in 1969 that immigrants were not being assimilated into mainstream Canadian life...[and] would adopt an official policy of multiculturalism” (p. 167). It also states that in working toward a “just society”, laws were “amended to eliminate racial discrimination...But the ‘just society’ proved a challenge, as Canada struggled to respond to the demands of women, Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, and francophone Canadians for greater equality” (p. 167).

Overall, the discussion and presence of multiculturalism in all three textbooks represent a colonial mentality. In 2000 and 2006, there is a clear erasure of Indigenous voices in



much of the discussion on multiculturalism, especially in 2006 when the text states that Ukrainian peoples are the founding peoples of Western Canada. The notion of “founding peoples” is quite confusing here, as “founding” would suggest “associated with or marking the establishment of (something specified); that originated or created” as defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED, n. 4.a., 2014).<sup>31</sup> This wording plays into the common discourse of discoverers, explorers and conquerors; these early travellers claimed to *find* the land in an existential way. Whether or not Indigenous peoples were present when Ukrainian immigrants settled in Canada speaks to a larger ongoing debate on the habitation and population of the Americas.

Stannard (1992) tackles this contentious issue in his book *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*. He states: “It is now recognized as beyond doubt, however, that numerous complex human communities existed in South America at least 13,000 years ago and in North America at least 6000 years before that. These are absolute minimums.” (p. 10). He goes on to explain that recent archaeological evidence puts the date for earliest human habitation in North America around 40,000 B.C., while other highly respected scholars place it closer to 70,000 B.C.

Regarding population he discusses that similar developments assist in estimating the population of the Americas “pre-Columbus”, or around 1492. He notes that conventional wisdom placed the population of the entire hemisphere at 8,000,000. Today, scholars place that number between 75,000,000 to 145,000,000; 18,000,000 of which, being in

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<sup>31</sup> It would be interesting to explore the settlement and history of Ukrainian immigrants to Western Canada. Again, here it is not unreasonable for the Ukrainian immigrants to desire recognition, as they *too* were “othered” and experienced discrimination. It is not the facts that are problematic but the presentation of the facts and the lack of contextualization and historical context.

North America (11). What do these vast differences in numbers mean? Stannard (1992) notes:

In the most fundamental quantitative ways, then, recent scholarship has begun to redirect inquiry and expose falsehoods that have dominated characterizations of the Americas' native peoples for centuries – although very little of this research has yet found its way into textbooks or other non-technical historical overviews....there is no doubt at all, according to modern linguistic analysis, that the cultural diversity of the Americas' pre-Columbian indigenous peoples was much greater than that of their Old World counterparts...[but] cultural conceit has long been the driving force behind the tales most European and white American historians have told of the European invasion of the Americas. (p. 11)

Thus, as Stannard highlights, the latest scholarship on habitation and population has addressed the dominant misconceptions regarding habitation and population, although this is not yet reflected in textbooks or other “mainstream mediums”. We can deduce from this evidence that a discussion on multiculturalism in Canada that excludes Indigenous peoples as the founding peoples of this land, stems from the “falsehoods that have dominated characterizations of the Americas' native peoples for centuries” (p. 11). These falsehoods are reflected in sections on multiculturalism, which subsequently contribute to the colonial mentality that persists in Canadian history textbooks.

Further analysis of multiculturalism in the textbooks reflects an apparent “surprise” by the fact that the adoption of multiculturalism on paper does not necessarily translate into equality in reality. As the 2000 textbook points out, in 1988 the government of Canada created a department for Multiculturalism and Citizenship, which continued to promote its policy, but “despite these initiatives, however, Canadian attitudes towards multiculturalism were complex” (p. 349). The 2006 textbook goes on to state that since

the inception of the policy, it has been “widely accepted, but not by everyone... Today, intolerant individuals remain hostile toward Aboriginal peoples, immigrants, and a variety of religious and ethnic groups” (p. 243). Finally, the 2008 textbook states: “despite the importance of immigration to Canada’s economy and cultural life, four decades after Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy, the emergence of apparently racial acts raised questions about how harmoniously Canadians were living together.” (p. 228).

The use of “despite” and “apparently” in the extracts from 2000 and 2008 are interesting; they denote a tone of *surprise* in the text. Canada however, has a history of racism and racist policies, which is indeed chronicled in the textbooks. Early immigrants to Canada were denied entry based on the colour of their skin and their apparent biological inferiority. It was not until 1971 that Trudeau announced an official policy of multiculturalism and “immigration laws were amended to eliminate racial discrimination” (p. 167). Thus, one should not be surprised or ambivalent that racist attitudes were not swiftly eliminated by one piece of legislation. Removing racialized attitudes that are entrenched institutionally, systematically and within policies is far more complex.

## **5.4 “Indigenous Passages**

### **5.4.1 Change**

#### ***Residential Schools***

Francis (2011) notes that for many Canadians, certain parts of our history are too shameful to remember; they are considered our historical “dirty laundry”. For many, this dirty laundry includes residential schools. In the 2000 textbook, the discussion on residential schools is preceded by statements such as: “The government’s stated aim was

to assimilate Aboriginal Nations into Canadian culture”; “Ottawa had the right to make decisions about what it felt was best for them [Aboriginal peoples]”; and “Canada’s Aboriginal people were not citizens like others.” (p. 12). The textbook goes on to state:

The government soon set up a system of residential schools to be run by churches...Once there, the children were forbidden to use their native languages, dress in traditional ways, or follow their own spiritual beliefs. They were made to feel generally ashamed of their heritage...Today Aboriginal Nations are working to revive their cultures and to educate Aboriginal children about their past (pp. 12-13).

This section also states that residential schools were in operation until the 1960s. The discussion drops off and is not picked up again until page 287, where in a special section called “parallels through time” a caption states: “Residential Schools: One of the areas in which Aboriginal people managed to gain control was education.” (p. 287). In this section, the 1960s and 1970s are compared with the 1990s. The 60s and 70s are labelled as eras when residential schools were dismantled, and the 90s are represented as a time when “although the residential schools were gone, their legacy continued to haunt many who had been through them” (p. 287).

In the 2006 textbook, not much more context is given when it comes to residential schools. The inception date is still 1920 and First Nations “continue to struggle with the effects of the residential schools” (p. 88). Whereas in 2000 the textbook had two small quotes from residential school survivors, in 2006, the textbook features a statement from Bill Phipps, moderator of the United Church of Canada. Residential schools are quickly mentioned once more in this textbook. In the chapter titled “Reaching Maturity” in a section titled “How Has Life Changed for Aboriginal Peoples”, it is stated: “today, the

residential schools are gone, and Aboriginal peoples are finding ways to heal the wounds the schools have caused.” (p. 340).

In the 2008 textbook, the discussion of residential schools is prefaced with a rather bizarre statement: “The federal government and most non-Native Canadians believed that life for First Nation peoples would be greatly improved if they gave up their cultures and became part of mainstream, Christian Canada” (p. 38). It is the first textbook to note that residential schools became mandatory in 1920 but began in the late 1800s. “Some residents adapted to the schools, and some had kind and supportive teachers. But for many, First Nation children, the residential system left deep scars.” (p. 38).

The examples from the 2000 textbook provided above contain strategies of authorization: legitimation by reference to institutional authority. This is accomplished by rooting the discussion within references of federal government legislation, and using paternalistic, patronizing language to describe the regulation of “Canada’s Aboriginal Nations”. The statement about Aboriginal people *managing* to gain control over education illustrates intertextuality and semantic relations. It is framed as if Indigenous peoples had been *trying* to gain control, but that their incapacity to do so was of no fault but their own. While the student knows that Indigenous peoples were largely regulated and legislated, there is not enough contextualization of the complex story of Indigenous peoples and education. Also absent from this section is a discussion on the intergenerational effects of residential schools and the need for ongoing healing.

The examples from the 2006 textbook are similar to those from 2000. Interestingly in 2006, instead of including quotes from residential school survivors, as is the case in 2000 and 2008, the textbook features a quote from the United Church. While the quote is well

intentioned and illustrates that the United Church offered an official policy, the gesture takes the voice away from the individuals who were forced to attend residential schools and should be speaking to the issue. By not providing a voice to residential school survivors, they are *othered* and silenced.

The 2008 textbook's opening sentence is cleverly worded, giving the illusion that the Canadian Government had the best of intentions by sending Indigenous children to residential schools. In reality, residential schools were about assimilating children and removing the Indian in the child. In addition, as is made evident throughout the 2008 textbook, at this time, many "non-Native Canadians" held racist and discriminatory perceptions toward racialized minorities, especially Indigenous peoples. The assertion that "most non-Native Canadians believed that life for First Nations peoples would be greatly improved if they gave up their cultures and became part of mainstream, Christian Canada" (p. 38) is to ignore the racism that existed at the time.

Examining the residential school sections in each textbook, and looking for evidence of *change* is somewhat difficult; change is apparent, yet whether or not it can be classified as positive or negative is complex. While the 2008 textbook added *more* information, additional information is counterproductive when it is written from a colonial mentality and reinforces stereotypical historical accounts. Additionally, when a textbook has room for six pages on the Dionne Quintuplets (pp. 56-61), six pages on the Rocket Richard Riot (pp. 120-125), and six pages on the Avro Arrow (pp. 126-131), but only one page on residential schools, something is amiss.

### ***Indigenous Land Claims***

As mentioned above, in the 2008 textbook, the section on “Land Claims” has somewhat improved from 2000. Some of the grammar, semantics and language used to discuss Land Claims are arguably less colonial. In 2000, specific claims: “arise in areas where treaties have been signed, but the terms of the treaty have not been kept” (p. 345). In 2008 the textbook states “specific land claims are based on the failure of the Crown to properly discharge specific obligations. Examples include non-fulfillment of a treaty or agreement, breach of an obligation under the *Indian Act*...” (p. 238). The notable positive change is the ownership of the failed promise. In 2000, it is unclear *who* has not honoured the terms of the treaty. In 2008 however, it is clearly stated that the Crown is at fault.

“Land Claims” however, is another area in the textbooks where *more* content is not necessarily better, not without more in-depth contextualization. Two issues arise in the 2008 textbook. First, the title of the section on land claims is “Whose Land Is This Land?” (p. 236). While the title obviously alludes to the issue of disputes over rights to land, there is a sizeable gap in the story. Many Indigenous groups in Canada did not, and do not think of land in the same terms as Western Europeans; these terms included ownership, exploitation, and extraction. In *All Our Relations*, LaDuke (1999) discusses the close relationship Indigenous peoples have with the land, a mutual relationship that does not encompass ownership. However, as settlers claimed more and more land as their own, and the plots of land “reserved” for Indigenous peoples got smaller and smaller, the question of “Whose Land Is This Land” needed addressing.

Second, the 2008 textbook includes more key events, pictures, maps, and primary sources on “land claims struggles”. After reading the section however, I am struck by the overall lack of contextualization of the disputes and a lack of Indigenous voices. There is

a large presence of hypotaxis which serves to delegitimize Indigenous claims, such as (example is italicized): “The Haida were protesting *what they saw* as irresponsible logging that depleted the old-growth forests and ecosystems” and “...on land that *the Mohawk claimed* belonged to them” (p. 237).

The textbook also stated: “Canadians had built homes and business on lands that had never been legally acquired by the Crown” (p. 236). This is written in a sympathetic tone for the non-Indigenous, hard working Canadians; they built their life on this land.

Confronting land claims issues can be uncomfortable for many non-Indigenous Canadians, because there is an assumption that Indigenous peoples ultimately want to kick them off “their land”. However, this is not what is at stake when it comes to land claims issues. What *is* at stake is full and proper implementation of agreements; acknowledgement of the land as that of their ancestors; compensation of losses; equal treatment in legislative matters; and the fulfillment of promises.

The inclusion of the comic strip of “The Great Divide” is meant to illustrate the “difficulties of resolving land claims” (p. 236). While it is true that land claims are very complex, the Canadian government exacerbates these circumstances, exhibiting a system of paternalism which need not exist. Also absent from the discussion is a persisting trend in the modern treaty making process. Agreements are ratified by the Canadian government, who then fails to fully implement the treaty, consequently failing to honour the original spirit and intent of the agreement. Determined to achieve full implementation of their agreements, all modern treaty holders in Canada formed a Coalition. The Land Claims Agreement Coalition (LCAC) has operated for eleven years and continues to



lobby the government for agreements to be honoured, respected, and fully implemented (LCAC, 2014).

Unfortunately, the largest section that is “inclusive” of Indigenous peoples in the Canadian history textbook frames Indigenous peoples as mere protestors and blockaders. Case 2: “The Haudenosaunee at Six Nations of the Grand River Territory, Caledonia, Ontario” frames the Six Nations as indecisive, stating that the land in question “was purportedly signed by 47 Six Nations chiefs appeared to authorize sale of land to build Plank Road” (p. 242).<sup>32</sup> The student is denied a historical context that would explain the complex progression of treaties in Canada. This information would include consideration of forced signings whereby settlers took advantage of circumstances such as: starvation of Indigenous communities, language barriers between signees, and employed strategies of intimidation. The inclusion and framing of this story reflects a colonial mentality that is still present surrounding land claims issues in Canada.

### ***The Canadian Pacific Railway***

The Canadian Pacific Railway represents an intriguing discussion regarding Canada’s history. On one hand, the glorification of the CPR is as Francis (2011) points out, a glorification of imperial rule and colonial victory. To include the discussion of the construction of the CPR as “the greatest achievement of the new nation” (Bain et al, 2000, p. 6) is to perpetuate colonial themes of conquest, development, and nation building. On the other hand, no discussion on the CPR would erase the irrevocable damage the CPR had on Indigenous peoples in Canada. Therefore I argue that the

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<sup>32</sup> As stated in a footnote in chapter one of this thesis, the Caledonia land conflict began in 2006 and continues today. It has been a violent, highly contested land dispute and the details and media coverage have been one-sided, racist, and discriminatory.

inclusion of the CPR and the subsequent ramifications illustrate negative change between the textbooks.

While the *way* in which the CPR is discussed in the 2000 textbook is problematic (this will be discussed further in the “Indigenous Passages” *colonial mentality* discussion), it does at the very least, touch on the negative effects that the CPR had on Indigenous peoples. It states: “Above all, the railway spelled doom for the traditional lifestyle of the Aboriginal Nations.” (p. 7). In the 2006 textbook, the CPR is not discussed. In the 2008 textbook, the only mention of the CPR is in relation to Chinese Immigrants. The textbook states: “thousands of Chinese men came to Canada to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway. When the railway was finished, many Canadians began to pressure the government to stop Chinese people from coming to Canada and to deport those who already lived here” (p. 39). This removal of information on the CPR furthers the lack of contextualization present in the History textbooks regarding the current conditions of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

### ***The Meech Lake Accord***

The Meech Lake Accord illustrates another negative change in the textbooks over time. In the 2000 textbook, the role of Cree NDP member Elijah Harper is significant. The student learns that Elijah Harper halted the ratification of the Accord, they read a direct quote from Elijah, and Elijah’s picture is situated to the right of the text, with the caption: “Elijah Harper holds an eagle feather for spiritual strength during debate on the Meech Lake Accord in the Manitoba legislature” (pp. 362-363).

In the 2006 textbook, Elijah Harper’s picture is still present, with almost the same caption beneath it. Once again the student learns that Elijah halted the Accord from

ratification, asserting that Aboriginal peoples special status needed to be recognized as well. This time however, the direct quote from Elijah is omitted (2006, pp. 326-327). In the 2008 textbook, the role of Elijah Harper and the impact of the Meech Lake Accord on Indigenous peoples has diminished further. The quote from Elijah, Elijah's picture, and the reason why he did not ratify the Accord have all been omitted (pp. 201-202). Elijah's reduced role in the Meech Lake Accord represents a negative change in the textbooks and his important actions are a significant loss of information.

#### **5.4.2 Colonial Mentality**

##### ***The Canadian Pacific Railway***

In the previous section on change in Indigenous passages, I began to discuss the complex inclusion of the CPR in the history textbook. I argued that the lack of information in the 2008 textbook on how the CPR affected Indigenous peoples signified a negative change. In this section I would like to focus on how the write-up on the CPR that *is* present in the 2000 textbook reflects a colonial mentality which must be decolonized in future textbooks. Using intertextuality and semantic relations, it is evident that the sections surrounding the discussion on the CPR exist to build up and substantiate the necessity of the CPR and subsequently justify the ill treatment of the Indigenous peoples affected by its construction.

Fairclough (2003) notes that part of "creating and proliferating differences" between groups of people amounts to "backgrounding" or setting up in the background relations of meaning-making. Keeping the discussion on the creation of race and racism from chapter two in mind, it is evident that a distinction is being made between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples are framed as traditional and backwards and

very much a part of a paternalistic relationship. “Canada’s Aboriginal Nations had no part in negotiating Confederation. The BNA Act put the federal government in charge of ‘Indians and land reserved for Indians’” (p. 6).

With the headline “Technology and Change” the following section goes on to hype up the construction of the CPR, stating: “The building of the **Canadian Pacific Railway** was the greatest achievement of the new nation” (p. 6) (original emphasis);

It took amazing engineering, hard labour, and vast sums of money...[it was] the shining example of nineteenth century progress. But progress has its costs. Canadian taxpayers provided huge subsidies to the CPR... Above all, the railway spelled doom for the traditional lifestyle of the Aboriginal Nations. Buffalo-hunting could not co-exist with grain farming. The buffalo and railway could not co-exist. Trains could not stop for thundering buffalo herds; a buffalo hoof caught in a track could cause a derailment. The buffalo had to go... The last organized resistance of the Cree and Métis, the Rebellion of 1885, was doomed in part by the new technology of the times. The telegraph sent word of the uprising instantly to Ottawa, and troops were sent on the railway to crush the rebels in record time. (pp. 6-7)

Below this appears an image of several individuals standing by a railway with thousands of buffalo bones. The caption states: “When the huge buffalo herds were wiped out, the Aboriginal peoples of the Prairies lost their main source of food. Buffalo bones were collected and shipped by rail to Central Canada, where they were turned into fertilizer” (p. 7).

The loss of the buffalo and the subsequent forcing of Indigenous peoples onto reserves is a devastating moment in Canadian history. Yet, looking at intertextuality, it is apparent that the author moves from one context to the other, very deliberately. The near starvation and demise of a peoples precedes the discussion of the CPR as a great national

achievement of progress and accomplishment. The editors are thus able to substantiate and justify the actions of the CPR within discourses of progress, nation building, and development.

The recontextualization, language, and semantics used in this section demonstrate a colonial mentality that is deeply entrenched in the history curriculum. Using a decolonial lens to examine this event, colonialism and relations of ruling are evident. As Francis (2011) notes, the building of the CPR resulted in “the irrevocable marginalization of Indigenous peoples to the confines of the reserves” (p. 66). However, because the CPR secured vast amounts of land in the West and is proclaimed as a victory for Canada, the stories and voices of Indigenous peoples are silenced.<sup>33</sup> Additionally, as is evident in the 2006 and 2008 textbooks, this event is now also erased from the narrative of Canadian history.

### ***Relocations and the Arctic Experiment***

The relocations of Indigenous peoples in Canada, and their overwhelming absence in Canadian history textbooks are shocking. The 2000 textbook contains a small section on Arctic relocation, which is written from a colonial mentality. It is preceded by three sections titled: “Canada’s Own Displaced Peoples”, “Africville: Demolishing a Community”, and “Resettlement in Newfoundland” (p. 213). In these sections it is evident that the exploitative systems that affected Indigenous peoples in Canada were also a reality for many “settlers” who came to live in Canada. Strategically placed to rationalize and justify relocations, these sections posit that “people were moved to make

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<sup>33</sup> Other voices are excluded from this discussion as well. These voices include the countless Chinese Canadians that came to Canada to build the CPR and experienced racism and appalling working conditions.

way for progress” and “all of this was supposed to be for the good of the residents” (p. 213). This is followed by a section titled “An Arctic Experiment”. It states:

Families volunteered for the move because hunting in their area was poor... Today, critics claim that these people were pawns in “an ill planned social experiment.” The government, they argue, was testing whether families could survive in the desolate conditions of Cornwallis and Ellesmere Islands. The government was also trying to assert Canadian sovereignty over the area, which was disputed by the Americans. The Inuit who still survive are bitter, claiming that they were promised abundant game and fish but instead got cold, disease, hunger, and poverty. (p. 214)

Finally, the Arctic experiment section is followed by a section titled: “Suburbia”. It states: “For most Canadians, relocation in the postwar period meant an exciting move to a new and bigger home, to a new lifestyle and good times” (p. 215).

The paternal and colonial language, grammar, semantics and recontextualization in these sections are quite apparent. Looking at semantic relations of the text reveals legitimation by means of authorization. The event is grounded as an official government act, thus giving it institutional authority. Government officials “acted ‘with honourable intentions’, believing that the Inuit would have starved to death in their old homes” (p. 214). The relocations are therefore justified as the lesser of two evils, and the onus of responsibility is removed from the Canadian government.

Authorial claims are also substantiated by the ordering of the sections that preceded and followed the section on Arctic relocation. These sections posit that Indigenous peoples were not the only ones who had to relocate, other Canadians were forced to leave their homes in the name of progress as well. While other settlers to Canada were also victims of relocation, the problem is in *how* these accounts are used to legitimize

relocation and minimize its devastating effects. Additionally, framing relocation for most as favourable and exciting, is extremely problematic.

The final sentence quoted above, which states that the Inuit were “bitter”, contains particularly interesting grammar and semantics. First, it states: “the Inuit who still survive”. The usage of the word survive could imply two different meanings: one, that the event occurred so long ago that many of the people who were relocated have now died of old age; or two, that relocation itself caused the death of many Indigenous peoples. What this section fails to include, thus *significantly excluding* the voices, is that relocations caused deaths in many Indigenous communities. According to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), “Several studies found an increase in mortality rates among relocated populations” (INAC, 2007, unpaginated). While the death of Inuit peoples is alluded to, it is not specified that their death was *due to* relocation.

Second, the usage of the word bitter minimizes the degree of suffering, pain, and trauma that relocation caused Indigenous peoples. Bitter, does not begin to convey the intergenerational damage relocation caused. Lastly, the grammatical inclusion of the word “claim” in reference to what the Inuit were promised, delegitimizes their voice. “Claims” and “promises” were part of the discussions that took place before relocations, as is made clear in the RCAP:

Promises were made as part of discussions that took place before the move, when government agents and other were doing their best to persuade the community that it was in their best interests to move. Once the relocation occurred, however, and the bargain, as Aboriginal people understood it, was not kept, the relocatees had no way to compel the authorities to deliver on their promises and no recourse if they failed to do so. (INAC, 2007, unpaginated)

Evidence from the RCAP confirms that promises were indeed made and not kept. A colonial mentality is reinforced by writing the event in such a way, as to make it look like it is merely a *claim* made by the Inuit, rather than a legitimate, documented, historical occurrence. The section should instead state that promises *were* made by the Canadian Government, and they *were not* kept by the Canadian Government. Minus this small write-up in the 2000 textbook on “An Arctic Experiment”, all three textbooks fail to contain substantial information on Indigenous relocations in Canada. This matter is highly significant and will be taken up in chapter 6.

### ***Indigenous Peoples “Organize”***

Throughout all three textbooks, a colonial mentality was present when it came to Indigenous nations “organizing”. The 2000 textbook states: “In 1961, the National Indian Council was formed in the first attempt to establish a network among Aboriginal groups in Canada. Despite its efforts, improvement in the lives of its members were slow to materialize” (pp. 240-241). Under the title “Aboriginal Nations Organize” the textbook also stated: “When Aboriginal peoples on reserves won the right to vote in 1960, it did little to improve their living conditions” (p. 286). It also stated: “Aboriginal Nations developed governments, registered and settled land claims, and took a range of actions to improve their lives within Canada” (p. 400). The 2006 textbook stated: “The years from 1960 to 1980 brought great changes for Aboriginal peoples. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups organized and pressured government to recognize the unique needs of their societies...” (p. 217).

The 2008 textbook states: “The Act allowed First Nations, for the first time, to form political organizations and lobby groups” (p. 111) and “by the early 1900s, First Nations



had begun to protest what they saw as promises broken by the federal and provincial governments” (p. 171). The quotes from 2006 and 2008 intend to imply that First Nations organized for the first time since the inception of the Indian Act made it illegal to organize. What is portrayed however, is that it is the first time First Nations organize, period. The text also states: “a growing number of Canadians agreed that governments were obliged to settle these disputes, some of which were over 200 years old” (p. 236). The textbook notes that land claims have been in existence for at least 200 years, thus proving that Indigenous groups have been “organized” for some time, and subsequently that the Canadian government has been avoiding settling these land claims for some time.

In reference to the quotes from 2000 and 2006, it is interesting to note that an assumption exists that gaining the right to vote would automatically issue-in improved living standards. Broken promises by the Canadian government, residential schools, relocation, and environmental devastation have led to a litany of serious issues facing Indigenous peoples. The assumption that health issues, poverty and inadequate housing and education would be ameliorated by gaining the vote is ill-informed and naive. This assumption speaks to the ignorance surrounding the complex political structures that many Indigenous nations have or had. Indigenous nations continue to fight for the right to self-governance, a right that they have never given up.

### ***Paternalism***

Paternal language and a paternal relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government was another common theme throughout all three textbooks. The 2000 textbook states: “Aboriginal Nations, too, saw little of the good life. The federal government, under the Indian Act, was responsible for assisting and protecting them, but

it fact, did little to help” (p. 122). Later, discussing Diefenbaker’s accomplishments, it states: “He gave Canada’s status Indians, living on reserves, the right to vote in federal elections” (p. 248).

In the 2006 textbook under “Social Change in Canada”, it states: “The years between 1961 and 1980 were an exciting time in Canada’s history. Canadians and their government were finding new directions to take on issues connected to youth, women, Aboriginal policy, and government programs” (p. 211). This sentence reinforces a paternalistic relationship whereby Canada is in the position of power and has the power to control and determine the lives of Aboriginal peoples. It also alludes to the issue of Indigenous peoples as the most legislated peoples on this earth. Youth and women are mentioned individually, but when Indigenous people are mentioned, it is in relation to policy. Even prior to the Indian Act, the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government reflected power and paternalism. Finally, the use of the word “exciting” is also very interesting. Indigenous peoples have consistently had policies and legislation that affect their everyday lives written, re-written, ratified, and amended. Therefore, this legislative process may not necessarily induce feelings of “excitement”.

The 2008 textbook also contains examples of paternalistic language:

Despite such legislation [Immigration Act, NORAD, Fair Employment Practices Act, and Female Employees Remuneration Act], minorities in Canada continued to struggle for equality and a greater share in the country’s prosperity. The federal Indian Act of 1951 defined “status” and “non-status” Indians. First Nation peoples gained more personal rights, and tribal leaders were given more control over decisions on resources, although the Department of Indian Affairs could overrule their decisions. (p. 111)

The last sentence referring to Indian Affairs' ability to overrule decisions reflects a paternalistic relationship. Additionally, the onus to gain prosperity is placed on the "minorities". Structured as they "continued to struggle" omits the systematic and structural barriers that, based on racialization, inhibit equality. As Francis (2011) poignantly observes, this account "does not fully trace the ways that access to the political benefits of citizenship were not only racialized but also hetero-masculinist and restricted to those with access to capital and property" (p. 9).

A paternal and colonial mentality is also present in many of the questions that are asked throughout the textbooks. The 2000 textbook asks: "Imagine that you are representing the Aboriginal cause in the 1930s. Make a list of complaints you would present to the federal government" (p. 128); and "What actions did Canada take to protect its sovereignty over the Arctic region?" (p. 338). The 2006 textbook continues this mentality, asking: "Do you agree with the United Church that people today need to accept responsibility for injustices committed in the past?" (p. 88).

Interestingly, the 2008 textbook also contained many paternal and colonial questions for the student to ponder. Some include: "Should Canadians today be held responsible for events that happened in decades or centuries past? Why or why not?" (p. 101); "Do you support the conclusion that under similar circumstances the decision to remove an "enemy" population would be taken today? Why or Why not?" (p. 99); and finally:

Ask yourself what responsibilities and duties Canada has today toward citizens from other countries who want to come here because of wars, persecution, and other threats in their native countries. Before answering, consider such factors as economic impact on Canada, humanitarian concerns, immigrants' adaptability to Canadian society, and Canada's international reputation (p. 65).

The way in which these questions are posed and the surrounding material that leads up to these questions being asked are problematic. First, the question referring to the Arctic posits a value assumption. It is assumed that sovereignty over the Arctic was Canada's to take and that indeed this taking was good and desirable. The final quote on allowing immigrants and refugees into Canada reflects the values of assimilation still prominent in Canada. While multiculturalism is *officially* acknowledged, immigrants must be able to "adapt" to Canadian society. Further, immigrants are desired if they can contribute to the Canadian economy.

Asking if Canadians today should be held responsible for events in the past minimizes the complexity of "Canadians" coming to terms with a colonial past, and that past in the present. It is not about being "responsible" for the past, but there is a responsibility to engage with and open up a discussion on historicity and making relations of ruling visible in the curriculum. As Battiste (2013) notes, "Whiteness and privilege are less evident to those who swim in the sea of whiteness and dominance. Confronting racism, then, is confronting racial superiority and its legacy, not only in history but also in contemporary experience" (p. 125).

### **5.5 Supplementary Curriculum Documents**

The Ontario Ministry of Education (Ministry) has identified Indigenous education, or what they refer to as First Nations, Métis and Inuit education (FNMI), as a priority. Over the past decade, the Ministry has released frameworks, policies, approaches, and guidelines with the intention of improving FNMI education and knowledge surrounding FNMI issues. In 2005 the Ministry released "Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs". In 2006 the Aboriginal Education Office was established, and they argued that

one of the keys to the success of their program is the “availability of resource materials that are contemporary and inclusive of First Nation, Métis and Inuit perspectives” (p. 8). In 2007 a Teacher’s Toolkit to bring Aboriginal perspectives into the classroom was released, which identified one of the overriding issues as “a lack of understanding within schools and school boards of FNMI cultures, histories, and perspectives” (p. 6). In 2007, the government also launched the new Aboriginal Education Strategy and the Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework. In 2009, “Sound Foundations for the Road Ahead: Fall 2009 Progress Report on Implementation of the Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit Education Policy Framework” was released.

According to a workshop on the Teacher’s Toolkit, “as a part of the curriculum review process, Aboriginal perspectives are being incorporated into the revised elementary and secondary curriculum” (Ministry, no date, slide 10). This means:

For all Ontario students, and educators, the revised expectations and opportunities add a rich, new dimension to Ontario’s curriculum, and strengthen opportunities to explore, appreciate, understand, and value the contributions of Aboriginal communities to the social and cultural fabric of our province (slide 12).

Thus, as the toolkit states, adding contributions that allow the student to “appreciate, understand, and value the contributions of Aboriginal communities” is a *new* dimension to the Ontario curriculum.

The 2009 Policy Framework states that the Ministry “is committed to developing strategies that will provide a curriculum that facilitates learning about contemporary and traditional FNMI cultures, histories, and perspectives among all students, and that also contributes to the education of school board staff, teachers, and elected trustees” (p. 7). In the 2009, “Sounds Foundations for the Road Ahead”, most of the document focuses on

delivering appropriate FNMI education to FNMI students. Under a sub-section titled: “Curriculum and Resources”, the Ministry has provided a list of achievables:

- FNMI curriculum content is being integrated into the revised curriculum, as part of the ministry’s curriculum review process, in consultation with Aboriginal organizations.
- Native language and Native studies courses are currently being reviewed...
- Aboriginal Perspectives: The Teacher’s Toolkit is a resource that has been developed to help teachers integrate FNMI perspectives into classroom instruction by providing teaching strategies aligned with the curriculum. It is now available on the ministry’s website.
- Native studies textbooks are currently being developed for two Native studies courses – Aboriginal Peoples in Canada (Grade 10) and Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations in Contemporary Society (Grade 11) – and are scheduled for completion in March 2011 (pp. 9-10).

Success of the framework includes ten performance measures, as outlined by the Ministry. They have been grouped into four overall categories: “Using Data to Support Student Achievement”, “Supporting Students”, “Supporting Educators”, and “Engagement and Awareness Building” (p. 11). The report concludes that because most boards are in the preliminary stages of their implementation, quantitative data is not available, however qualitative data is. Overall, the report indicates an increase in FNMI students reaching provincial standards, and increased satisfaction among educators ability to serve FNMI students more effectively. One aspect of the report indicated a success in “integration of educational opportunities to significantly improve the knowledge of all students and educators in Ontario about the rich cultures and histories of First Nation, Métis and Inuit peoples” (p. 17).

Thus, there is no shortage of material being released by the Ministry when it comes to FNMI issues and education. Yet, many of the Ministry's curriculum documents pertaining to Indigenous education, focus solely on Indigenous education for Indigenous students. While this is clearly of major importance, it seemed there was a gap in the literature when it came to the importance of Indigenous education for non-Indigenous students. I therefore examined the curriculum document titled "Canadian and World Studies" to ascertain whether or not this gap was addressed in the actual course guide. I analysed and compared the revised 2005 and 2013 versions to determine if there was an increase in focus on Indigenous content in the curriculum. Additionally, as my textbooks range from 2000 to 2008, I wanted to examine the document that was in circulation during this time period. Indeed the 2013 document states: "Beginning in September 2014, all Canadian and world studies courses for Grades 9 and 10 will be based on the expectations outlined in this document" (2013a, p. 3).

Some significant differences emerged between the two documents, most obviously, the 2005 version had 77 pages, while the 2013 version had 188. With this, there was a considerable "increase in focus on Aboriginal peoples and Aboriginal issues" in the document.<sup>34</sup> In the Overview for history in the 2005 document, it states:

Through the narrative of history we hear and see the people, events, emotions, struggles, and challenges that produced the present and that will shape the future. The better we understand history, the easier it becomes to understand other times and places. Such knowledge teaches us that our particular accomplishments and problems are not unique – an important lesson in a world in which the forces of globalization are drawing people of different cultures closer together. Canadian and world studies offers

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<sup>34</sup> While the document does indeed reflect an "increase" in Indigenous content, this acknowledgement reifies problematic concepts such as simply "integrating" content into a predominantly colonial text, and the quantification of what would be considered an adequate amount of "Indigenous content".

students a variety of history courses that will enhance their knowledge of and appreciation for the story of Canada (Ministry, 2005, p. 43).

The document thus acknowledges that to know the past is to understand the present, yet this understanding is reflected neither in the curriculum materials, nor the textbooks. The quote also posits an existential and propositional assumption. It is assumed that Canada's "story" is one which will be appreciated. Further it is assumed that the student will learn these stories and subsequently also appreciate them and their country.

Additionally, using intertextuality, it is apparent that this write-up reflects the version of Canadian history in which numerous voices are silenced. Here, one can deduce that because a positive tone is being reflected on the "stories" of Canada, all the oppression, slavery, subjugation, genocide, ecocide and assimilation that occurred in Canada are not included in the sentence "appreciation for the story of Canada". As Francis (2011) aptly notes, Canadians have a tendency of forgetting the gruesome events of the past, as they are too shameful to remember (p. 80).

Finally, in the 2005 document, students are expected to describe factors that "shaped the experience of Aboriginal peoples in Canada since 1914" including "pressures to assimilate" (p. 59). Besides reinforcing a homogenous representation of "Aboriginal peoples", the wording insinuates that in many cases, Indigenous peoples were able to opt-in or opt-out of assimilation; if they caved to the *pressure*, they were assimilated. This wording ignores the forced assimilation that was imposed on many Indigenous peoples. One such example is residential schools that Indigenous children were forced to attend, where assimilation was indeed the ultimate end goal.



In 2013, the Ministry released the revised version of “Canadian and World Studies”. Under the title: “Secondary Schools for the Twenty-First Century”, the document states: “It is important that students be connected to the curriculum; that they see themselves in what is taught, how it is taught, and how it applies to the world at large” (p. 3). The document also focuses on “Citizenship Education” whereby the student is taught to be a “responsible, active citizen [that] participates in the community for the common good” (p. 9). Here it is evident that the Ministry acknowledges Indigenous success in the mainstream curriculum is dependent on a better and increased representation of Indigenous peoples’ histories, knowledges, and perspectives.

As alluded to above, the 2013 document contains a larger focus on integrating “Aboriginal perspectives” into the curriculum. Throughout the document, Aboriginal peoples are frequently brought into student expectations. Under “Identity, Citizenship, and Heritage”, students are asked to analyse how significant events and groups such as Aboriginal peoples, Quebecois and immigrants contributed to the development of identity, citizenship, and heritage (p. 109). Other “student expectations” include knowing about Aboriginal: title, demographics, land claims, treaty rights, politics, and social movements. It is also important to note that the document states that the Canadian and World Studies program, which includes geography, history and civics, is meant to build upon what was taught in grade 7 and 8 history and geography.

Therefore, in addition to curriculum documents and the Canadian and World Studies guide, I analyzed the curriculum document titled: “Social Studies Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography Grades 7 and 8”, with a particular focus on grades 7 and 8 (2013b). Grade 7 and 8 history are separated into two chronological strands. In grade 7 strand A: New

France and British North America, 1713-1800; strand B: Canada, 1800-1850: Conflict and Challenges. In grade 8 strand A: Creating Canada, 1850-1890; strand B: Canada, 1890-1914: A Changing Society.

Some of the sample questions for students include: “What impact did Clifford Sifton’s immigration policies and strategies have on Canadian heritage and identity?”; “What challenges would Ukrainian immigrants have faced on the Prairies at the end of the nineteenth century?”; “What social attitudes were reflected in the forced removal of First Nations and Métis communities on the arrival of Loyalists and European immigrants?” (pp. 130-131). The document also refers to “colonial Canada” on numerous occasions and places colonial Canada in opposition to “Present-day Canada” thus perpetuating the idea that Canada is no longer affected by colonialism (p. 138). By the end of the unit, students are expected to be able to “analyse key similarities and differences in...some different groups and/or communities in Canada... [such as] What are the main differences between your life and the life of a child in Haudenosaunee society” (p. 138). Another expectation is to be able to answer: “What was the significance of the Red River Resistance and the North-West Rebellion for First Nations and Métis people?” (p. 150).

Without examining the entire grade 7 and 8 curriculum, it is hard to make any generalizations or conclusions, however, Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues are represented to some extent<sup>35</sup>. Having said this, there is still a large focus on Britain and France as the predominant early settler communities. This focus perpetuates a colonial mentality that carries through to the grade 10 history curriculum. There is also a tendency to proliferate difference between various “cultural groups”, to look at inequalities in past-

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<sup>35</sup> I acknowledge that this finding indeed reifies the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in the curriculum.

tense, and to reflect on how said inequalities have led to many of the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Canadians today. While the blatant racism and colonialism that existed in the past has *improved*, this kind of teleological logic stunts further progress and begs the question whether or not *covert* racism and colonialism is any *less* damaging.

Drawing on my quantitative findings, my supplementary curriculum findings, and my findings pertaining to change and a colonial mentality, my next chapter will endeavour to establish where this leaves us. I will discuss what is absent from the curriculum, including the peoples and voices that have been erased. Finally, drawing on current literature, I will put forth potential implications of these findings.

## 6. Discussion

*“No educational system is perfect, yet few have been as destructive to human potential as Canada’s, with its obsession with paternalism and assimilation and racialized discourses.” (Battiste, 2013, p. 65)*

### 6.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have explored current literature on colonization and nationhood, colonialism and racism, discourses of multiculturalism, and the Canadian education system. I laid out decolonial theory as the theoretical perspective grounding this project, Fairclough’s systemic textual analysis as my methodological analysis, and presented my findings from the grade ten Ontario history curriculum. I now look to my findings to examine the objectives of this thesis.

The first objective was a longitudinal textual analysis of the grade ten history curriculum aimed to measure *change* over time. Over the past decade the Ontario Ministry of Education has released an abundance of documents, all with the intention of incorporating more Indigenous content in the classroom. This section will discuss whether or not *more* Indigenous content was present in the curriculum over time and whether or not *more* translated into a positive outcome.

The second objective was to determine whether or not a *colonial mentality* was present in all three textbooks. Alfred (1999) discusses a colonial mentality as a harmful internalized form of oppression that “can be thought of as a mental state that blocks recognition of the existence or viability of traditional perspectives: it prevents people from seeing beyond the conditions created by the white society to serve its own interests”

(p. 70). *Change* and a *colonial mentality* will be considered conjointly in the “Implications of Findings” section of this chapter.

The implications of my findings reflect what *is* present in the text. However, a significant discovery during my analysis was the gaps and absences in the curriculum. Fairclough (2003) posits that one part of analysing text is to analyze what *is* there (in praesentia); another part is to analyze what is *not* there (in absentia). Using intertextuality, it was evident that many voices were being significantly excluded from the textbooks. These erasures contribute to the perpetuation of stereotypes, misinformation, racism, and discrimination toward Indigenous peoples. The first section of this discussion therefore, will outline what was absent from the textbooks. This will be followed by the implications of my findings, broken down into *change* and *colonial mentality*.

## **6.2 In Absentia**

Throughout my analysis, I found myself continuously writing in the margins of the textbooks: “Where are the Indigenous voices” and “Why are Indigenous peoples not included in this event?” While I am far from qualified to offer a history lesson which accurately represents Indigenous histories, stories, perspectives, and knowledges, I can comment on the glaring omissions in the textbooks. Unfortunately, at the same time, my limited knowledge of Indigenous peoples historically serves to reify normative and stereotypical accounts of Indigenous peoples. While this section highlights the “obvious” omissions, I acknowledge that in an effort to bring light to what is absent, I reinforce what I intend to challenge.

This ill-qualification also brings to light the issue of when it is my place to speak and when it is not. While I can discuss absences, the implications of my findings, and make recommendations, it is not my place as a non-Indigenous individual to assert which Indigenous (his)stories should be present in the curriculum. This matter as well as the dilemma mentioned above will be taken up further in chapter 7.

Some of the Indigenous scholars and historians who are far more qualified to write this section, and whom I draw insight from, include: Thomas King (2003) (2012), Jack Weatherford (2010), Winona LaDuke (1999) and David Stannard (1992). Their knowledge and insight will indeed inform this section. Weatherford (2010) states: “Native Americans and other tribal people from the Ainu to the Zulu have a legacy as important to the modern world as any great power of Europe, Asia, or America, but too often their stories are marginalized as regional and unimportant in the greater sweep of history and world events” (p. vii).

As previously mentioned in Chapter 5, except for a small write-up in the 2000 textbook on “An Arctic Experiment”, all three textbooks failed to contain substantial information on Indigenous relocations in Canada. In 1996, the Canadian Government Commissioned the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). Chapter 11 of the RCAP focussed on “Relocations of Aboriginal Communities” (INAC, 2007). The RCAP states: “relocations must be seen as a part of a broader process of dispossession and displacement, a process with lingering effects on the cultural, spiritual, social, economic and political aspects of people’s lives” (2007, no page numbers).

Relocation began as early as the 1600s, and as the RCAP states, Indigenous peoples are still vulnerable to relocation today. Some examples of recent relocations, which would

fall within the grade ten history textbook timeline of 1914 to present, include: The Métis of Ste. Madeleine in 1935, The Ouje-Bougoumou Cree of Quebec who have been relocated seven times since 1927, The Cheslatta T'en in the 1950s, and the Cheawawin Cree in the 1950s (INAC, 2007). Several sections of the RCAP are worth highlighting:

Governments saw relocation as providing an apparent solution for a number of specific problems...government administrators saw Aboriginal people as unsophisticated, poor, outside modern society and generally incapable of making the right choices...Justifying its actions by this attitude of paternalism, Canada used its power in an arbitrary manner...Few Canadians would tolerate the degree of interference in their lives that Aboriginal people have had to endure. In many cases, relocation separated Aboriginal people from their homelands and destroyed their ability to be economically self-sufficient. (INAC, 2007)

As previously stated in this thesis, the point in highlighting specific historical events is not to rehash the gruesome details of the past but rather to understand the past in order to move on in the future (Pohl, 2002). Smith (1999), Kanu (2011), and Kovach (2009) argue that the way Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues are currently viewed is directly based on a particular understanding of historical events. Thus, this massive absence in the literature of Canadian history contributes to how Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues are currently viewed.

All three textbooks failed to provide adequate information on residential schooling. Much of the information that *was* included removed the onus of responsibility from the Canadian government. Over the past several years the atrocities and intergenerational effects of residential schooling has been at the forefront of mainstream news and academic discussion. Indeed one of the recommendations of the 1991 RCAP was the need for a public inquiry (INAC, 2007).

Highlighting the systemic neglect, discipline, and abuse of residential schools, the RCAP states that residential schools were to be a final step in assimilation. It states: “an even more disturbing reality... at no time in the history of the system did the schools produce the well-educated graduates that were the prerequisite for both the original scheme of enfranchisement and Smart’s amended community-based strategy” (INAC, 2007). Further it states: “[the] conditions constituted the context for the neglect, abuse and death of an incalculable number of children and for immeasurable damage to Aboriginal communities” (2007).

By the 1980s it was a well known fact, according to the RCAP, that the residential school experience “had devastated and continues to devastate communities” (2007). Thus, as a historical occurrence that has come to affect and shape innumerable communities in Canada, it is unacceptable that residential schools are *still* not adequately and respectfully addressed in the history curriculum.

Contextualization is another glaring omission in all three textbooks. When Indigenous peoples *are* mentioned during a particular historical event, there is not enough background information to inform the reader *how* and *why* the circumstances are what they are. When the post-World War II boom is discussed for example, the 2000 textbook states: “Many of the new immigrants to Canada, especially women, did not share in the prosperity of the times... Those who fared worst however, were Canada’s Aboriginal Nations” (p. 240). In the 2006 textbook, Indigenous peoples are not mentioned in the post WWII boom discussion, although immigrants, the baby boom, industrial growth, American ownership, TV, women, and teenagers are (pp. 190-199).



In the 2008 textbook, the post WWII boom discussion states: “Despite such legislation minorities in Canada continued to struggle for equality...The federal *Indian Act* of 1951 defined “status and “non-status” Indians. First Nations peoples gained more personal rights...although the Department of Indian Affairs could overrule their decisions” (p 111). Again, the student learns that First Nations peoples are *still* struggling, yet there is no contextualization.

Another example of a lack of context involves the RCMP in the 2008 textbook. It states: “RCMP entered Six Nations territory with an armed force to end a centuries-old system of governance based on female leadership, to replace it with an elected system under the federal *Indian Act*” (p. 34). As Canada has an elected system of governance, which has indeed been highlighted as a superior system throughout the textbook, one could presumably gather that this change is for the *better*. Additionally, by referencing an elected system under the Indian Act, the switch in governance is given institutional authority and legitimation. Governance and different governing styles have not been discussed, thus the student has no contextualization for this information.

Indigenous Nations have long had complex, democratic systems of governance. While the Canadian government insists on a paternalistic debate regarding whether or not *they can allow* Indigenous Nations to self-govern, Indigenous Nations have never given up their right to self-government and should not be forced to the court system to fight for this right. By excluding this information, Indigenous peoples are once again silenced from the history curriculum and the student lacks the contextualization to adequately comprehend the material.

It is difficult to qualify this next example of absence without, one, reinscribing and romanticizing stereotypical constructions of the noble Indian, and two, lumping all Indigenous nations into one homogeneous group. Indeed the textbooks managed to straddle between two contradictory constructions, portraying Indigenous peoples in a patronizing, passive tone, while framing them as inherently impoverished, and conflict-prone. Having said this, I argue that the student does not gain knowledge of Indigenous peoples' strong ties to land and their unique cultures from one Indigenous Nation to the next. Discussing the damaging effects of relocations, one participant from the RCAP discussed his relationship to land:

It is on this concept of territory that Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people do not understand one another. Territory is a very important thing, it is the foundation of everything. Without territory, there is no autonomy, without territory, there is no home. The Reserve is not our home. I am territory. Language is territory. Belief is territory, it is where I come from. Territory can also vanish in an instant...[translation].  
(Oscar Kistabish/Osezima. Val d'Or, Quebec, 30 November 1992). (INAC, 2007)

The textbook mentions that First Nations, Metis, and Inuit are distinct peoples, and there are a few token references to specific Indigenous Nations, but Indigenous peoples are largely lumped into one homogenous group. Further, by using hedging language such as "*considered sacred*" (2000, p. 344), or "*protesting what they saw*" (2008, p. 237) the textbook trivializes and delegitimizes Indigenous peoples' sacred and strong ties to the earth.

Finally, I found there was an overwhelming absence of Indigenous peoples throughout *all* of "history". It was not until page 38 that Indigenous peoples are mentioned at any length in the 2008 textbook. In the 2006 textbook, except for a small write-up about

Aboriginal men volunteering for the War on page 11, and several token mentions throughout, “Aboriginal Peoples” are not included at any length until page 87.

This absence is apparent throughout all three textbooks and is extremely problematic. Page after page, historical event after historical event, Indigenous peoples are silenced and erased from *the* story; their presence does not make the cut for the narrative of “Canadian History”. The presence of Indigenous peoples at the beginning of the textbook and equally throughout the textbook is not a petty issue of fairness. This erasure from the historical trajectory insinuates that Indigenous peoples were not there at that time, and further that they were not doing anything of “historical significance”. This issue will be revisited in the recommendations section in the final chapter of this thesis. The next part of this chapter discusses the implications of my findings, looking at *change* and *colonial mentality*.

## **6.3 Implications of Findings**

### **6.3.1 Change**

#### *Non-Indigenous Passages*

In all three textbooks I noted positive change, negative change, and no change for particular historical events. Regarding non-Indigenous passages in the 2008 textbook, it seemed that information was presented in a more neutral manner as “evidence” for the student to examine. In many ways, the 2008 textbook challenged many long-held historical assumptions that were left unchallenged in 2000 and 2006. This was accomplished by framing the assumptions as questions, such as: “Billy Bishop: A True Canadian Hero?” (p. 16); “Did the War Really Change the Role of Women in the Workforce?” (p. 18); and “Canada: Peacekeeper? Peacemaker? Peacebuilder? Canada: A Peacekeeping Nation – Myth or Reality?” (p. 254).

On the other hand, the 2008 textbook regressed in some areas. One example is of the inclusion of the question: “Was Canada’s Response to Black Soldiers Racist?” (p. 10). No amount of racism is justifiable, even if looking back on a historical trajectory. The textbook should leave no room to answer that Canada’s response was *anything but* racist. Additionally, the 2008 textbook included many sections that, when considering residential schools were only given one page, were questionably long. Examples include: six pages on the Dionne Quintuplets (pp. 56-61), six pages on the Rocket Richard Riot (pp. 120-125), and six pages on the Avro Arrow (pp. 126-131). The textbook was effective in what Fairclough (2003) refers to as “building up the background” and framing certain historical moments as more important than others.

Looking to the literature on colonialism and nationhood it is clear that these *banal* historical moments are reinforced. Indeed Francis (2011) argues that historians shape the Canadian identity with a focus on our history “as a country founded on a commitment to democratic forms of order and good government” (p. 9). While the analysis of change in the non-Indigenous passages illuminates important patterns and themes throughout the textbooks, I would like to focus the remainder of this discussion on the Indigenous passages.

### ***Indigenous Passages***

The quantitative findings, when examined in conjunction with the qualitative findings, are interesting. Only 15% of the 2000 textbook contained material “inclusive” of Indigenous peoples or Indigenous issues. In 2006 this number drops to 12%, and in 2008 it is back up to 14%. Essentially, the numbers have remained much the same and reveal the embarrassingly low statistics of Indigenous content in the history curriculum. The

lack of adequate representation of Indigenous peoples in the textbooks is also reflected in the timelines for the 2008 textbook. Timelines provide a snapshot of a decade; Indigenous peoples' repeated absence in these snapshots erases their presence from the historical trajectory. Non-Indigenous historical accomplishments are subsequently situated as more interesting and note worthy. Examining the qualitative findings yields similar results; some areas of the textbooks showed positive change, but most were negative.

The Meech Lake Accord and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) both represent negative change over time in the textbooks. The decrease in content pertaining to Indigenous peoples rights during the Meech Lake Accord and further in Elijah Harper's presence is concerning. As even articulated in the textbooks, it is important for students to see themselves in the stories that they read. Removing Elijah Harper's picture from the 2008 textbook erases an important Indigenous figure in Canada's history. Further, Anderson and Robertson (2011) argue that Elijah Harper and the Meech Lake Accord are often inaccurately tangled up in anti-Quebec sentiment and the Oka conflict (p. 235).

Removing the CPR's devastating effects on Indigenous peoples is also extremely problematic and speaks to the glorification of conquering "new land" and nation building. As was the case for many of my findings, the CPR exemplifies both change and a colonial mentality, and will therefore be discussed further in the colonial mentality section of this chapter.

The section on land claims exemplified *some* positive change. The language and semantics used to discuss broken treaties had improved. The notable positive change was the ownership of broken promises. In 2000, it is unclear *who* had not honoured the terms

of the treaty. In 2008 however, it is clearly stated that the Crown is at fault. The section on land claims was also significantly expanded from 2000 and 2006. The textbook presented many more case studies and pieces of evidence for the student to consider.

As stated in chapter 5 however, land claims is another area in the textbook where *more* content does not necessarily translate into a positive overall income. The paternalistic language used to discuss the claims and the portrayal of Indigenous peoples as mere protestors and blockaders was highly problematic. Further, the increase in problematic content reinforces stereotypical and racialized conceptualizations. Instead of adding this problematic content, the textbooks could have taken the opportunity to highlight some important historical moments in the land-claims process.

Land and Townshend (2002) for example, highlight the importance of the Royal Proclamation, stating: “it promises that land cannot be taken from Aboriginal communities and used for settlement unless the Crown (the government) makes a treaty first” (p. 54). However, by 1927, the Canadian government was making it illegal for Indigenous peoples to raise money to pursue land claims. Land and Townshend point to this basic conflict of interest in the claims process, whereby “the federal government is both a party to and the ultimate judge in the dispute” (p. 57). This information however, is overshadowed by conflicts and blockades, and does not make it into the textbook.

Looking at the Ministry’s efforts to incorporate more Indigenous content into the curriculum, it is apparent that not enough positive change has occurred. Additionally, when change had taken place, it often reified problematic and stereotypical conceptualizations. Taking all my findings into consideration when it comes to change, I argue that change has indeed occurred, but *mere changes* in the history curriculum are

not enough to combat the racism and colonialism inherent within it. Additionally, I note that while my findings suggest there has been positive *and* negative change, most of the positive change was represented in the non-Indigenous passages.

### **6.3.2 Colonial Mentality**

The second objective of this thesis was to determine whether or not a colonial mentality was present throughout the textbooks. Indeed, I found that a colonial mentality was present and inherent throughout much of all three textbooks. White-male, or non-Indigenous curriculum remained central to all three textbooks. Some notable examples included discussions on: the Canadian Pacific Railway, the arctic experiment, push/pull factors, Indigenous peoples “organizing”, nation building and identity, and multiculturalism.

The Canadian Pacific Railway and the Arctic Experiment both appeared in the 2000 textbook, but not in 2006 and 2008. The way these events were framed, exemplifies the colonial mentality discussed by Alfred (1999). He notes “the colonial mentality is recognizable in the gradual assumption of the values, goals, and perspectives that make up the status quo” (p. 70). In these examples, the Canadian government maintained the status quo while Indigenous peoples are the ones who suffered. The Railway *needed* to be built in order to expand Canada’s power to the west, and Inuit peoples *needed* to be relocated to the Arctic in order for Canada to assert its sovereignty over the North.

Similarly, the articulation of immigrant push and pull factors exemplifies the goals of the status quo. Canada wanted to advertise an abundance of land to entice immigration, yet the textbook failed to mention that Indigenous peoples were murdered and relocated

in order for this so-called unused land to be available. All three examples illustrate land sovereignty and its subsequent devastating effects for Indigenous peoples.

I found that the idea of “organizing” was another common theme throughout the textbooks that exemplified a colonial mentality. Framed in patronizing and paternalistic language, the textbooks made it seem as if Indigenous peoples were *finally* organizing and that they had not been organized before. Ignored and erased is first of all the fact that Indigenous peoples have been “organized” for thousands of years. Second, is the violence and oppression that led to the establishment of the Indian Act, whereby it was illegal for Indigenous nations to “organize”. Alfred (1999) speaks to the revitalization of Indigenous forms of governance, noting that “few people imagine that they will be exact replicas of the systems that governed Native structures in the pre-colonial past” (p. 3), and also that “a crucial feature of the indigenous concept of governance is its respect for individual autonomy. This respect precludes the notion of ‘sovereignty’” (p. 25).

Nation building and the national identity also represented a colonial mindset present in the history curriculum. As Francis (2011) argues, nation building and *belonging* have had particularly devastating effects on Indigenous peoples: “While all settlers who were racialized as non-white were excluded, in different ways, from the rewards of citizenship, the legacy of settler colonialism and its impact on Indigenous peoples constitutes the most profound spectre” (p. 12). In some instances identity and the notion of “Canadianness” were extremely covert, however, their damaging effects were not minimized. Bannerji (2000) argues, “if we problematize the notion of “Canada” through the introjection of the idea of belonging, we are left with the paradox of both belonging and non-belonging simultaneously” (p. 65). Throughout the textbooks, this paradox is



apparent. Some sections highlight an inherent connection between the Canadian identity and Indigenous peoples, albeit from a dotting, paternal perspective, while others marginalized and othered Indigenous peoples from the Canadian identity.

Further, the “traditional” lifestyle of Indigenous peoples was problematized when placed in opposition to the building of the nation. As mentioned throughout this thesis, Indigenous peoples have long been viewed as obstacles to civilization, progress, and development. “Indigenous life projects” are not valued in the same way as “development projects” as argued by Blaser et al (2004) in *In the Way of Development*. Bannerji (2000) notes: “it is obvious that, by its very organization of social communities in “race” and ethnic terms, the state constantly creates “Canadians” and “others.” (p. 72).

Finally, multiculturalism was an interesting component of all three textbooks, which indeed exemplified a colonial mentality. St. Denis (2011) states, “by inciting multiculturalism, public schools effectively limit meaningful incorporation of Aboriginal content and perspectives into public schools” (p. 307). Indeed it was evident that multiculturalism was able to simultaneously highlight and erase Indigenous peoples. It celebrated diversity, while lumping all “ethnic others” into one multicultural menagerie.

I found the textbooks also tended to assume that multiculturalism *should have* solved all problems of what the Ministry refers to as equity and diversity. The 2009 Ministry of Education document titled, “Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy” states: “Canadians embrace multiculturalism, human rights, and diversity as fundamental values. However, there are ongoing incidents of discrimination in our society that require our continuing attention” (p. 7). In this 34 page document, staff and students are asked to “value diversity and to demonstrate respect for

others” (p. 10). Teachers are also “encouraged” to “incorporate a variety of viewpoints and perspectives in learning activities” (p. 25). Multiculturalism assumes diversity, yet no real *commitment* to action is being made.

“Multiculturalism in schools makes it possible for non-Aboriginal teachers and schools to trivialize Aboriginal content and perspectives, and at the same time believe that they are becoming more inclusive and respectful” (p. 313). Have schools, as St. Denis argues, used multiculturalism as the only meaningful incorporation of Indigenous content in the curriculum? I would argue, yes. It was evident throughout the curriculum that the unique and culturally specific circumstances of Indigenous peoples were lumped together with the equally unique and specific needs of other “minoritized” groups.

As an official policy, multiculturalism was not about the celebration of diversity; rather it was about appeasing all “ethnic” groups with one piece of legislation. The education system has since latched onto multicultural teachings and it is now disseminated to the masses as a policy that defines the Canadian nation and the Canadian identity. Bannerji (2000) notes “the whole world looks up to Canada. Although in practice, multiculturalism has never been effective, it can and does serve as an ideological slogan within a liberal democratic framework” (p. 73). Thus, multiculturalism comes to represent one of the most prominent examples of a colonial mentality throughout the textbooks.

## 7. Conclusions

*“The most important educational reform is to acknowledge that Canadian schools teach a silent curriculum of Eurocentric knowledge that is not accommodating to other ways of knowing and learning.” (Battiste, 2013, p. 66)*

In the previous chapter I discussed absences in the history curriculum, change, and a colonial mentality. Overall, there was evidence of *slight* positive change in the history curriculum toward being more inclusive of Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues, although change largely pertained to the non-Indigenous passages. *Change* was not as illuminating as expected and indeed proved to be more problematic than advantageous. The presence of a *colonial mentality* was far more revealing. The textbooks and the curriculum are so deeply entrenched in a colonial mentality, that slight increases are insufficient to address racism and colonialism.

It was evident in the literature that colonialism and racialization are *still* highly relevant in Canada. Normative pedagogies coupled with an overwhelming lack of contextualization persist when so-called marginalized groups are discussed in historical trajectories. The history of Canada focuses on a glorification of war, original ties to England and France, Canada’s peacekeeping efforts, and multiculturalism. Absent are the voices and stories of Indigenous peoples and their “integration” is not a simple task. Indeed it is the idea of “integration” that serves to reify and reinforce stereotypical and harmful conceptualizations of Indigenous peoples in the past, and the past in the present. These strategic absences perpetuate the marginalization of Indigenous peoples in Canada and postulate their presence, or lack thereof, as irrelevant. The ramifications indeed, are far beyond what can be worked out in this thesis.

At its core, this thesis was about illuminating the potentially devastating lack of information in the Ontario history curriculum relevant to Indigenous peoples and Indigenous issues historically, which ultimately sets the groundwork for understanding the past, and the past in the present. That is, for understanding *why* Indigenous peoples are currently one of the most disenfranchised groups in the world. This thesis also endeavoured to open up the discussion on the questions and responsibilities pertaining to coming to terms with Canada's past. The land on which we now call Canada has seen major shifts in diverse peoples over the past five centuries. Many factors have "pushed and pulled" groups of people all across the country. What is apparent is that the history of the nation-state we call Canada is complex, and trying to address the wrongs of history is no easy task. In conducting this research, I hope to open up the discussion on historicity and the importance of multiple and diverse historical accounts.

As Francis (2011) notes, and as this thesis has shown, through the careful selection and omission of certain historical stories, we have altered *the* story and we are now left with a progression of historical myths that make up what we call "Canadian history". These historical myths have normalized and justified the colonization of what we now call Canada and legitimized the subsequent oppression, exploitation, and subordination of "minority groups". In particular, historical myths have been exceptionally devastating for Indigenous peoples in Canada and their (lack of) presence in Canadian history.

I have several recommendations for practice for the Ontario Ministry of Education. The entire curriculum must be decolonized, which means it must be re-written. This re-writing must be an equal collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, instead of one Aboriginal reviewer on the panel of reviewers, as was the case

for the 2008 textbook. Indeed having only 12% to 15% of the textbook encompass Indigenous histories, perspectives, and stories is simply not enough. This chapter will offer some brief recommendations and directions for future research. I begin however, by outlining some limitations of the research itself, followed by limitations of decolonial theory.

### **7.1 Limitations**

One of the limitations of this study was that I did not know what materials were used *in addition* to the textbook. Teachers can, and do, incorporate an abundance of supplementary material into the classroom, and I was unable to take this into consideration. It is plausible for example, that some of the absences and omissions I identified are addressed by teachers using outside resources. Having said this, I argue that the Canadian History textbook is meant to be a full and accurate representation of “Canadian History”. Regardless of what materials are being used to supplement, the textbook has not brought the experiences of Indigenous peoples into the Ontario school curriculum in a way that is at all adequately responsible or respectful to the past, present, or future.

Second, I was also unable to comment on the students’ *reception* of the textbook. Learning does not take place in a vacuum; students come to the classroom with varying degrees of pre-conceived notions and background knowledge. Knowing *how* the student received the information would be an interesting component to this research. As Fairclough (2003) argues however, three separate elements comprise the analysis of text, each entailing something quite different: the production of the text, the text itself, and the

reception of the text. There is a certain degree of interplay between each component, although each can certainly be examined separately.

Based on research done by scholars such as Kanu (2011) and Pohl (2002), I can comment on the difficulties of bringing Indigenous material into the classroom and the reception of the textbook. Besides “lukewarm support for integration” (p. 186) Kanu (2011) noted that many teachers felt unprepared to teach “Aboriginal material”. Pohl (2002) also found that when the inclusion of Aboriginal studies is an *option*, many instructors opted to skip it altogether. She argues the issue is largely attributed to teachers’ discomfort or ineptitude towards the topic, as many teachers “panic at the thought of mangling some sensitive issue about First Peoples” (p. 241).

Kanu also sheds light on the reception of the text, noting that teachers found it difficult to incorporate Indigenous content when students arrive with previously formed bias and discrimination. One teacher notes: “But what I think a lot of them have from home is resentment over Natives getting special treatment or special consideration” (p. 185). Kanu goes on to say that teachers have the difficult task of dispelling racist attitudes: “Textbooks and other curriculum materials may no longer carry overt racist portrayals of Aboriginal and other non-European peoples, but negative images of Aboriginal peoples are still prevalent in the minds and attitudes of the mainstream” (p. 185).

### ***Limitations of Decolonial Theory.***

As discussed in chapter three of this thesis, no theoretical framework is without its limitations. Speaking to the somewhat contradictory nature of decolonizing research, Swadener and Mutua (2008) argue one must ask: “whose agenda is it to decolonize research”, “who holds the power to name how such power reifies existing power

relations”, “who and how [is] ‘scholarship’ legitimized” and what are the “tensions between ‘indigenous insiders’ versus etic researchers” (p. 34).

In addition, what exactly is involved in a truly decolonizing endeavour? When looking at the findings, and taking *change* and a *colonial mentality* into consideration, it seems that I would recommend that the entire grade 10 history curriculum must be re-written. But I would also recommend that history from grades 1 to 12 be re-written. But do I stop there when arguably the entire education system is rooted firmly and deeply within colonial ontologies and epistemologies? Does this not imply a problematization of the entire education system? If so, am I aiming to “influence the powerful” as suggested by Fuller (2004):

On a practical level, research directed toward the concerns of dominant groups contains the implicit assumption that the way to achieve peace is to influence the powerful. The problem with this assumption is that given the existence of structural violence, genuine peace requires the transformations of structures of social stratification (economic, social, or political) to achieve a redistribution of power (p. 93).

This challenge must be what Swadener and Mutua (2008) refer to when they discuss the complexities and (im)possibilities of “a truly decolonizing endeavour” (p. 32).

Colonization and colonialism manifest in multiple nuanced ways and the steps to decolonization are not easy, nor clear. In attempting to address the wrongs of history, I look to the history curriculum and simplify a complex and nuanced colonial past. I attempt to address racism and colonialism by taking on hundreds of years of issues, spanning social, economic, political, and geographical accounts. In my endeavour to come terms with the past, I accomplished what I set out to avoid; I invert power relations

and reify problematic concepts I intended to challenge. In the following section I will endeavour to identify some recommendations and lines of future research.

## 7.2 Recommendations and Future Research

The Ontario Ministry of Education likely has the best of intentions when they release mandates, policies, guidelines, and toolkits; however, not enough is being done. An attempt to bring Indigenous content in the classroom or to increase “Indigenous content” is insufficient to address the racism, colonialism and ignorance surrounding Indigenous issues in Canada. I argue that the current Ontario history curriculum is not adequately situated to address and deconstruct the nuanced racist and colonial material inherent within it. The changes required in fact go beyond the capabilities of the education system and speak to the dominant power relations and relations of ruling. My suggestions for the Ministry of Education are briefly outlined in the following paragraph.

I recommend that the Ministry of Education abandon the idea that a mere increase in Indigenous content will ameliorate discrimination and racism in schools and in society. I suggest that multiculturalism is an inadequate umbrella term to accurately and fairly represent the unique and culturally specific needs of Indigenous peoples and other “racialized” marginalized groups. In the interim of larger structural changes, I suggest that the history curriculum be re-written collaboratively with Indigenous and non-Indigenous story-tellers and historians. In addition to this collaboration, all of the “absences” laid out in the “In Absentia” portion of chapter six should be incorporated into the curriculum.

The Ministry of Education must also make *mandatory* requirements and *firm* commitments. It is insufficient to *encourage* teachers to “incorporate a variety of



viewpoints”. Further, the “incorporation” of Indigenous histories, perspectives and knowledges must be a part of the compulsory courses within the curriculum. It is inadequate to *only* have this information in optional courses.<sup>36</sup>

In my recommendations, I wish to avoid the pitfalls of “involving others” which Fuller (2004) describes when she says: “to speak of ‘involving’ others implies that the researcher remains in control of who participates and who does not, which is contrary to the self-determination that is an essential element of emancipatory research” (p. 97). It is the intention of this research to open up the questions and responsibilities of who can and should participate in this discussion. Future research could be community-based participatory research, and include many voices and perspectives. The Ministry of Education could be one of many organizations involved in facilitating the gathering of stories and knowledges.

Future research could focus on additional components of the history curriculum, but must be far more *narrow* in scope. This project took on far too much content and could have greatly benefitted from a more manageable range of content. Making the focus of historical attention very specific would have opened up a more detailed, nuanced analysis. Additional areas of research could include: analysing the supplementary materials teachers bring into the classroom; conducting open-ended interviews with teachers; and identifying student knowledge of Indigenous issues after taking the grade ten history course. It would also be interesting to identify the textbooks used by each school in each school board across Ontario. This information would be helpful in revealing the average age of the curriculum content being used.

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<sup>36</sup> I acknowledge that in using language such as “incorporate” I am reifying dominant epistemologies and systems of power.

This thesis is but one piece of research in the ongoing discussion of representative Indigenous material in the history curriculum. By analysing the Ontario grade ten history curriculum, I hope to have opened up a discussion on interrogating how “Canada’s” past is viewed, and the past in the present. Differing accounts of histories make the colonial past complex and nuanced and in asking these complicated questions it is difficult to avoid a reification of the problematic concepts we wish to challenge. There is not one single truth about history. However, it is imperative to open up the questions and responsibilities surrounding Canada’s brutally exploitative past and to be reflective in our processes in getting there. My experience of analysing the curriculum in order to come to terms with the past, but reifying problematic conceptualizations in doing so, will be discussed in the following reflective afterword.

## Reflective Afterword

Upon concluding this thesis, I realized several points. First, I could have turned around and written an entirely different thesis. Second, my analysis could have been far more narrow in scope. Third and finally, in my endeavour to come to terms with the past I ended up reifying some problematic conceptualizations I intended to challenge. How did I get here?

I identified a problem: a lack of fair, adequate and respectful knowledge regarding Indigenous stories, histories, perspectives and knowledges – particularly in the Canadian history curriculum. I was haunted by the injustices of the past, and the fact that they were nearly erased from present *and* historical narrative of Canada. The material that *was* present was skewed, written from a perspective I came to understand was rooted in colonial ideology. I repeatedly heard calls for fair and accurate representation of Indigenous peoples in the history program. I decided that conducting a text analysis of history textbooks, seemingly one of the roots of the problem, was the best research strategy.

I decided I would examine first, whether or not the history curriculum had actually increased Indigenous content, as was alluded to in documents released over the previous decade by the Ontario Ministry of Education. If no change, or not enough change had occurred I would be able to show that the Ministry mandates were hollow. Second, I foresaw that if the curriculum was rooted within a colonial mentality, no amount of change or increase would be adequate. Therefore, I also analyzed whether or not a *colonial mentality* was apparent throughout the textbooks.

Once my research was complete however, it was apparent that the problem did not necessarily stem from the history curriculum. The problem seemed to be a larger issue altogether, an issue of systems of power and relations of ruling. This is perhaps what Swadener and Mutua (2008) refer to when they discuss the complexities and (im)possibilities of “a truly decolonizing endeavour” (p. 32); to merely decolonize one component of a larger system of oppression is not really a *truly* decolonizing endeavour.

With that said, the inherent challenges and issues that arise in this thesis offer helpful considerations for all those thinking about issues surrounding coming to terms with the injustices in Canada’s past. The results of this thesis can help us to identify some of the challenges that arise when different historical accounts are presented. This thesis can begin to open up the questions and responsibilities of disrupting hegemonic narratives of Canada. It can also begin to help us think about how we can live respectfully with justice and awareness of the past, and the past in the present. As aforementioned, I would like to reflect on three areas that arose during my analysis: alternative ways this thesis could have been conducted; conducting research that is more narrow in scope; and finally challenges of reification when conducting this type of research.

First, upon completion of this thesis, it was apparent that I could have turned around and conducted an entirely different project. While the history curriculum is indeed problematic, it is not the site or root of the problem. Rather, it is one of the consequences of living in a nation-state such as Canada, which is enshrined within larger systems of power and forms of dominance.

An alternative research project could have more effectively disrupted the normative, hegemonic narratives of “Canada”, what it means to be Canadian, and how these are tied

up in systems of power. Indigenous knowledges, perspectives and epistemologies and Indigenous peoples are not oppressed or pushed to the periphery by how they are represented in the history textbook. Rather, Indigenous peoples and perspectives are marginalized by larger systems of oppression and this marginalization is reflected in the textbooks. Thus, to address the wrongs in the textbook, one needs look at larger capitalist and colonial systems of power and dominance.

In reflecting on this research, I am now able to see that the problematization of nationhood, the nation-state, and what this means for Canada could have been more central to my thesis. History as a subject is very much tied to the idea of nationhood. If this thesis were looking at any other secondary school program, such as geography or English, the parameters for such a study would differ greatly. However, the history of history poses unique and interesting challenges, challenges that are not easily addressed. These complexities could have been expanded on throughout this thesis.

Second, the task of analysing an entire history textbook, indeed *three* history textbooks, proved to be somewhat unmanageable. I attempted to address racism and colonialism by taking on hundreds of years of issues, spanning social, economic, political and geographical accounts. My intention was to be able to comment on the entire history textbook; I wanted to be able to see the textbook as a whole. In doing so however, I was only able to provide a shallow analysis for each historical event, never really delving into the minutia of the stories.

Thus, in the examples that *were* included in the findings chapter of this thesis, which represent a mere fraction of the data collected, I was limited in the amount of detail I was able to provide. For example, I could have selected one event from all three textbooks,

such as residential schools. Subsequently I could have conducted an in-depth analysis of how residential schools are portrayed in the textbooks, looking at what is present, what is missing, and who is silenced. The analysis would also examine how this representation is a reflection of the wider national construction of residential schools and how relations of ruling control how residential schools are constructed and understood. Although more narrow in scope, this type of detailed methodology would open up a much more comprehensive critical analysis.

Third and finally, several scholars such as Pohl (2002), Kanu (2011) and Harrison and Greenfield (2011) discuss the difficulties that arise when educators attempt to “incorporate” Indigenous content into the curriculum. Indeed I critique the education system for reifying problematic conceptualizations when “adding” or “increasing” “Indigenous content”, then in my own analysis I too end up reifying these conceptualizations. One of the issues with this type of analysis seems to be that “integration” immediately reifies notions of dominance and hierarchical epistemologies. The “original” material remains central, and the newly integrated material remains peripheral and marginalized.

Integration of material also does not necessarily insinuate that the material is accurate, respectful, and decolonized. Additionally, there should be no reason to choose between the integration of problematic Indigenous content, and an absence of Indigenous content; it is not a question of “either or”. There should be an increase in Indigenous content, *and* it should be decolonized content. It must also be in the context of a rewriting of the history curriculum entirely, rather than an integration of Indigenous content into the pre-existing curriculum.

In sum, the kinds of changes this thesis sought to explore cannot be found in the history curriculum alone, however there is much to be taken from this research. While this thesis did not address what was initially intended, it does open of the discussion for *who* should address these issues and *how* can we move forward together. To glaze over the challenges that arose in this project would be a disservice. This thesis can begin to help us think about how we can live respectfully with justice and awareness of the past, and the past in the present.

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