2010

EXPOSING THE CRACKS IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ONTARIO'S SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

Jeffery S. Westlake
Western University

EXPOSING THE CRACKS IN ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ONTARIO'S SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM

(Spine title: A Critical Analysis of Aboriginal Content in Ontario's Curriculum)

(Thesis format: Monograph)

by

Jeffery S. Westlake

Faculty of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario
April 2010

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES

CERTIFICATE OF EXAMINATION

Supervisor	Examiners
Dr. Rebecca Coulter	Dr. Kathyrn Hibbert
Supervisory Committee	Dr. Shelley Taylor
Professor Brent Debassige	Dr. Bernard Hammond

The thesis by

Jeffery Stephen Westlake

entitled:

Exposing the Cracks in Aboriginal Education Policy: A Critical Analysis of Ontario's Social Studies Curriculum

is accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Date_____

_____
Chair of the Thesis Examination Board

Abstract

This case study demonstrates through the lenses of critical theory and anticolonialism that Ontario's compulsory Grades 6-9 Social Studies curriculum is written from a Euro-Canadian standpoint and gives little regard to Aboriginal perspectives. Despite the Ministry of Education's antiracism and equity policies, the Ontario curriculum is tainted by stereotypes, Eurocentrisms, myths, and omissions. The curriculum is an impediment to the reconciliation that must occur between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in order to bring healing to Aboriginal communities. This thesis contributes to critical education research by showing that the Ontario curriculum is partially responsible for the ignorance that secondary school graduates possess regarding Aboriginal people. It offers recommendations to correct the flaws of the Ontario curriculum and to enhance the Aboriginal content. The implementation of these recommendations could allow the curriculum to fulfill its stated goals of fostering the development of students who will respect others, recognize stereotypes, and take a stand against racism.

Key words: curriculum, Aboriginal, education, critical theory, anti-colonialism, content analysis, stereotype, Eurocentrism, racism, antiracism, equity, antidiscrimination

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to Dr. Immaculate Namukasa, who guided the early work of this research and ensured that I set out on the right path. I am deeply grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Rebecca Coulter, who shared her gifts of acuity and wisdom throughout the research process. It has been a privilege to tap into into her extensive wealth of experience and knowledge. I also offer thanks to Professor Brent Debassige for generously contributing his insight into the work that I have presented. I owe a great deal to the Aboriginal scholars and leaders whose perspectives are interwoven into this work – this thesis would have been impossible without their voices. Finally, I thank my family, Lyn, Charlotte, and Benjamin, for sacrificing family time over the past three years as I pursued my educational goals. Their gracious support spurred my motivation and helped me to achieve a healthy balance between work, family, and school. I look forward to once again giving you my undivided attention!

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Figure 1 – The Vanishing Race - Navajo - 1907 - Edward S. Curtis

"The thought which this picture is meant to convey is that the Indians as a race, already shorn of their tribal strength and stripped of their primitive dress, are passing into the darkness of an unknown future" – Edward S. Curtis

(Author's Note: Curtis's photograph and comments are archetypal examples of the "vanishing Indian" stereotype that tosses Aboriginal people into the margins of history. This photograph epitomizes the way in which Aboriginal people are regarded in the Ontario curriculum).

Chapter One
Introduction

Antiracism and antidiscrimination education are claimed as major components of the Ontario curriculum. Curriculum writers have set lofty goals such as producing students who can "demonstrate.... a willingness to show respect, tolerance, and understanding [of others]... recognize bias and stereotypes... *and take a stand against racism*" (emphasis mine) (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005, p. 24). Aboriginal people receive exclusive attention in the antidiscrimination objectives and the equity and inclusiveness education policies contained in recent Ministry of Education publications such as the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework* (2007) and are an important element of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy* (2009). The Ontario government claims in these documents that the inclusion of Aboriginal peoples in the curriculum is of critical significance. But how well does the curriculum achieve Ontario's antiracism goals in regards to Aboriginal peoples? Does the Ontario curriculum combat or contribute to racism and discrimination? This study examines these questions by evaluating the compulsory Grade 6-9 Social Studies curriculum for its inclusion and representation of Aboriginal people.

Background: A Personal Encounter with Colonialism

As a servant of the Crown, I am sworn to faithfully conduct the Crown's bidding. And it was in the service of her Majesty that I found myself in Northern, "fly-in," Ontario, hundreds of miles from the nearest town, doling out Canadian "toonies" to the

Indigenous peoples in recompense for their ancestors having signed away certain lucrative land rights some eighty years prior. Under the terms of Treaty Nine, which was signed between the British Crown and the Anishnabe and Cree of Northern Ontario in 1929/30, each man, woman, and child is entitled to receive a grand total of four dollars per annum as "beneficiaries" of the Treaty. The Crown, for a few thousand dollars per year, possesses and exercises land rights over thousands of square kilometres of traditional Aboriginal territory.

In one treaty community, where protocol dictated that we display the Union Jack in an ironic gesture to that community's view of its historic relationship to the Crown, I took a soul-searching walk after a day of passing out toonies in an effort to learn more about the place and people with whom our government signed Treaty Nine. As the fiery Northern sun was setting over the moody waters of the community lake, igniting the rusted out truck that was resting near the lakeshore, I noticed an Elder receiving flattened cardboard boxes from a store employee who had delivered them in his pickup truck. I recognized the Elder because he was one of three Elders from the community who shook the hand of everyone on our government treaty team – an experience that was unique to that reserve. I will never forget his grateful smile as I placed two toonies in his weathered hand. His teeth were as crooked as the proverbial crooked mile, but the genuineness of his smile penetrated the cultural divide. He spoke to me in Cree, and all I knew how to say in return was "meegwetch," or "thank you." Cardboard was a valuable commodity that this elderly man was reusing to burn for heat or as insulation for his house. Half of his house was wrapped in plastic and he likely found it difficult to keep warm, even in August, when it was barely 10 degrees outside. The shingles were

crumbling and he had a rickety plywood entrance. It was obvious that this man was materially poor for someone who resided in one of the richest countries on earth. Yet most of us do not realize that our prosperity is due to the generosity that the First Nations displayed when they agreed to share their land by signing the treaties – this Elder's father, who most likely signed Treaty 9 in 1929/30, probably never imagined that his son would grow up and have to rely on cardboard and plastic sheets to stay warm in his old age. The four dollars that I had given that man now seemed like more of an insult than ever; particularly since the Supreme Court of Canada ruled in *R. vs. Sioui (1990)* that the treaties should be liberally interpreted in favour of the First Nations as the concept of owning Mother Earth was foreign to them and the surrendering of title was usually not explained or understood (Kulchyski, 1994). This ruling is rarely heeded in practical terms; if it were, I would have been giving that Elder two thousand toonies instead of two. Realizing the injustice of this man's poverty when I saw him, his house, and his cardboard, I felt ill on the inside.

My Position as Researcher

As a non-Aboriginal researcher, I recognize that I must be conscious of my voice and my position. I am descended from one of the original English settlers of the Huron Tract, which was purchased from the Chippewas who resided in South-Western Ontario in 1827. I grew up on the same land that my ancestors settled in 1853, near Kettle and Stony Point First Nations, and I have always been extremely conscious of the fragile relations between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations of that area. Fortunately, it was not always that way. My Grandfather and Great Uncle told me stories

of the excellent relationships that our ancestors forged with the Aboriginal inhabitants who lived on my parents' property up until the 1920s. I have set many of my life goals, including the writing of this thesis, in the spirit of seeing a return to harmonious relationships between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people on a broader scale. Nevertheless, I do not claim the right to impose what I think the curriculum should contain or aim to achieve. Such a claim would only serve to perpetuate the very omission of Aboriginal inclusion that characterizes many areas of Canadian society and contributes to the power imbalance and marginalization that colonialism inflicts on Aboriginal people. Aboriginal scholars have witnessed that their voices are not becoming increasingly included in the work of others; rather, their voices are increasingly excluded as other scholars fail to cite their work (Mihesuah & Wilson, 2004). Aboriginal voices are central to my research. The voices of Aboriginal scholars, educators, students, leaders, and community members are exceedingly abundant and powerful and will illuminate my research. My objective as a researcher is to gather those voices and to reflect them faithfully in my thesis. I do not claim a position of neutrality either. All research is conducted through epistemological lenses and it is important for me to acknowledge that, as one who engages in community development work in several Aboriginal communities, I have a stake in the Aboriginal community (Absolon & Willet, 2005). Finally, like Freire (1998), I recognize that my position is privileged – not just in where I stand within society but also in my role as a researcher whose desire is to contribute to social justice: "The real issue is to understand one's privileged position in the process so as not to, on the one hand, turn help into a type of missional paternalism and, on the other hand, limit the possibilities for the creation of structures that lead to real

empowerment" (p. xxix). Cognizant of my position of privilege and as a stakeholder in the Aboriginal community, it has been my goal to reflect the voices of the Aboriginal community while considering varied, and sometimes, conflicting points of view.

Context: Oppression and Ignorance

Aboriginal people in Canada generally fare worse than non-Aboriginal people in every socio-economic indicator, at least partly due to their historical treatment. Many Aboriginal communities struggle with assimilation, racism, and sub-standard socio-economic conditions, as per the 2006 Census (Gionet, 2009). A more recent national poll commissioned by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada found that racism towards Aboriginal people is increasing, with forty per cent of Aboriginal people indicating that they have suffered discrimination (Canwest, 2007). Colonialism has not been kind to First Nations. Wherever Aboriginal people are colonized, they are the single most disadvantaged and discriminated against group in every society (O'Sullivan, 1999). They have suffered the most severe marginalization in both historical and contemporary times. The effects of colonization that Europeans imposed in North America are historically seen as a disaster (O'Sullivan, 1999). Reconciliation of past wrongs has been a recent theme of various government and community interactions between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal governments and community groups. The Government of Canada, in its response to the report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, released a policy document in 1997 entitled "Gathering Strength" and an accompanying document, "Statement of Reconciliation," that acknowledged the mistakes of the past and committed the Government to pursing a relationship marked by reconciliation and cooperation. The Prime Minister of Canada apologized to former

students of residential schools in 2008 and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was established as a result of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement is mandated to facilitate reconciliation between former residential school students and their families and all Canadians:

> There is an emerging and compelling desire to put the events of the past behind us so that we can work towards a stronger and healthier future. The truth telling and reconciliation process as part of an overall holistic and comprehensive response to the Indian Residential School legacy is a sincere indication and acknowledgement of the injustices and harms experienced by Aboriginal people and the need for continued healing. This is a profound commitment to establishing new relationships embedded in mutual recognition and respect that will forge a brighter future. The truth of our common experiences will help set our spirits free and pave the way to reconciliation (Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2009, p. 1).

Non-Aboriginal communities have much to gain by discovering the richness of Indigenous cultures. The misconceptions, errors, fears, apathy, disregard, and stark racism that is evident among some secondary school graduates could potentially be superseded by learning experiences that acknowledge, appreciate, and even embrace Aboriginal peoples and cultures. Our future leaders could be the architects of a seismic reconstruction of a relationship that has often been rocky and strained. Ignorance of Aboriginal peoples is perilous and poses a monumental obstacle to reconciliation and socio-economic parity.

We perpetuate a system of oppression based, in part, on ignorance. The profound dearth of knowledge in Canada regarding Aboriginal cultures and histories is well-documented. Recent reports by the Canadian Education Association (2009), the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies (CAAS, 2002), and the Minister's National Working Group on Education (2002) have established that Canadian secondary school graduates possess limited knowledge of Aboriginal peoples. Graduates are ignorant about the history and experiences of the First Peoples. The CAAS survey found that 79.3% of students felt that their schools did not adequately provide opportunities for them to learn and understand Aboriginal issues, and 80.7% felt that they were not sufficiently trained to understand current issues between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. An appalling 23.3% of the respondents reported learning nothing about Aboriginal people. Students felt cheated by the education system: "I was barely taught ANYTHING regarding Aboriginal Peoples in school.... I am absolutely clueless with regard to these issues. I am uneducated on these matters and, as such, feel ill-equipped to even have an opinion, much less come to an understanding" (p. 129). Another student wrote: "This is the first I've ever heard about the residential schools...I will admit that because of my ignorance, my sympathy for the struggles of First Nations people was minimal. I have heard more about the Native people with alcohol-related issues who receive free tuition to university than I have heard what has happened to them to make them so desperate" (p. 154). The conclusion reached by the CAAS researchers should act as a clarion call for change from educators: "When a majority of students in undergraduate programs across Canada feel the education system has failed to prepare them for dealing with [what the United

Nations calls] Canada's 'most pressing human rights issue,' there is *clearly* something wrong with the system" (p. 112). In the absence of knowledge that prepares young people to intelligently view and connect with Aboriginal matters, stereotypes and other misconceptions inevitably fill the void as evidenced by the graduates' responses contained in some of these reports. Misconceptions prevent an honest and critical analysis of the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples and even present a barrier to the conceptualization of change in that relationship (CAAS, 2002). Ignorance fosters racism, and racism fuels conflicts and perpetuates numerous social ills, such as the Third World conditions in which many Aboriginal people live. Robert Debassige, former Tribal Chairman and Executive Director of the United Chiefs and Councils of Manitoulin, explained to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996):

> Public education is essential in confronting the problems posed by ignorance and misconceptions regarding our place in Canadian history and the nature of our rights. All Canadians should have the knowledge required to understand our situation, as well as the knowledge that what we have sought all along is mutual respect and coexistence. (Vol. 5, Ch. 4, p. 1).

The RCAP Commissioners heard a consistent message that the ignorance that is persistent among non-Aboriginal people poses barriers to mutual understanding and respect:

> … we have been reminded repeatedly of the limited understanding of Aboriginal issues among non-Aboriginal Canadians and of the

> obstacles this presents to achieving reconciliation and a new relationship. As one intervener described it, there is a "vacuum of consciousness" among non-Aboriginal people. We would go further to suggest a pervasive lack of knowledge and perhaps even of interest. (RCAP, 1996, Vol. 7. Ch. 1, p. 1)

This lack of knowledge strikes at the very foundation of a just society - meaningful inclusion, participation, representation, and the recognition and honouring of Aboriginal rights:

> Historically, the door has not been open for the just participation of Aboriginal peoples and their representatives in Canada. The Commission heard about misunderstandings concerning the treaties and about federal policies that ignored solemn commitments made in these treaties once the newcomers were settled and assumed control. Federal legislation, we find, has unilaterally defined 'Indians' without regard to the terms of the treaties and without regard to cultural and national differences among Aboriginal peoples. (RCAP, 1996, Vol. 1, Ch. 1)

Churning out secondary school graduates who know very little of Aboriginal people and their histories serves to perpetuate the ill effects of the strained relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Rationale

In this thesis I explore one of the potential reasons behind the paucity of knowledge of Aboriginal peoples that is rampant among Ontario secondary school

graduates by examining the mandated social studies curriculum for the provincial school system. Does Ontario's curriculum allow for a meaningful exploration of Aboriginal issues? Does the curriculum encourage students to research and think critically about historical and contemporary Aboriginal issues? Do the Ontario curriculum documents sufficiently contribute to the fulfillment of Ontario's antiracist education policies regarding Aboriginal people? I have focussed on an examination of the mandatory Grade 6-9 Social Studies/Social Sciences curriculum in order to answer these questions. The answers have profound educational, social, and practical significance.

I deliberately chose a course of study that could potentially lead to a pragmatic outcome. Educational researchers are guilty of eschewing the practical realities of education. Apple (1993) warns of the peril of disregarding the pragmatic mechanisms that control education at all levels: "We have become so abstract, so metatheoretical, that we are in danger of ignoring the daily realities of and struggles over the actual policies and practices of curriculum, teaching, and evaluation in schools" (p. 93). Hence, I have anchored my study in a review of a practical component of education, the Ontario curriculum, that has ramifications for the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and the well-being of Aboriginal communities.

The Social Studies curriculum contains the greatest amount of content relevant to this study when compared to other subjects that contain references to Aboriginal people (e.g., English or the Arts). Although the Grade 6 component is part of a larger document, *Grade 1-6 Social Studies*, I have chosen to start with Grade 6 as the focus of the course is on First Nations peoples and European explorers. Grade 6 students are also at a level where they are no longer just exploring simple facts about Aboriginal history – the

curriculum at this stage encourages students to also explore differing opinions, interpretations, and viewpoints. Students are beginning to form attitudes and outlooks that they will carry with them into adulthood. Ignorance also takes root at a young age: "The seeds of racism can be planted very early when the curriculum does not reflect the culture and reality" of Aboriginal peoples (CAAS, 2002, p. 16). The pertinent Grade 7 and 8 documents are entitled *History and Geography* and the Grade 9 and 10 documents are entitled *Canadian and World Studies*. The Grades 6-9 Social Studies curriculum is rife with relevant content for an age group that is formulating attitudes and opinions that may become entrenched for many years, if not the rest of their lives.

In keeping with its stated mandate of providing antidiscrimination and antiracism education, the Ontario curriculum has been occasionally updated by the Ministry of Education to be more inclusive of marginalized groups including Aboriginal people. I examined the curriculum to determine its level of inclusion of Aboriginal people. It was my goal to determine if the curriculum truly lives up to its goal of providing meaningful antiracism education. In the spirit of critical theory, it is my goal to use the results of my research to influence positive changes in the curriculum. Where there are exclusions, misinformation, or flaws, I have identified and recommended ways to correct the curriculum and to make it more inclusive.

Outlining the Theoretical Framework

I have placed my research within the theoretical framework of critical theory and critical education research. Rather than a descriptive account, critical theory is "explicitly prescriptive and normative, entailing a view of what behaviour in a social

democracy *should* entail" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 26). Critical theory questions powerful interests and their legitimacy in their service to equality and democracy (Cohen et al., 2007). Critical theorists believe that they have a right and a duty to "speak out against every abuse of power, whoever the author, whoever its victim" (Foucault, 2000, p. 474). Critical theory is a research tradition that examines the political and social conditions that perpetuate injustice. Its purpose extends beyond observing and commenting on the world; critical theory intends to transform the world into a world of justice, equality, and liberty (Cohen et al., 2007). I conducted my research in the tradition of critical theory knowing that Aboriginal people are a marginalized people in a country that has been enriched by their generosity and that they have not conventionally been well-represented in curricula.

However, critical theory is not without its detractors and it is incumbent upon me to briefly address their criticisms. Hunkins and Ornstein (2009) summarize the criticism by characterizing critical theory as "brainwashing" and critical theorists as believing they hold an "exclusive patent" on critical pedagogy characterized by reflection and action (p. 383). Hunkins and Ornstein (2009) criticize critical theorists for maintaining that dominant pedagogies lull educators and students into accepting the status quo of the powerful and privileged by suppressing and subjugating the "underclasses" on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity and so forth (p. 383). Hunkins and Ornstein (2009) further argue that mainstream educators recognize that many social wrongs are premised on inequality and power struggles that must be corrected, but not through revolutionary acts that overthrow the current system. Although Hunkins and Ornstein allude to a rather extreme Marxist form of critical theory, their points are well-heeded. I agree with their

assertion that certain elements of critical theory may not be common to all pedagogies, but they are at least valued by most educators who "foster in students the construction of new meaning and the generation of new social practices that contribute to critical mindedness, to the transformation of thought and action, and to the liberation of both mind and spirit" (p. 283). I, too, do not subscribe to the more radical features of critical theory, but I do place my research within a critical framework of transformative change. In a more detailed rebuttal of the criticisms of critical theory, Morrow and Torres (2006) outline five major types of attack on critical theory and pedagogy and spend the greater part of their book, *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical Pedagogy and Transformative Social Change*, defusing the criticisms and arguing for the importance of an education geared to social change.

My research is also situated in the critical education research and pedagogy traditions of scholars such as Michael Apple who have analyzed curricula as tools that the elite use to perpetuate their positions of privilege and power (Apple, 1979). Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) move beyond the philosopher Herbert Spencer's question, "What knowledge is of most worth?" to ask "*Whose* knowledge is of most worth?" (p. 1). They declare that curriculum is not neutral knowledge. What is presented as legitimate knowledge is a "result of complex power relations and struggles among identifiable class, race, gender/sex, and religious groups" (p. 2). Social and economic control is exercised through what Apple (1979) terms the "hidden curriculum" (p. 63). The forms of meaning are situated so that cultural legitimacy is conferred on particular social groups, thereby ensuring that inequitable social structures are reproduced (Apple, 1979). It is important to note that the perpetuation of power through the creation and mandating

of official curricula does not necessarily have to be a deliberate act of racism or suppression. Apple stresses that those who do the state's bidding, such as educators, can unwittingly be players in "unconscious" and "latent functions" that serve to maintain class structure (Apple, 1979, p. 64). Education and power are inextricably linked. Similarly, Giroux and McLaren (1997) assert that most school texts are the products of interests that inform dominant social and cultural groups. History is an extremely subjective course as history is a retelling or recounting of stories that are filtered by time, perspective, emotion, motive, and a host of other factors. And as the official writer and approver of the mandated curriculum, the state has the power to directly influence what version of history is told. Historian Alan Munslow (1997) extends the argument further: "Written history is always more than innocent storytelling, precisely because it is the primary vehicle for the distribution and use of power" (p. 13). For Aboriginal people, the state's influence over officially disseminated knowledge holds exceedingly high stakes. According to Aboriginal scholar, Vine Deloria Jr. (2003), the rewriting of North American history was one of many weapons that the European newcomers used in the colonization of Aboriginal people: "To retrench the traditional concept of Western history at this point would mean to invalidate the justifications for conquering the Western hemisphere" (p. 111). Kanien'kehaka scholar, Taiaike Alfred (1999), declares that the state uses its privileged position to continue to oppress Aboriginal people: "The state attempts to rewrite history in order to legitimize its exercise of power (sovereignty) over Indian peoples" (p. xii). A compulsory curriculum written by the state is a powerful link in the chain that has bound Aboriginal people to the colonizer.

Critical education research is an important tool for identifying and resisting

those forces that marginalize knowledge of Aboriginal people and their histories. Critical education research serves to "destabilize the constellation of reified facts and to defamiliarize the domesticating myths which often serve to legitimize existing relations of power and privilege among dominant groups" (Giroux & McLaren, 1997, p. 35). Critical education research aims to bolster critical literacy:

> [Critical literacy] in the broadest political sense, is best understood as a myriad of discursive forms and cultural competencies that construct and make available the various relations and experiences that exist between learners and the world. In a more specific sense, critical literacy is both a narrative for agency as well as a reference for critique (Giroux, 1987, p. 10).

And critical literacy poses a threat to those "existing systems of power that actively attempt to manage knowledge for the purposes of domination" (Morrow & Torres, 2002, p. 117). Some scholars have criticized critical pedagogy for focusing on the shortcomings of current education rather than presenting a vision of what education should be and how to realize that vision through a clear set of values (McLaren, 1997). Cognizant of that criticism, I present that vision through the voices of Aboriginal people later in this text.

I also have set my study firmly in the tradition of anti-colonialism. Anti-colonialism contains many elements of critical theory. In a general sense, colonialism is defined as "all forms of dominating and oppressive relationships that emerge from structures of power and privilege inherent and embedded in our contemporary social relations…Colonial is defined not simply as foreign or alien, but more importantly as dominating and imposing" (Dei & Asgharzadeh, 2001, p. 308). Colonialism, as

practiced in North America and other parts of the world, is a specific system of domination and subjugation over all facets of Aboriginal life: "Colonialism not only meant the imposition of Western authority over Indigenous lands, Indigenous modes of production, and Indigenous law and government, but also an imposition of Western authority over all aspects of Indigenous knowledge, language, and culture" (Smith, 1999, p. 64). In some cases, Western imposition means utter destruction of the past in order to dominate the present and future: "By a kind of perverted logic, [colonialism] turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it" (Kempf, 2006, p. 132). In a quest for domination, the oppressor fabricates a new reality. Fact fades into fiction, and fiction is accepted as fact. Oppressor groups deliberately define what is "normal," "real," or "correct" in order to supplant truth with falsehoods: "The reworking of fact into convenient or expedient fantasies by the colonizer is a logical process rather than an inexplicable aberration" (Churchill, 1992, p. 19). This artificial reality has been described as "hegemony" and is a process of exalting certain cultural beliefs, values, and practices to the suppression and exclusion of all others (Hardiman & Jackson, 2007, p. 36). Hegemony can even include denial of colonization on the part of the colonizer. For example, at the G-20 Summit in the Fall of 2009, Prime Minister Stephen Harper proudly declared to the world's press that Canada does not have a history of colonization (Barerra, 2009). Though his office later backpedalled on the statement, Aboriginal leaders clearly took the Prime Minister's words (in addition to the *Indian Act* and other colonizing methods) as a sign that the Government of Canada is still in the business of colonizing. Sometimes, colonization is not a respecter of limits. Colonialism seeks to root out anything that is Aboriginal in origin or nature that may be perceived to threaten

the exalted position of the colonizer.

Anti-colonialism, then, is the resistance of the forces of hegemony that strive to control and dominate in order to maintain positions of power and privilege. Anti-colonialism recognizes that all knowledge emerges from a particular social context that moulds ways of knowing and understanding and recognizes the significance of understanding the relationship of the social and political realms in constructing social realities (Dei & Kempf, 2006). Anti-colonialism "calls for a critical awareness of how knowledge is produced, validated, and disseminated in order to challenge social oppression and subvert domination" (Dei & Kempf, 2006, p. 3). Embracing anti-colonialism compels the shedding of passivity and unconsciousness and the cloaking of active opposition against those systems and structures that collude to suppress a marginalized people.

Critical theory and pedagogy play a paramount role in the resistance of anti-colonialism. Aboriginal scholars have turned to some of the architects of critical theory to construct their own bulwarks against colonialism. For example, Angela Wilson (2004) has acknowledged her indebtedness to the works of Fanon and Freire to articulate her own struggle against what she describes as "our ongoing colonization" by stating that "their writings refreshingly offer hope for real world change" (p. 69). For Wilson, Fanon illuminated the necessity of overturning the colonial structure in realizing freedom from oppression. Freire introduced Wilson to the concept of "praxis," which is a term that describes a process of reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it (p. 69). Critical pedagogy is a vital weapon in Wilson's fight against colonialism. Describing it as a liberatory pedagogy that offers a vibrant application for the struggles

that Aboriginal people face, she asks, "For what had I been continually seeking an education if not to transform the world around me and create a place where justice for Indian people is more than an illusion?" (p. 69). Cree scholar, Winona Wheeler (2000), explains that critical literacy is key to empowering her people as they contend with the ill effects of colonialism:

> A large part of decolonization entails developing a critical consciousness about the cause(s) of our oppression, and distortion of our history, our own collaboration, and the degrees to which we have internalized colonialist ideas and practices… Decolonization is about empowerment – a belief that situations can be transformed, a belief and trust in our own peoples' values and abilities, and a willingness to make change. (p. 212)

For many Aboriginal scholars, critical theory provides a place to fight for survival and justice in which the "pedagogue" is a "warrior" (Regnier, 1995, p. 67). Regnier (1995) states that pedagogues as warriors perform crucial tasks:

> … [they] reveal contradictions between dominant ideologies and Aboriginal subjugation,… call upon the public to support Aboriginal struggles for mutual survival and justice,… criticize racial injustice,… and where the hidden curriculum of racism is to be rooted out in structure and ideology, the pedagogue as warrior inserts the self into a position that confronts structure and provokes critical reflection. (p. 67)

Aboriginal scholar, Billie Allan (2006), best summarizes the challenge of resisting

colonialism:

> The most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and community. In order to resist colonization, we must resist this removal. By remembering our history, reconnecting to our communities, and bringing forth the teachings… we rupture the hegemony of knowledge production while at the same time working to decolonize our minds, bodies, hearts, and spirits. (p. 268)

Anti-colonialism holds the promise of transformative change – empowerment of a people who became almost powerless in the wake of colonialism, and reconciliation for a strained relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Summary of Existing Research

Scant research has been conducted on Aboriginal content in the Ontario curriculum. There is some literature on culturally relevant curriculum for Aboriginal students (Agbo, 2001; Aikenhead, 2001; CAAS, 2002; Cardinal, 1999; Cherubini, 2009), but precious little work looks at what the "mainstream" curriculum contains to educate non-Aboriginal students. The Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies (CAAS) conducted a review of Aboriginal content in provincial and territorial curricula and published its report, *Learning About Walking in Beauty*, in 2002. This study concluded that Ontario's curriculum lacked Aboriginal content that allowed students to study Aboriginal people in-depth (CAAS, 2002). The study is also based on a survey of 519 secondary school graduates from eighteen post-secondary institutions in eight provinces that tested their knowledge of Aboriginal people. The survey found that the

graduates were extremely ignorant of matters pertaining to Aboriginal people. The curriculum documents that I have reviewed have been rewritten since 2002 and the possibility for improvement exists.

Several other studies have informed my examination of Ontario's curriculum. Winny (2000) analyzed Aboriginal inclusivity in Canadian fiction for adolescents, spanning two decades from 1970-1990. Winny's (2000) examination of the political and educational climate that set the stage for changes in adolescent fiction provides useful contextual material for situating the changes in the Ontario curriculum that I will discuss. Boyko (2007) reviewed the content of textbooks prior to the 1980s and found that Aboriginal people were invisible and that the textbooks were dominated by the story of the development of the French and English. Additionally, Watter (2008) examined the current *Grade 9-10 Canadian World Studies* curriculum documents and concluded that they fall short of any meaningful inclusion of Aboriginal people. Anti-racist educator Kempf (2006) reached the same conclusion in his analysis of Ontario's only compulsory secondary school history course, *History since World War 1, Grade 10, Academic, 2005,* as part of his case study that surveyed Ontario classroom history resources from 1860 to 2006. The absence of Aboriginal content is evident in the course description and the fourteen overall learning expectations in which there is no mention of Aboriginal people (Kempf, 2006). Aboriginal people are acknowledged in only three of the sixty-five specific learning expectations. Kempf (2006) scrutinized a broad range of general history resources, which included both textbooks and Ministry of Education curriculum guidelines, and infers that there is a "litany of glaring omissions, outright expressions of hatred, and anthropological condescension that combine to privilege whiteness at the

expense of Aboriginal perspectives and material processes" (p. 136). Kempf (2006) concludes that there has been an inadequate and exclusionary portrayal of Aboriginal histories, activities, perspectives, and contributions. The Ontario history resources he delved into have served to reinforce the "philosophical backbone for the continuing cultural and economic imperialism inflicted upon Aboriginal people by the Canadian Government on a micro level, and by the global capitalist system on a macro level" (p. 136). The insidiousness of the colonial practice of wiping out Aboriginal knowledge and superseding it with self-exalting perspectives is infused in Ontario's "official" history:

> The education system in Ontario...ignores the content and practice of Aboriginal history and epistemology. It instead provides compulsory Canadian settler history that preserves the salience of settler domination. Inaccurate and oppressive histories are thus thrust upon Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike (Kempf, 2006, p. 133).

Thus, there is compelling evidence that Ontario has historically failed to educate students about Aboriginal people.

Kempf's (2006) case study is also worth briefly examining for the way he categorizes the resources that he analyzes (pp. 138-143). He divides them into four groups:

Group A: These resources use history to debase Aboriginal people and promote explicitly racist and hateful misunderstandings. Fortunately, these resources are confined to the past, but portray Aboriginal people in a very negative light, such as savages, barbarians, simpletons, and many other time-worn stereotypes that I refer to elsewhere in this thesis.

Group B: Aboriginal people are treated as relics from long ago who were developmentally arrested. This group virtually ignores Aboriginal resistance to colonization and features First Nations as features from the geographic landscape of history.

Group C: This category practically erases Aboriginal people from the historical record and supplants Aboriginal history with settler history.

Group D: Kempf (2006) categorizes Group D as "transhistorical." There are some references to resistance to colonization, but these resources do not sufficiently incorporate Aboriginal worldviews or epistemologies and do not address the degree to which Aboriginal people are oppressed by the Canadian system.

Although I do not align my analysis with Kempf's categories, his insights into the omissions and inadequacies of historical resources in Ontario informed the creation of my categories of analysis of the Ontario curriculum.

Of Methodology and Content Analysis

In my analysis of the curriculum documents I employed content analysis, which is simply defined as "the rigorous analysis, examination, and verification of the contents of written data" by a "strict and systematic set of procedures" (Cohen, et. al., 2007, p. 475). It is a very valuable research technique for making "replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorp, 2004, p. 30). Content analysis is praised for its reliability: it is "systematic and verifiable (e.g. in its use of codes and categories), as the rules of analysis are explicit, transparent, and

public" (Cohen et. al., 2007, p. 475). It can also be used to describe the relative frequency and significance of particular subjects and to evaluate "bias, prejudice, or propoganda" (Anderson & Arsenault, 1998, p. 101). I followed the eleven steps of content analysis as outlined by Cohen et. al. (2007):

1. Define the research questions to be addressed by the content analysis.
2. Define the population from which units of text are to be sampled.
3. Define the sample to be included.
4. Define the context of the generation of the document.
5. Define the units of analysis.
6. Decide the codes to be used in the analysis.
7. Construct the categories for analysis.
8. Conduct the coding and categorizing of the data.
9. Conduct the data analysis.
10. Summarize.
11. Make speculative inferences. (pp. 477-483)

The units of analysis that I chose were based on the number of references to Aboriginal people. I began by documenting the frequency with which the term "Aboriginal" and other related terms such as First Nations, Indian, Métis, Inuit, specific First Nations and so forth are mentioned in the curriculum "learning expectations." The curriculum is organized by themes, topics, and learning expectations. A learning expectation is an objective or outcome that guides teachers as to the skills and knowledge that students should learn. I then tabulated how often Aboriginal people/issues are mentioned as a potential topic of study, or expectation, within a unit and as a unit of study. Some of the

expectations are general in nature but refer to Aboriginal people in specific examples. Inasmuch as the curriculum documents are limited in length and do not prescribe every specific topic that could be studied, the examples that are included can be interpreted as being representative of the topics that are expected to be covered. In order to make inferences regarding the relative frequency of Aboriginal peoples in the curriculum documents, I compared the mention of Aboriginal people to non-Aboriginal people where appropriate. To enrich my analysis, I also sought stereotypes, myths, Eurocentric terminology and ideas, and omissions in relation to Aboriginal people as categories of analysis. I chose these categories because of their role in distorting the truth about Aboriginal people. As I will elucidate in the next section, inaccurate or non-existent portrayals of Aboriginal people possess the potential for graver harm than simply contributing to the trend of graduates who are ignorant or misinformed. Although it can be limited to being quantitative in nature, the highest quality of content analysis has elements of both quantitative and qualitative analysis (Weber, 1990). As such, utilizing quantitative and qualitative analysis has allowed me to infer emergent themes from the curriculum documents in order to sculpt my thesis.

Categories of Analysis: The Peril of Stereotypes, Eurocentrisms, Mythologies, and Omissions in the Curriculum

Stereotypes are a perilous source of information that can distort the public's perception and relationship with Aboriginal people. Stereotyping in education "contributes to the lack of Canadian understanding of Aboriginal rights, cultures, and traditions" (CAAS, 2002, p. 16). Thus, it is critical that the Ontario curriculum avoid

any hint of stereotypes. In my study, I have analyzed the Ontario curriculum to determine if it is free of stereotypes. Stereotypes of Aboriginal people are well-documented and it is worth briefly examining the stereotypes for which I searched in my study. There is an extensive range of stereotypes that have been created since first contact, from the "idealized, all-spiritual environmentalist to the 'primitive' down-trodden welfare case" (Doxtator, 1992, p. 12). The "most important and common features of stereotypes of major structural groups relates to their mental abilities. In each case, the oppressed group is characterized as innately less intelligent" (Kilpatrick, 1999, p. xvii), a practice that originated at least as early as Aristotle who classified Aboriginal people as a minor category of sub-humans, in the lower echelons of intelligence (Deloria, 2004). Other stereotypes abound: primitive, filthy, innocent, intensely sexual, more bestial than human, the pure and attractive Indian princess, and the natural ecologist who is in harmony with nature and the spiritual world and is the loyal guardian of Mother Earth (Kilpatrick, 1999). A plethora of stereotypes, sometimes contradictory, have been embedded in North American society since first contact with Europeans.

Stereotypes in North America have their roots in early historical accounts of the first encounters between explorers and the First Nations. In those days, explorers intent on launching expeditions into the Americas in hopes of securing land and resources fabricated propaganda depicting the original inhabitants as barbaric, heathen, savages who thwarted progress and needed to be dismissed and displaced (Churchill, 1992). Intent on the European settlement of Virginia, Samuel Purchas (1625) wrote a haughty and cruel description of the Indigenous peoples:

> On the other side considering so good a Countrey, so bad a people, having

> little of humanitie but shape, ignorant of Civilitie, of Arts, of Religion; more brutish than the beasts they hunt, more wild and unmanly then that unmanned wild countrey, which they range rather than inhabite; captivated also to Satans tyranny in foolish pieties, mad impieties, wicked idlenesses, busie and bloudy wickednesse. (p. 231)

More positive accounts, from those with less nefarious intentions, often generalized the traits and circumstances of an individual community and applied them to all Aboriginal people (Kilpatrick, 1999). Anthropology is another culprit in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes such as the primitive savage. Edward Tylor (1871), the founder of modern anthropology, posited that all cultures can be plotted on a linear continuum that shows progress from a primitive to an advanced state:

> [The] standard of reckoning progress and decline is…of movement along a measured line from grade to grade of actual savagery, barbarism, and civilization…the savage state in some measure represents an early condition of mankind, out of which the higher culture has gradually been developed or evolved… (p. 28).

Late nineteenth and early twentieth century's anthropological assumptions are echoed in popular stereotypes:

> …the uniformity of human mental characteristics and abilities over space and time allowed the comparison of peoples regardless of geography or history; similarity of stages in the course of cultural evolution of all peoples; and the use of European standards and the idea of progress to measure the direction and

amount of development. (Berkhofer, 1979, p. 52)

Scientific racism was solidified by Social Darwinism when evolutionary theories were mistakenly transferred from the non-human world to anthropology (Miller, 1991).

Stereotypes were also perpetuated by popular literature. James Fenimore Cooper is known for having entrenched the "noble savage," the "bloodthirsty savage," and the "outlaw Indian," intent on wreaking destruction among peace-loving settlers, in his early nineteenth century novels such as *The Leatherstocking Tales* and *The Last of the Mohicans* (Kilpatrick, 1999, p. 2). A few decades after Cooper, influential historian Frederick Jackson Turner immortalized the "disappearing" or "vanishing Indian" in his work on the frontier thesis (Kilpatrick, 1999, p. 39). Widely accepted as a reasonable analysis, Turner posited that Native Americans presented an obstacle to the natural progress of civilization. He erroneously asserted that Aboriginal people preceded agrarian development and impeded a fully-developed urban civilization. The "vanishing Indian" stereotype served the interests of the colonizers who wished to clear the frontier of anything or anyone that they perceived to be as an obstacle to their destiny of inheriting the "New World." The photograph, "The Vanishing Race," by Edward S. Curtis (1907) that is located on page viii of this paper is a classic example of the "vanishing Indian" stereotype. Curtis would be shocked to learn that the "vanishing" Navajo Nation is now the second must numerous Aboriginal group in the United States, numbering over a quarter of a million people. Stereotypes of Aboriginal people possess an unfortunate legacy in North America.

One might assume that stereotypes are relics of the distant past and therefore are not worthy of examination in a study of contemporary curricula. I wish that were a

correct assumption. Unfortunately, stereotypes have persisted into modern times. Turner's "vanishing Indian" is evident in the following passage that concludes Kevin Costner's 1990 cinematic, revisionist portrayal of the Lakota: "Thirteen years later, their homes destroyed, their buffalo gone, the last band of free Sioux submitted to white authority at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. The great horse culture of the plains was gone and the American frontier was soon to pass into history" (as cited in Prats, 2002, p. 251). Relegated to a tragic and romantic past, the Lakota remain frozen in time. And the "bloodthirsty savage" still endures in the popular *Lonesome Dove* series by Larry McMurty: the Aboriginal man, Black Duck, is portrayed as an amoral murder machine (Kilpatrick, 1999, p. 11). Stereotypes are also rampant in modern sports. Tomahawk chops and war whoops were relished by fans of the World Series winners, the Atlanta Braves, in the 1990s. An editorial that ran in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* during the World Series importuned Atlanta Fans to cease their degrading behaviour: "Please, Georgians, leave your tomahawks, chants, and headdresses at home. It's simply wrong to mock other people, to use their cultural symbols crudely, and to resurrect hurtful old stereotypes" (Kilpatrick, 1999, p. 121). Various lawsuits have since been launched by Aboriginal groups against other professional sports teams who employ demeaning stereotypes to market their franchise, including the Florida State Seminoles, Washington Redskins, Kansas City Chiefs, and the Cleveland Indians, among others (Kilpatrick, 1999). Even secondary school teams such as the West Hill Warriors in Scarborough, Ontario, that have recently acknowledged the debasing stereotypes that they have adopted as their own and have moved to rectify by shedding the Warrior image, have been met with unbending resistance from those who do not recognize the harmful nature

of stereotypes (Stuart, 2009). Manifestations of modern stereotypes are also prolific: "...as militant, renegade law-breakers (e.g. land rights protesters with the media slant towards "armed stand-offs," tobacco smugglers, greedy fishermen or hunters, urban gangs of angry youth, etc.), who are recklessly trying to destroy everything that has been built on this land since European civilization arrived" or "...the poor helpless victim who may be incarcerated, drunk on the street, sniffing gas in some isolated and dilapidated recreation centre, suffering from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, or otherwise reeling from the abuses" that his or her people have endured (CAAS, 2002, p. 45). This stereotype is perpetuated by popular novelist, Jan Frazier, who portrays members of the poorest First Nation in the United States, the Pine Ridge Sioux, as alcoholics who are mired in poverty and who refuse to do anything about it (Mihesuah, 2004). Often, the most shocking examples of stereotypes emanate from the mouths of students. The CAAS (2002) survey of secondary student graduates unveiled some deep-rooted stereotypes (2002, p. 46-47):

- "They want more money [and the solution is] just like weaning a baby, slowly take it away from them."
- "We have good artwork, totem poles, and cultural studies that we can show in museums and to other countries to make it look like we have culture."
- "They contributed to Canadian culture with wars."
- "It's hard not to be judgemental when they get special treatment for everything."

These attitudes are indicative of an education system that has failed to provide accurate and balanced perspectives that would counter popular stereotypes. Clearly, stereotypes

of Aboriginal people are still deeply entrenched in North American society.

It is paramount that curricula be free of any trace of stereotypes because stereotypes form the lenses by which others are viewed. In her landmark work, "Rethinking Stereotypes," sociologist Theresa Perkins (1979) outlines the fundamental role that stereotypes play in forming our opinions of others and argues that "stereotypes are evaluative concepts about status and role and as such are central to interpreting and evaluating social groups" (p. 156). Stereotypes become deep-rooted substitutes for knowledge based in reality and as such can form the basis for misguided attitudes and behaviour. In commenting on the function that literature has served in perpetuating stereotypes, Aboriginal scholar Ward Churchill (1992) asserts that stereotypes are an integral weapon in the arsenal of colonialism:

> The stereotypes [in both historical novels and documentary accounts] assume a documented 'authenticity' in the public consciousness. For stereotyped and stereotyper alike, it becomes dehumanizing and a tool to justify murder under the guise of aesthetic freedom… The [stereotypes] of American Indians in American literature may be seen as an historical requirement of an imperial process. (p. 1)

Choctaw scholar, Devon Mihesuah (2004), contends that stereotypes are intentionally created or sustained in order to suppress the colonized and benefit the colonizer, both materially and psychically. When the real accomplishments and humanity of a people are disregarded, people disappear from history and consciousness. Furthermore, "…dehumanization, obliteration, or appropriation of identity, political subordination, and material colonization" are elements of a common process of imperialism (Churchill,

1992, p. 239). The consequences of stereotypes being sustained in popular opinion have a profoundly negative impact on the lives of Aboriginal people. Dakota scholar, Angela Wilson (2004), is haunted by the conviction that non-Aboriginal scholars are also guilty of contributing to detrimental misperceptions of Aboriginal people and suggests that "many scholars continue to dehumanize Aboriginal people by imposing a near-Neanderthal mentality on our people. Not only is this racist and insulting, histories stemming from this dangerous misconception of Indigenous peoples have very real consequences for living First Nations people" (p. 71). Wilson illustrates those consequences by explaining that on her reservation there was a high school drop out rate of a staggering eighty per cent in 2002. Students attend a secondary school adjacent to the reservation and Wilson blames the racist school curriculum for significantly contributing to this appalling statistic. Stereotypes are also evident in the unabashedly racist comments of students who were part of the CAAS (2002) survey (p. 56-57):

- Whatever. Why don't they just stop fighting and get a job and fit in. That's what they want so stop trying to stick out.
- Don't care about it...Take the land with no remorse – survival of the fittest.
- Probably nice people, but I'm just not interested. I really wouldn't want to learn more of this stuff in school than we already do.
- They haven't and never will [contribute to Canadian society] because they have never been important.

Undoubtedly, the potential damage that could be wreaked by these types of racist attitudes is severe and poses an astronomical barrier to reconciliation. Eliminating stereotypes is an essential initial step toward achieving reconciliation between Aboriginal

and non-Aboriginal people.

In addition to searching for stereotypes, I also studied the Ontario curriculum for signs of Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is a worldview that places European concepts and interests at the centre of the dialogue and ignores or marginalizes non-European worldviews. As a form of ethnocentrism, Eurocentrism judges the qualities of others in terms of its own ideals and standards (Berkhofer, 1979). For instance, First Nations are viewed as one cultural grouping, with nothing to distinguish one group from the other. Contemporary references to "Aboriginal culture" are commonplace, as if there is one culture that is mutual to all Aboriginal people. In the words of Churchill (1992), distinctions are either "non-existent (ignorance) or irrelevant (arrogance)" (p. 236). "Non-existent" could also be an exhibit of arrogance if it is derived from a view that Aboriginal people were too rudimentary to have developed multiple cultures of complexity. Such "ignorance" or "arrogance" is as absurd as stating that all Europeans are homogenous and there is nothing distinct among the various nations of Europe: Spain is the same as France as France is the same as Ireland. Over-generalizations that chain Aboriginal people to a stock identity distort reality. The authors of the CAAS report (2002), *Learning About Walking in Beauty*, satirize the hybrid Aboriginal person, who is featured in many Canadian curricula, and whom they have called the "Classroom Indian":

> We all know this **man** (for the 'Classroom Indian' is almost always a 'man' in conventional Canadian curricula). He sits on a horse in the sunset with a Plains Chief head-dress of many feathers. On one side is

> his Totem Pole; on the other is his Tipi. His snowshoes (an 'Indian' invention) lean against the side of the Tipi. His corn (one of the many 'gifts' the Indians 'gave' to the European pioneers) is growing in the background. Behind him, to the north, is his requisite Igloo, and his friend the Eskimo – now usually called the Inuit so as to be more respectful. (p. 75)

Eurocentrism is also found in the vocabulary of popular studies: "whites are soliders, Indians are warriors; whites live in towns, Indians in villages; whites have kings and generals, Indians have chiefs; whites have states, Indians have tribes; whites have eschatology, Indians have ghost dances" (Wright, 1991, p. x). The bias behind the contrasting vocabulary is in favour of a Eurocentric worldview that European society is superior to Aboriginal societies. The Bering Strait Land Bridge theory is another common example of Eurocentrism (Mihesuah, 2004). Found in virtually every history book that traces the history of Turtle Island's first inhabitants, the theory maintains that the First Nations are not indigenous to North America, but actually migrated across a land bridge that connected Asia with what is now Alaska anywhere from fifteen thousand to forty thousand years ago. The implication of this theory is that First Nations were "primitive" distant relatives descended from a far more advanced civilization of Asia. The theory, which is treated as fact by many historians and teachers, consequently debunks First Nations oral histories that assert that they are indigenous to Turtle Island and relegates their creation stories to the fantastical and quaint realm of mythology. This perpetuates the stereotypes that Aboriginal people were less intelligent, simple, romantic, and naïve in their belief systems. Viewing Aboriginal people and their histories through

Eurocentric lenses clouds an accurate and respectful vision of reality.

In my study I also sought traces of mythology. In the retelling of history, First Nations history can degenerate into mythology. Ronald Wright (1991) warns of the harm that can be caused by myths that are passed off as history:

> Most history, when it has been digested by a people, becomes myth. Myth is an arrangement of the past, whether real or imagined, in patterns that resonate with a culture's deepest values and aspirations. Myths create and reinforce archetypes so taken for granted, so seemingly axiomatic, that they go unchallenged. Myths are so fraught with meaning that we live and die by them. They are the maps by which cultures navigate through time. (p. 5)

Portrayals of First Nations constantly at war or the exact opposite, living in a harmonious Garden of Eden, are examples of the warped history that is regurgitated in various forums and inevitably can lead to stereotypes (Kilpatrick, 1999). The myths of Thanksgiving and Pocahontas overshadow the personal histories of numerous First Nations in the North Eastern United States and the English invasion of their homelands (Kilpatrick, 1999). Mythologies ignore or hide certain facts that may shed unfavourable light on particular people or circumstances. Buscombe's (2006) analysis of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington provides an excellent example of such a narrow retelling of history. The museum opened to copious fanfare in 2004, and was heralded as progressive in its extensive inclusion of Aboriginal people in its creation. Buscombe, however, casts a more critical eye on the museum, regardless of who was chosen to be the spokespeople for an entire revision of Native American history. He argues that the Museum's exhibits are politically correct in content and tone but do not

share a coherent story of Native American history. They gloss over the destruction of Aboriginal cultures and the unromantic aspects of Aboriginal cultures such as inter-Nation warfare and the oppression of women. Buscombe admits that the Museum strives to redress the imbalance of history written from a Eurocentric perspective with some "striking" results, but also leaves behind the impression of a romantic and pastoral past. Buscombe's analysis is reminiscent of a poignant verse in Bruce Cockburn's (1976) song, "Red Brother, Red Sister:"

> Went to the museum, red brother
> Saw your ancient bloom cut, pressed and dried
> A sign said wasn't it clever what they used to do
> But it never did say how they died.

In both the Buscombe and Cockburn examples, the truth has been white-washed in order to shield certain parties from the discomfort or pain that results from the truth being openly displayed. Mythologies are impediments to an informed understanding of Aboriginal cultures and histories.

I also sought omissions and inadequacies in the curriculum. For example, are Aboriginal worldviews presented? Are Aboriginal historical perspectives considered? Does the curriculum move beyond the surface of Aboriginal cultures? An excerpt from *The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Report* (1996) aptly describes the types of inadequacies of curricula in the past that I explore:

> For most Canadians, understanding the practice of traditional Aboriginal cultures in cities is particularly difficult because we have been taught to 'understand' narrow and inaccurate stereotypes of Aboriginal culture. The

> images of Aboriginal culture for many people are totem poles, stone carving, pow-wow dancing, canoes, moccasins, and feather head-dresses. These are among the images of Aboriginal people that are presented in schools and in popular culture. Viewed this way, culture is no more than a collection of objects and rituals, observed in isolation from their vitality and meaning within a particular cultural context. This view also emphasizes the past and leaves the impression that Aboriginal cultures are static rather than dynamic and contemporary. But the artistic and material aspects of Aboriginal culture, though important, are only a small part of its reality and need to be understood within the large context of Aboriginal peoples' world views, beliefs and changing ways of life. (Vol. 4, p. 523)

Students who were surveyed in the CAAS (2002) report attest to the inadequacy of the teaching that they received:

- "Schools don't teach the issues surrounding Aboriginal culture. We only learned about buffalo hunts and teepees" (p. 115).
- "I think we covered one chapter in Grade 8 and then moved on" (p. 115).
- "I was taught how savage the natives were in early North American history. I have since learned the significance of their existence pre-Columbian era and how sophisticated they were" (p. 120).

As Aboriginal people and cultures are presented as "quaint, curious, exotic, and past tense," the underlying message is that nothing can be learned from contemporary Aboriginal people (CAAS, 2002, p. 76). Students are also hard-pressed to be able to draw connections between these stock images and modern images presented by the

media like Aboriginal groups protesting the 2010 Winter Olympics, the Caledonia dispute, communities plagued by alcoholism and unemployment, and treaty negotiations. There is a cavernous gap between the deficient representations that are often found in curricula and the daily struggles and triumphs of Aboriginal people today.

In summary, it is my objective to ascertain the degree of accuracy and inclusivity of the compulsory Grades 6-10 Social Studies curriculum, searching for signs of stereotypes, half-truths, Eurocentrism, and inclusivity, using content analysis. Emergent themes that arise from the analysis have enabled me to draw conclusions about the Aboriginal quantity and quality of the curriculum.

Limitations of the Study

Due to time and resource constraints, I only examined one potential root cause of the dearth of public knowledge of Aboriginal people, the official curriculum. There are undoubtedly other potential causes such as teaching methods and learning capacities that would give my research a fuller treatment of the issue, but I was confined to working within practical boundaries. I chose to examine the official curriculum as there is a strong tie between the treatment of particular groups and what society teaches its children about those groups through officially sanctioned government curriculum documents (Apple, 1979). Future research would aim to answer questions such as the following: Are teachers teaching about Aboriginal issues or do they gloss over the topic? Do teachers have sufficient knowledge and resources to teach about Aboriginal issues? How comprehensive and balanced is the curriculum that they are teaching? Some studies already exist with answers to these questions in specific contexts and scholars have

surmised that teachers and the content they are teaching are regrettably insufficient. Pohl (2002) has observed that even teachers are "uninformed of Aboriginal perspectives, cultures, and concerns – even compulsory units on Aboriginal Peoples are often handled in a minimalist manner, resulting in further reinforcement of negative and false stereotypes about First Peoples" (p. 13). Unfortunately, I can recount two recent incidents that reinforce Pohl's statement. I recently took my family and two Japanese students who were staying with us to a local pow wow. A teacher friend of ours asked us what we had done that weekend and we mentioned attending the pow wow. He was completely unfamiliar with what a pow wow is and had to ask us to clarify the term. This would not seem so unusual except that he is certified to teach Native Studies. If a "certified Native Studies teacher" is ignorant about such a basic concept, how uninformed are teachers who do not get certified in this subject? And what is the quality of the teacher education program? In the second incident, a teacher who was recently hired to teach Native Studies at a local secondary school admitted to a colleague that he knew nothing about the subject. He was hired on the strength of his successful football coaching record. Such blatant disregard for Native Studies demonstrates complete disrespect for Aboriginal people, the students who want to learn about them, and for an education system that is inadequately structured to meaningfully include Aboriginal people.

Even if one could examine all of the individual factors that lead to the knowledge outcomes of graduates, one of the most important factors of student learning resides with individual students and their complex learning environments. Learning can only occur by the will of the individual. Without motivation, desire, and effort, learning will not

occur. So even the most optimal learning conditions, whether teachers, curriculum, or environment, do not guarantee successful student learning. Students also exercise their own judgement and "selectively accept, reinterpret, and reject what counts as legitimate knowledge" (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 14). Students are not empty vessels into which educators pour knowledge, but are "active constructors of the meanings of the education they encounter" (Freire as cited in Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 14). And although neither curriculum nor teachers trump the ultimate right and responsibility of individual students to learn, learning always occurs within categories determined by institutions (Terwell & Walker, 2004). And those institutions are administered within the context of what Joseph et. al. (2000) term "curriculum cultures" (p. 12). Curriculum cultures are characterized by differences in "outlook, goals, contents, and interaction patterns between schools, related thinking about education, and planning the curriculum" (Wardekker, 2004, p. 2). These differences contribute to tangible variations in the results of educational outcomes. Therefore, as a determinant of student learning, the official written curriculum is one of many factors in a profoundly complex and shifting matrix that defies a simple analysis.

My study is also limited by the constraints of textual analysis. Indubitably, deficient curricula is a potential root cause of deficient knowledge among secondary school graduates. But Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) caution researchers who employ content analysis to draw conclusions about the meanings behind texts. There is a tendency to presume that texts mirror a particular ideological position, which can be subsequently traced to specific class interests (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991). In my analysis I make no such presumptions and strive to heed the advice of Allan Luke

(1988): "[Researchers] neglect the need for a more complex model of content analysis, one that does not suppose that texts are simply readable, literal representation of 'someone else's' version of social reality, objective knowledge, and human relations. For texts do not always mean or communicate what they say" (p. 30). Meaning is not intrinsic to text and post-structuralist theories posit that "meaning is the product of a system of differences into which the text is articulated" (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 13). Apple and Christian-Smith (1991) express their doubts that one can fully understand a text by mechanically applying any interpretive procedure. Thus, a concerted effort is required of the researcher to identify and diminish any presumptions that impose unjustified inferences onto the text.

I limited my study to the Grade 6-9 Social Studies curriculum. Aboriginal Studies is an interdisciplinary field that is applicable to all grade levels. There are many other grades and subjects that could be examined that would allow my study to be more comprehensive. As I have discussed in this paper, a limited number of studies have been conducted on other courses and grade levels. The curriculum documents I have chosen cover the Social Studies content that is mandatory from Grades 6 to 9 and contain a significant amount of relevant content, allowing for a representative case study of the Ontario curriculum.

Therefore, in the spirit of critical theory and anticolonialism, this study challenges the antiracism and equity goals of the Ontario education system. Ontario secondary schools are graduating students who, for the most part, demonstrate minimal knowledge of Aboriginal people at best, and distorted views and potentially damaging attitudes at worst. The general population does not appreciate the critical role Aboriginal people

have played in Canadian history and the current struggles and triumphs of contemporary Aboriginal life. At a time when government relationships with Aboriginal people are moving towards reconciliation, Canadian citizens are not being sufficiently educated to appreciate the rationale for reconciliation. In this thesis I have examined the mandatory Grade 6-9 Social Studies curriculum for the inclusiveness and accuracy of its Aboriginal content as a potential source of the ignorance of graduating students.

The Historical and Political Context of Ontario's Curriculum

Although a historical examination of Ontario's curriculum from its earliest days would be both fascinating and informative, a cursory look at the most recent historical and political developments that have shaped the current curriculum will suffice for the purposes of this study. In Ontario, the provincial government is responsible for the writing and publication of the curricula used in all elementary and secondary schools, both public and private, via the Ministry of Education. Standardized teaching resources have conventionally been developed around the government curriculum (Kempf, 2006). In order to understand the historical and political context of the curriculum, I will begin my review with a watershed period that has had a profound impact on Ontario's education system in contemporary times. Premier Mike Harris and his government's "Common Sense Revolution" wrought radical changes in government services in the 1990s and education was one of the areas of service that experienced a substantial amount of change. The Progressive Conservative government spawned a massive rewriting of the entire curriculum. In its wake, equity issues were dropped from the mandate of the Ministry of Education and the Anti-Racism and Ethno-Cultural Equity

Branch of the Ministry was dismantled (Carr, 2007). After several years of orchestrating a massive overhaul of the education system, the Progressive Conservative government was voted out of office by a public that had grown weary and wary of the Common Sense Revolution. The current Liberal government was elected in 2003 and quickly moved to place its own mark on the education system. The Liberal government revamped Ontario's Aboriginal policy, entitled *Ontario's New Approach to Aboriginal Affairs (2005),* established an Aboriginal Education Office within the Ministry of Education, and in 2007 published the *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Education Policy Framework.* Under the Framework, the government is committed to "working with Aboriginal leaders and organizations to improve education outcomes among Aboriginal students" (p. 5). The Ministry claims that First Nation, Métis, and Inuit content has been integrated into a revised curriculum, including the Social Studies curriculum that is at the centre of this study. Ontario once again committed itself to inclusive and equitable education with the 2009 publication of *Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy.* Recognizing that inclusivity and equity are essential to high-quality education, the policy sets guidelines for reducing the "achievement gap" for Aboriginal students, among others (p. 5). Therefore, the current Ontario government has delivered significant promises in the area of Aboriginal education that should be reflected in the quality of Aboriginal content in the curriculum.

Chapter Two
Data Analysis: Exposing the Cracks

Quantitative Analysis

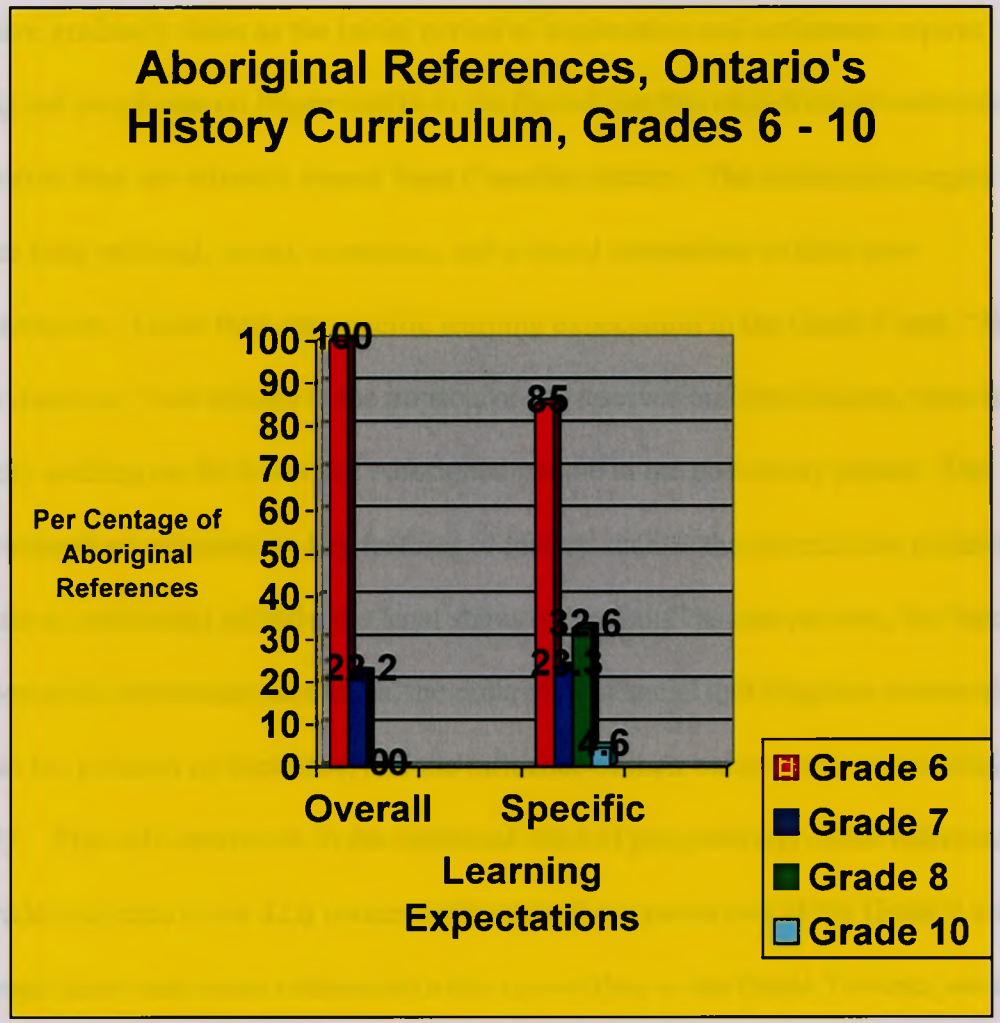
As indicated earlier, I utilized content analysis to scrutinize the quantity and quality of Aboriginal content in the Ontario curriculum. The Grades 6-8 courses do not have specific names, but are divided into units of study: "*Heritage and Citizenship: Grade 6 – First Nations Peoples and European Explorers*;" Grade 7 - "*New France*," "*British North America*," and "*Conflict and Change*;" Grade 8 – "*Confederation*," "*The Development of Western Canada*," and "*Canada: A Changing Society*." The Grade 6-8 courses combined cover the history of Canada from the origin of First Nations up until the period preceding World War One. I excluded the Grade 7 and 8 Geography courses from this study. The Grade 7 course covers physical geography and the Grade 8 course covers human geography, but neither course references any particular people groups. The Grade 9 Academic and Applied courses are entitled, "*Geography of Canada.*" The Grade 10 History course to which I refer is called, "*History since World War 1.*" I did not include the Grade 10 History course in my analysis since Kempf (2006) has already analyzed the latest version of the course. Like Kempf, I documented the frequency of learning expectations that refer to Aboriginal people. These calculations allow for a verifiable and quantitative comparison of Aboriginal references within units of study and grades, and between courses and grades. Such units of measurement also permit a comparison with the content analysis that Kempf conducted on the Grade 10 History course, "*History since World War 1, Grade 10, Academic, 2005.*" I did not tally the number of total references as units of analysis, with one exception that I will refer to

later, as this would not constitute as precise a measurement of the amount of Aboriginal content. Certain types of references could skew the total numbers. For instance, consider the following statement: "As per Section 32 of Canada's Constitution Act, Aboriginal people include First Nations, Inuit, and Métis." This statement could be counted as one reference or four references, depending on how the researcher wanted to measure it. The statement refers to one definition of Aboriginal people, but there are also four Aboriginal-related terms listed in the definition. A simple form of content analysis would merely count all of the relevant words in a given document and use the total number of words to draw inferences (Anderson and Arsenault, 1998). Counting this definition as four references would not be particularly useful as a comparable measurement and would only cast doubt on the validity of the quantitative analysis. In this case, I have chosen to forego interpretation of what comprises an accurate measurement of analysis by counting words or groups of words. By avoiding interpretation of the data, I can ensure that the quantitative data is as precise as possible. Thus, I have selected the number of learning expectations that contain references to Aboriginal people as my units of analysis. I confined the analysis in the Grade 9 course to the units that contain Aboriginal content, since there are some sections that cover physical geography that are not as pertinent to Aboriginal people as History. In this case the percentage of units of analysis that contains Aboriginal content do not correspond with an exactitude that allows for an accurate comparison. Thus, a direct comparison between the learning expectations of the History-focussed courses and the Grade 9 Geography would not be instructive to this study. By analyzing the quantity of Aboriginal content in these courses, I have been able to draw conclusions about the

relative importance that Aboriginal people are given as a subject in the curriculum.

The percentage of learning expectations that contain Aboriginal content convey resounding messages about how Aboriginal people are viewed by those who are involved in writing and approving Ontario's curriculum. The overall learning expectations, which are a summary of the general expectations of the course, range in number from a total of three to fourteen. The specific learning expectations, which are applicable to units of study within each course, range from twenty to sixty-five. The variation reflects the shorter length of the lower grade courses (a few weeks) and the lengthier courses of the higher grades. For example, the Grade 10 History course consumes a whole semester, which is a few months in length. My analysis found that there is a wide variation among the amounts of Aboriginal content in the various History courses. As reflected in Figure 2, *Aboriginal References in Ontario's History Curriculum, Grades 6-10,* one hundred per cent of the overall learning expectations of the Grade 6 Course, "*Heritage and Citizenship: First Nation Peoples and European Explorers,"* and eighty-five percent of the specific expectations refer to Aboriginal people.

Figure 2



This is a really positive number that indicates the importance of Aboriginal people to the European exploration of the Americas in the view of the curriculum authors. Indigenous peoples were instrumental in acting as guides to European explorers, as soldiers in their colonial wars, and as teachers of how to prosper in cultures and climates to which the explorers were unaccustomed. However, as the subsequent courses cover later historical periods, the diminishing significance of Aboriginal people to the curriculum writers is mirrored in the waning number of references to Aboriginal people.

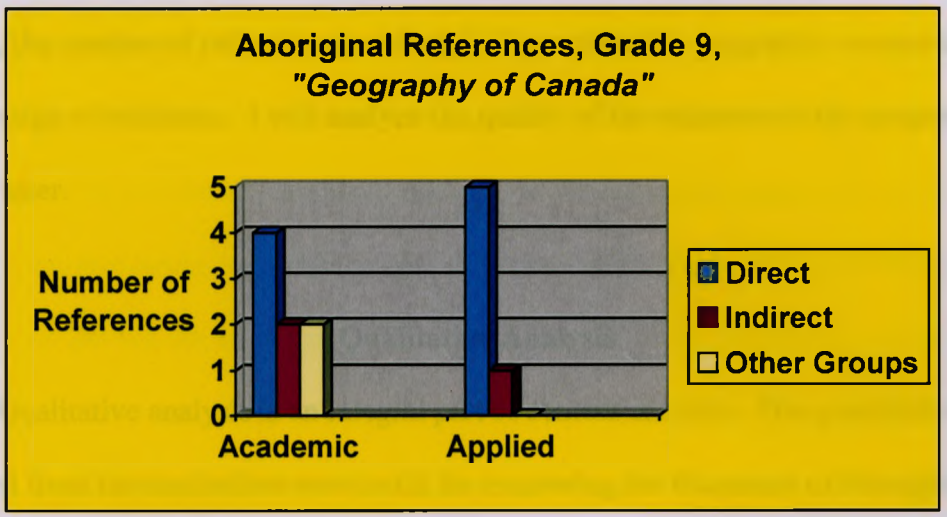
In the European settler perspective, the importance of Aboriginal people to the settler narrative gradually fades as the initial period of exploration and settlement expires. Once Aboriginal people are no longer useful to the Euro-Canadian objectives of settlement and expansion, they are virtually erased from Canadian history. The curriculum largely ignores their political, social, economic, and cultural adaptations to their new circumstances. Other than one specific learning expectation in the Grade 7 unit, "*British North America,*" that alludes to the impacts of the reserves on First Nations, there is virtually nothing on the history of Aboriginal people in the post-treaty period. The curriculum does not mention key features of history such as the assimilation policies and legislation, residential schools, the legal status of "Indians" as non-persons, the banning of Aboriginal governance structures, the outlawing of social and religious ceremonies such as the potlatch or Sundance, and the influence of their cultures on non-Aboriginal society. The only aberration in the statistical trend of progressively fewer references as the grades advance is the 32.6 percent of the specific expectations of the Grade 8 course. Although there were more references in this course than in the Grade 7 course, we shall see in the qualitative analysis that those references in and of themselves do not constitute a meaningful inclusion. There are no references whatsoever to Aboriginal people in the overall learning expectations of the Grade 8 and 10 courses, and only 4.6 percent of the specific expectations of the Grade 10 course reference Aboriginal people. Notably, there are no references in the overall learning expectations of the Grade 7 unit, "*British North America.*" The foci of the unit present a Euro-Canadian perspective on the European settlement of North America and the colonial struggles that hastened settlement (p. 55). A European perspective hastily eclipses Turtle Island. There are also no references in

either of the overall or specific learning expectations of the Grade 7 unit, "*Conflict and Change*." The foci of this unit are on the rebellions of 1837-38 in Upper and Lower Canada and the social, economic, political, and legal changes in the Britain's North American colonies between 1837-50 (p. 57). Apparently Aboriginal peoples were not sufficiently involved in these changes to warrant mention in the curriculum. The subliminal message is that Aboriginal history during this period is not significant. By the final unit of the Grade 8 course, "*Canada: A Changing Society*," Aboriginal people have all but disappeared. There is one lone reference to Pauline Johnson in the specific expectations. Aboriginal people are statistically non-existent in this period of Canada's history as per Ontario's official version. This unit ignores Aboriginal people to focus on the Euro-Canadian changes that occurred in Canada between 1885 and the beginning of the First World War in 1914 (p. 64). Again, did changes not occur to the First Peoples or were they not involved in the changes that occurred to Canadian society? What happened to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit? It is as if they followed Curtis's (1907) trail into the darkness of an unknown future. The curriculum writers have relegated Aboriginal people to the murky shadows of history, invisible and forgotten. I will examine how this Eurocentric perspective feeds into the "vanishing Indian" stereotype later in this thesis. This omission of Aboriginal history serves to marginalize Aboriginal people in the context of a colonialist structure. The curriculum sends the wrong message to youth: the history of Aboriginal people and their involvement in the changes to the rest of society are not important.

Although I deemed that a direct comparison between Aboriginal references in the learning expectations of the History and Geography courses would not be valid or

profitable, it is still worth examining the number of references in the Grade 9 Academic and Applied Geography courses, "*Geography of Canada.*" These courses explore the geographic systems and relationships that shape the character of Canada. Students are expected to "investigate the interactions of natural and human systems within Canada, as well as Canada's economic, cultural, and environmental connections to each other" (p. 29). The major difference between the two courses is that there is a greater focus on the personal and practical applications of geography in the applied course (p. 36). Unlike history, which recounts and interprets historical events, there is less opportunity to weave a coherent narrative pertaining to Aboriginal people in a geography course. There is, however, a smattering of references to Aboriginal people and in fact, there are more references to Aboriginal people in these courses than to any other distinct people group. The reason behind this is not explicit or clear. One could conjecture that Aboriginal people are featured in geography more than any other people groups because of their stereotypical ties to the land and the environment, which I discussed earlier. But the evidence is inconclusive. I will discuss some of the stereotypical nature of the geography curriculum in my qualitative analysis later on, but I will not draw any conclusions about why Aboriginal people are featured more than others at this point. The number of references is displayed in the following graph:

Figure 3



The indirect references in both courses refer either to Nunavut or the Arctic. In comparison to the nine direct references to Aboriginal people, the two references to other people groups include Francophones and immigrant groups. Those two references are contained in the academic course and are dropped from the corresponding expectation in the applied course: "- identify and explain the regional patterns of population distribution of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people across Canada (e.g. where various groups are located and why they settled there)" (p. 37). So this expectation crosses over into inquiry into the history of settlement patterns and gives special recognition to Aboriginal people. There is also the odd topic that could engender discussion of Aboriginal people such as the James Bay hydro project and diamond mining in the Northwest Territories (p. 31). This particular learning expectation asks students to evaluate differing viewpoints on the benefits and disadvantages of natural resource mega projects. Aboriginal people are not mentioned specifically, but it is difficult to imagine that they could not be part of the discussion. On the other hand, I have already uncovered blatant examples of the

omission of Aboriginal people from the curriculum, so I dare not make any assumptions. Overall, the number of references to Aboriginal people in the geography courses is a positive sign of inclusion. I will analyze the quality of the inclusion in the geography courses later.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative analysis is an integral part of content analysis. The quantitative data I extracted from the curriculum was useful for measuring the frequency of Aboriginal references from which I could infer the significance and relevance that the curriculum writers, and by extension, the government, accords to Aboriginal people and their histories. However, quantitative analysis alone does not provide sufficient evidence from which to draw solid conclusions. Quantitative data present an incomplete picture. The minimal Aboriginal content I discovered demonstrates that Aboriginal people are given little recognition in the curriculum. Their stories and perspectives may occasionally be mentioned, but overall they receive little attention or serious consideration. By examining certain qualities of the content of the curriculum, it is possible to acquire deeper insight into what students are expected to learn about Aboriginal people. A qualitative analysis lends insight into the accuracy and inclusiveness of the knowledge that students are expected to learn and the perspective and viewpoints of the government bureaucrats who officially approve of the curriculum. Such insight can then be correlated to the theoretical framework that has demonstrated that curriculum is a tool that governments can use to perpetuate the elevated positions of the powerful. Again, my units of analysis consist of the learning expectations that contain references to

Aboriginal people. Many of the learning expectations may be general in nature, but refer to Aboriginal people in specific examples. I analyzed the quality of the Aboriginal content of the mandatory Grades 6-9 Social Studies curriculum. I organized my analysis by the following categories: positive/negative viewpoints, stereotypes, Eurocentrism, mythologies, and omissions. Earlier I defined these categories and presented examples of them (pp. 24-36). In some cases, the categories overlap and the learning expectations apply to more than one category. For those expectations that fit into more than one category, I endeavoured to apply the category that was most fitting wherever possible. In some cases, however, the information was too multi-faceted and more than one category was too relevant to simplify the analysis to one category. By extending my analysis beyond a quantitative study, I can draw more definitive conclusions about the degree of equity and inclusiveness as they pertain to the Ministry of Education's guidelines concerning antiracism and antidiscrimination.

A common function of content analysis is to assess a text for negative and positive viewpoints (Robson, 1993). Quantitative analysis involves some degree of subjectivity and qualitative analysis involves subjectivity to an even greater extent. But ascertaining whether a viewpoint is negative or positive can be a highly subjective process. I resolved to include this part of the analysis in my study because it is important to determine if there are any expressions of explicit views of Aboriginal people. As I have shown, past curricula writers have not held back their negative views in the documents they wrote and today's secondary school graduates still possess negative views of Aboriginal people. So it is important to demonstrate whether the curriculum in Ontario has moved beyond the negative portrayals of the past to depict Aboriginal people

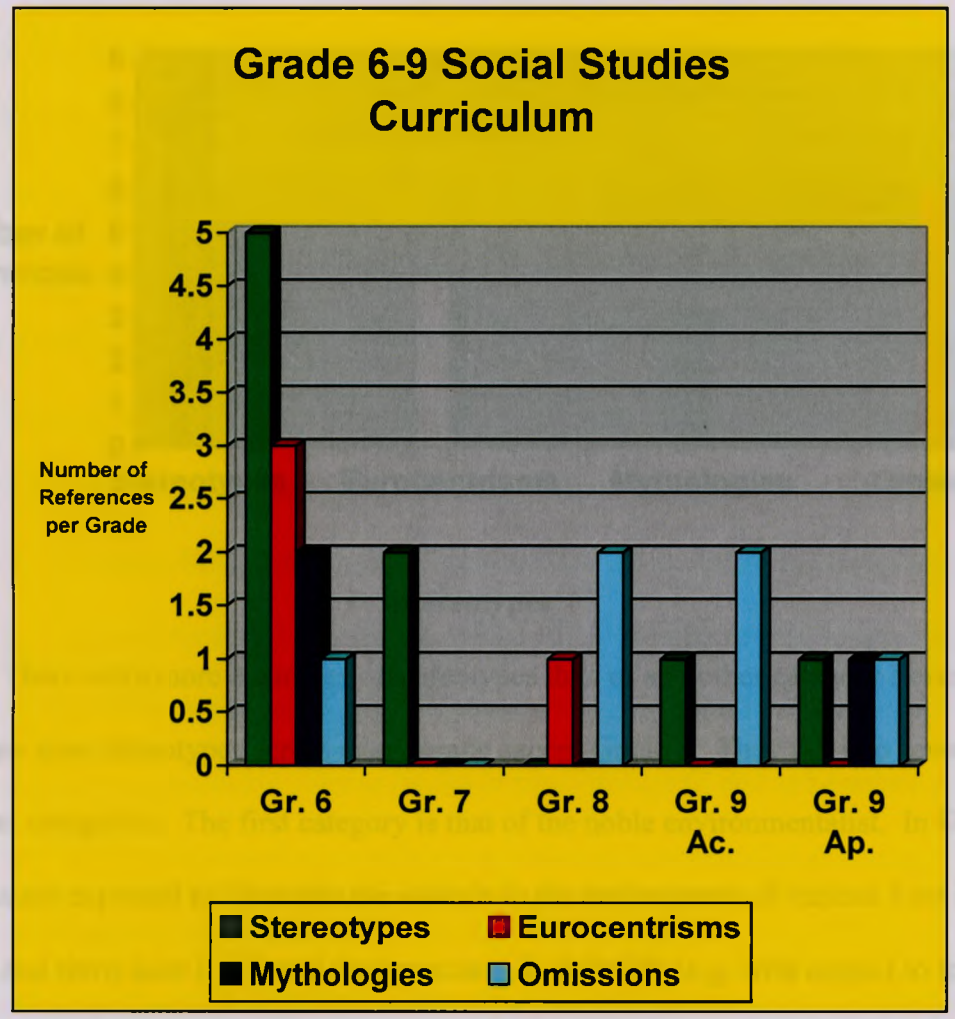
positively. In order to eschew subjectivity, I only looked for viewpoints that are explicit in their portrayal. Encouragingly, I did not uncover any evidence of explicitly negative viewpoints. There is nothing in these courses that is blatantly reminiscent of the disdainful views expressed by past curriculum authors. It is imperative to remark, however, that I am not precluding the possibility of implicit or underlying negative portrayals of Aboriginal people. That remains to be covered as part of the further analysis in the thesis.

Disappointingly, of the one hundred and thirty-six learning expectations that refer to Aboriginal people, only four positively represent Aboriginal people. A learning expectation in the Grade 8 unit, "*Confederation,*" asks, "What qualities made Louis Riel a good leader?" (p. 59). Contrast this question with past portrayals of Riel as a rebel and a traitor to Canada. The Grade 7 unit, "*British North America*," lists Joseph Brant/Thayendanegea as one example of a significant person who has made a notable achievement or contribution to Canada (p. 55). Similarly, the Grade 6 course asks students to "identify achievements and contributions of people in present-day Canada" and lists James Bartleman, Jordin Tootoo, Douglas Cardinal, and Susan Aglukark as examples (p. 33). Finally, in the Grade 8 unit, "*Canada: A Changing Society,*" Pauline Johnson is cited as an example of a woman who helped changed the position of women and children in Canada (p. 63). The recognition of Aboriginal contributions in the curriculum is a welcome contrast with past viewpoints that ignored their achievements and portrayed Aboriginal people as being incapable of accomplishing anything of worth. Among the one hundred and thirty two other learning expectations that take a neutral stance, some of them consider parts of Aboriginal history that could be rendered

important. For example, the Grade 6 course asks students to consider the role of First Nation women in the fur trade (p. 32). The Grade 7 course expects that students will learn how to formulate questions to facilitate research on specific topics: "Why were the Iroquois peoples allied with the British Crown?" (p. 55). Louis Riel was mentioned in a list consisting of some very important figures in Canadian history, including Queen Victoria and Sir John A. Macdonald, in an expectation that asks students to "describe and analyse conflicting points of view about a historical issue or personality" (p. 60). Although they may not be explicitly positive, some of the "neutral" references to Aboriginal people are positive additions to the curriculum. Overall, however, the four positive learning expectations are minor. The curriculum authors missed the opportunity to more thoroughly showcase the positive attributes and contributions of Aboriginal people. In other words, the positive references to Aboriginal people are a welcome change from the past, but are overshadowed by the dominance of the perspective and actions of the European settlers.

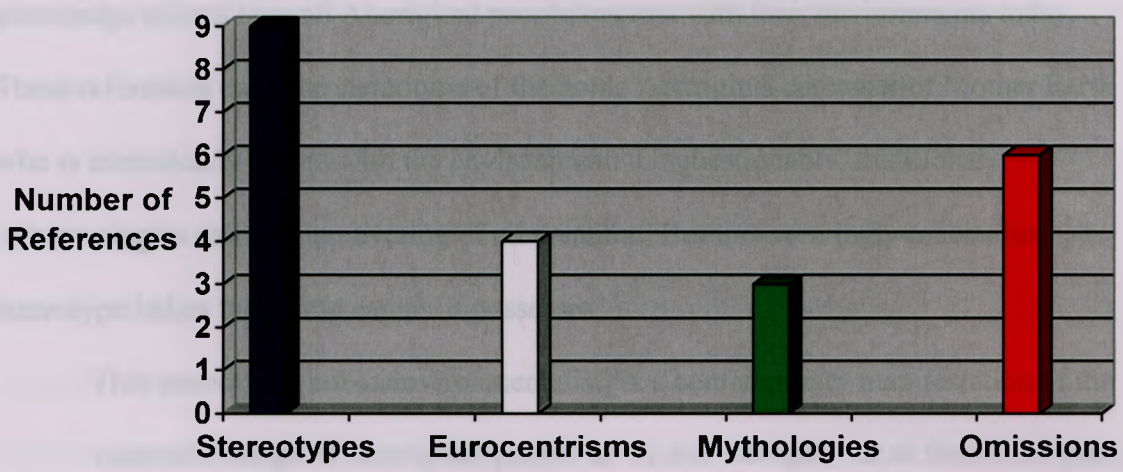
Unfortunately, my search for stereotypes, Eurocentrisms, mythologies, and omissions was fruitful. There was not an overwhelming number of examples, but there were sufficient numbers to create deep concern. The following graph illustrates how many I identified in each course:

Figure 4



The total numbers of stereotypes, Eurocentrisms, mythologies, and omissions are illustrated in this graph:

Figure 5



Stereotypes

There were more examples of stereotypes than of any other category I examined. There are nine stereotypes across every grade except Grade 8. They fall into several common categories. The first category is that of the noble environmentalist. In Grade 6, students are expected to "describe the attitude to the environment of various First Nation groups and show how it affected their practices in daily life (e.g. with respect to food, shelter, clothes, transportation)" (p. 31). In the Grade 9 Academic Geography course, it is expected that students will "explain the ways in which the traditional ecological knowledge of Aboriginal peoples, including their concepts of place, wilderness, and boundaries, influences how they interact with their environment" (p. 31). The corresponding expectation in the Grade 9 Applied Geography course is exactly the same with the addition of asking how traditional ecological knowledge affects how Aboriginal peoples interact with their environment *today* (p. 38). In the first reference, rather than relating their daily practices to factors like the availability of resources or practical necessities, the author chose to single out First Nation "attitudes" to the environment.

The latter two references could be interpreted to mean that traditional ecological knowledge affects how all Aboriginal people interact with their environments today. These references echo the stereotype of the noble Aboriginal caretaker of Mother Earth who is intrinsically united with the environment. Unquestionably, traditional epistemologies call for the revering of all creation. But this seemingly innocuous stereotype belies the subtle danger it possesses:

> This stereotype [noble environmentalist] is a contemporary manifestation of the venerable image of Aboriginal people as "Noble Savages," or as the RCAP puts it, "the noble Red Man roaming free in the forest."....There is a suggestion that Aboriginal people have an inherent disposition towards certain behaviours and/or sensibilities – in this case, that they have a "natural" affinity with nature. Aboriginal people are seen as *frozen in time*, living off, and in harmony with, the land and are thus exalted as defenders of the environment and all things organic and "natural." (Harding, 2007, p. 384)

These learning expectations incite the noble environmentalist stereotype and conjure the romantic image of a simple and primitive people who live as "one" with their environs. The expectations could be interpreted as suggesting that "real" Aboriginal people must engage in particular behaviours that exhibit communal unity with the natural/spiritual world and deny an authentic Aboriginal identity to those who do not to subscribe to this epistemology and way of life. The first reference could steer around the environmentalist stereotype by asking students to consider additional factors that influenced how Aboriginal people conducted their daily affairs. The latter two expectations could avoid perpetuating this stereotype by specifying traditional Aboriginal people, so that it is clear

that the possession of traditional ecological knowledge is not being ascribed to all Aboriginal people. These expectations are dangerously misleading and require revisions in order to avoid any appearance of the noble environmentalist stereotype.

The "vanishing Indian" is also evident in the curriculum. In Grade 6, students are expected to be able to communicate the "results of inquiries about the effects of early contact between First Nation peoples and early European explorers e.g. the causes of the disappearance of the Neutral Nation" (p. 32). The "disappearance" of a whole nation conjures up the image of some mysterious and magical vanishing act. This version of the Neutral Nation's "disappearance" echoes conventional retellings of their plight in which they are vanquished forever. But the Neutral, as the French called them, or the Chonnonton as they called themselves, did not just disappear from the face of the earth. They were either absorbed by the Haudenosaunee in wars between the two nations or migrated to the Prairies as a result of the warfare (Dickason, 1994, pp. 148 & 151). The Chonnonton were certainly changed as a result of their fighting with the Haudenosaunee, but they did not simply evaporate. This view is Eurocentric in nature and fosters the notion that Europeans were destined to inherit the "New World" as the First Nations helplessly and inevitably "vanished." Descendants of the Chonnonton would certainly tell their ancestors' story from a different perspective. They would reminisce about a proud history and look forward to a promising future.

Previously I referenced the absence of Aboriginal people in the curriculum in the latter part of the Grade 8 course. In the curriculum the story of Aboriginal history ends with the suppression of the North-West 'Rebellion' of 1885. Gabriel Dumont, Louis Riel, Big Bear, and Poundmaker receive special mention in the unit, "The Development

of Western Canada," but once they and their people are subdued, the story of Canada's "progress" can continue. The obstacle has been conveniently removed. Aboriginal people are no longer useful; they are no longer a hindrance. They have vanished and Canada's settler narrative continues without them. Historian J.R. Miller (1991) aptly describes the abandonment of Aboriginal history after this period: "It is almost as though a great amnesia descended on Canadians as a result of the crushing of Indian leadership after the rising of 1885" (p. 188). The stereotype of the vanishing Indian conveys to students that Aboriginal people were only important to Canada's development in its early stages and once they thwarted that development, their "disappearance" was inevitable. The curriculum delivers the message that as a people who faded in Canada's memory shortly after Confederation, Aboriginal people are not relevant to contemporary Canada.

The stereotype of the "Indian" who is too docile and simple to resist, adapt to, and influence the changing society and circumstances that accompany the European settlers is closely related to the "disappearing Indian." This stereotype feeds into the Eurocentric and racist idea that "civilization" was bound to march over Aboriginal people and leave them behind in the name of progress. The Euro-Canadian attitude was that God and fate willed that Aboriginal people would benefit from the fruits of European civilization – an attitude that fuelled the assimilation policies of the colonial governments of the eighteenth to twentieth centuries (Dickason, 1994). In actuality, even though rapid change did occur to some First Nations with very little warning (for example, epidemics), Aboriginal people influenced the design of their destinies and were active participants in the change that European settlers precipitated. And the influence that Aboriginal people had on the newcomers is often overlooked. History is never one-

sided. Aboriginal people were not passive recipients of whatever passed them by. There are a few examples of this stereotype in the curriculum.

I have already discussed the overview of the Grade 7 History course that refers to the impacts of European settlements on First Nation peoples. Subsequently, one of the specific expectations of the Grade 7 course is for students to "explain why people came to live in New France and describe the impact of European immigration on First Nation settlements" (p. 53). Students are not asked to consider the inverse: the impact that the First Nations had on European immigration and settlements. This stereotypical viewpoint, that Aboriginal people were too complacent or unsophisticated to affect change, is also Eurocentric in nature. One is not asked to consider the influence that Aboriginal people may have had because it is the European settlers who are at the centre of the curriculum. But quite often the immigrants had to succumb to the influence of the First Nations. The Wyandot, who were considered to be a proud and affluent First Nation, refused to lower themselves and learn French in order to trade (Miller, 1991). If the French wanted to trade with them, the French would have to learn their language, to which the French complied. The curriculum tells the popular story of European dominance and perspective. The second example is also found in the Grade 7 curriculum. Under "Inquiry/Research and Communication Skills," students are expected to formulate questions to aid in gathering and clarifying information (p. 53). This is the sample question: "How did the Catholic Church influence the life of First Nation peoples and French settlers in New France?" Undeniably the Church impacted First Nation peoples. The answers to the example question as given by popular history is that the proselytising efforts of the Catholic missionaries eroded traditional belief systems

and triggered the collapse of much of the Aboriginal social structure. John Webster Grant (1984) captures the essence of the popular images and an appropriate response to them:

> To think of encounter between Christianity and the Indians of Canada is almost inevitably to conjure up a picture of dominant missionaries gathering Indians around them, collecting them into villages, and forcing on them a strange religion and an alien culture. This picture captures an element of painful reality, but it is unfair not only to the missionaries but to the Indians: recognizing only the former as actors, it reduces the latter to the role of passive recipients. Since the Indians were under no direct compulsion to embrace Christianity, there could have been no native Christian communities unless they had voluntarily converted themselves. To round out the story, therefore, we need to consider how the Indians responded to Christianity, what they made of it, and how they used it to reshape their lives and societies. (p. 238)

Grant describes the various responses to this new religion: from outright rejection, to cautious incorporation of Christian beliefs into traditional beliefs, to enthusiastic acceptance, to a façade of acceptance in order to appease their visitors/trading partners. Motives for the acceptance of Christianity were also varied and included the cementing of commercial alliance, the acquisition of material goods, and the custom of incorporating other beliefs into one's own belief system (Miller, 1994). Some of the missionaries quickly learned that in order to be successful, they could not import a European version of Christianity and expect a wholesale adoption of all of its strange tenets and rituals. The Jesuits accepted that they would have to adapt to Aboriginal

customs and so opened the practice of their religion to Indigenous expressions of faith like conducting services in the Aboriginal vernacular, incorporating informal questions and dialogue in services, and placing symbolic possessions in the grave (Grant, 1984). Thus, First Nations actively rejected and accepted European influences based on the advantages with which they could enrich their lives. And the newcomers learned that they also had to adapt their way of life to conform to the varied needs, cultures, and advantages that the Aboriginal people offered to them.

The stereotype of the "primitive Indian" also appears in the curriculum. There are two instances in the Grade 6 course. Although Aboriginal people may not explicitly be labelled "primitive," the message is certainly there. The distinction is made upon comparison of European technology and the apparent absence of Aboriginal technology. Aboriginal examples of technology are not even intimated and the implication is that Aboriginal people did not possess technology or anything else that was of comparable worth. The first example is found in the "Application" section: "By the end of Grade 6, students will explain how cooperation between First Nation groups and early European explorers benefited both groups (e.g. Europeans gained medical knowledge, survival skills, and geographic knowledge from First Nation peoples; First Nation peoples acquired products of European technology such as cooking pots, metal tools, blankets, and clothing" (p. 32). Certainly in some cases, the First Peoples were eager to obtain products of European technologies. As Cartier recorded in his comments regarding the fur trade in the 1530s, they were often enthusiastic about the opportunity:

> [they thought that it was] strange and wonderful to discover that these hairy strangers were eager to get their hands on the old furs that the Indians wore. That

> these fools would take worthless hides in exchange for wondrous things such as mirrors, glass beads, and items made of iron was amazing (as cited in Miller, 1991, p. 35).

But the benefits accorded to the Europeans are linked to exploration and survival – what could be interpreted as relatively primitive pursuits compared to technological innovations. The one exception the curriculum mentions is medical knowledge: First Nations originally developed over five hundred drugs in modern medical pharmacopoeia. But First Nations were also not strangers to other scientific accomplishments often associated with "advanced society." For example they mastered metallurgy, fashioning tools and artistry with various metals - copper and beaten metal work in Canada, which predated that of civilizations found elsewhere in the world; and silver, gold, alloys, and they were the first masters of platinum metallurgy in areas farther south (Dickason, 1994). First Nations developed technologies that were highly superior to those that the Europeans possessed for the climate and terrain of Turtle Island. Canoes, kayaks, umiaks, snowshoes, waterproof ponchos, and snow goggles were among the products of First Nation technology that the Europeans acquired in order to adapt to the challenges of Turtle Island (Weatherford, 1991). Of course, Aboriginal inventions are not recognized as technological products in a Eurocentric curriculum; they would likely fall under the category of the acquisition of "survival skills." First Nations were also quite accomplished in the agricultural sciences. In fact, the cultivation of corn is considered one of the world's greatest achievements in plant science. It is one of the most nutritious and efficient crops in the world, in terms of yield. It is estimated that it took about one thousand years of selective breeding for First Nations to develop the over one

hundred and fifty varieties that were available by the time of European contact. Maize and another Aboriginal-developed crop, potatoes, are considered to be two of the world's four basic food crops. In fact, more than one hundred species of plants that were developed by Indigenous Peoples are routinely grown today (Dickason, 1994). Some of the other agricultural crops that Aboriginal people developed as gifts to the world include the following: tomatoes, squashes, pumpkins; almost all the types of beans; peanuts, pecans, hickory nuts, black walnuts, sunflower seeds and oils, cranberries, blueberries, strawberries, maple syrup, Jerusalem artichokes, peppers, prickly pears, chocolate, vanilla, allspice, sassafras, avocados, wild rice, and sweet potatoes (Weatherford, 1991). There are many other achievements of Aboriginal societies from which the newcomers benefited. The curriculum, however, stays steadfastly focussed on European technology. The second example from the Grade 6 course highlights this focus: "Identify some present-day issues concerning First Nation peoples that relate to results of early contact (e.g. the effect of new technologies on First Nation cultures)" (p. 33). It is difficult to ascertain which technologies the author is referring to when making a connection between present-day issues and early contact. Whatever technologies they may happen to be, the implicit message is that First Nations lacked technological achievements and are passive victims of technologies that were thrust upon them on contact with Europeans. It embodies the whole notion to which I previously referred – the idea that Aboriginal people were in an arrested state of development when Europeans arrived and they were powerless to stop or influence any of the changes that Europeans wrought. The curriculum does not counter the primitive Indian stereotype; it reinforces the idea that the supposed superiority of European technology was both a blessing and a curse to the

unsuspecting and hapless Aboriginal victims who were caught in the wake of its advent. The curriculum does not acknowledge the extent of the intercultural exchange of products of science and technology. Stereotypes still exist in the curriculum. They may not be as obvious, but their presence, and their potential for injury, cannot be denied.

Eurocentrisms

The curriculum I analyzed is written primarily from a Eurocentric perspective. The "development" and "progress" of the European newcomers who settle and multiply on Turtle Island is an overwhelming theme of the curriculum. There is a major imbalance between the settlers' "accomplishments" and their perspectives and those of Aboriginal people. Consider the overview of the Grade 7 History course: "In Grade 7, the study of history focuses on the development of Canada from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. Students investigate the contributions of significant groups and individuals and develop an understanding of Canada's European roots. They study the early settlements of North America and their impact on the First Nation peoples and on English-French relations" (p. 52). The focus of the overview is on the "development of Canada" which it defines as an understanding of "Canada's European roots" and the "early settlements of North America." The one direct reference to Aboriginal people portrays First Nation peoples as passive recipients of the influence of the settlers and does not allow for a consideration of the influence that the First Nations had on the newcomers. Specific units are also overtly Eurocentric in their view. The overview of the Grade 8 unit, "The Development of Western Canada," focuses on "how the new Dominion expanded with the settlement and development of the Canadian west" (p. 61). Although the overview mentions the roles and reactions of First Nation peoples and

Métis, among other groups, none of the overall expectations of this unit refer to Aboriginal people. Therefore, the curriculum represents European settlers as domineering the nucleus of progress and change and the First Nations as being at the margins of history.

Eurocentrism is also unveiled in the way that "competing" theories are presented. The Bering Strait Bridge theory appears in the Grade 6 curriculum. Students in Grade 6 are expected to "examine various theories about the origins of First Nation and Inuit peoples in North America e.g. that they crossed the Bering land bridge, had always been indigenous to North America, travelled by water from South America" (p. 31). Credit is due to the curriculum writers for including the "indigenous theory". Many texts dismiss Indigenous creation stories as quaint fantasy. At least this curriculum document does not. The issue here, however, is that Indigenous origin ideas are listed as just another theory, in the scientific sense. To many Aboriginal people, their stories are sacred and call for respect. Studying origin theories is not a matter of deciding who is right and who is wrong. To do so would miss out on the richness that the creation stories offer and the meanings they hold. Ronald Wright (1991) offers an insightful perspective into a respectful response to First Nation origin theories: "There need be no conflict between sacred tradition and scientific evidence. The traditions are philosophically true. Native Americans have been here since time immemorial; their languages, cultures, and civilizations developed here. They are American in a way that no others can be" (p. x). If Aboriginal origin stories are to receive proper respect, they cannot be viewed in a Eurocentric, scientific paradigm, in opposition to other scientific theories as this Grade 6 expectation has set it up. The curriculum should take advantage of the opportunity to

share the lavishness of the creation stories in a context that is both inclusive and respectful.

The Glossary of the Grade 1-8 Social Studies Curriculum is also indicative of the curriculum's Eurocentric obsession. The Glossary defines the "New World" as "the Western Hemisphere of the earth as originally named by European explorers" (p. 81). The curriculum fails to mention the fact that many Aboriginal cultures call the land where they lived "Turtle Island," among other names, and consider themselves to be living at the centre of the earth, with Europe to the east and Asia to the west. Eurocentrism can also be found in the Glossary's definition of New France: "- the territory colonized by France in North America from the explorations of Jacques Cartier in 1534 to the loss of the last of the territories to Great Britain in 1763" (p. 81). The curriculum perpetuates the European perspective that once Cartier set foot on First Nation soil, the land belonged to France for the next two hundred and twenty-nine years and "lost" it to Great Britain once it conquered France. Cartier erected two crosses of possession, believing that he had "discovered" Canada (Dickason, 1994, p. 100). He acted in accordance with royal instructions under the doctrine of *terra nullius* – that Aboriginal peoples who were not organized into states could not be classified as inhabitants with a recognizable title to the land (Dickason, 1994). This doctrine and the common law that followed it has been debunked by scholars and courts around the world as discriminatory and unjust as evidenced in an Australian High Court ruling:

> A common law doctrine founded on unjust discrimination in the enjoyment of civil and political rights demands reconsideration. It is contrary both to international standards and to the fundamental values of our common law to

> entrench a discriminatory rule which, because of the supposed position on the scale of social organisation of the indigenous inhabitants of a settled colony, denies them a right to occupy their traditional lands. (Reynolds, 1992, p. 187)

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 has been regarded as a kind of charter of rights by many court cases in Canada for its recognition of Aboriginal title (Kulchyski, 1994). The curriculum fails to provide the perspective that the colonizers of New France were wrong and did not have the right to claim Aboriginal territories as their own by virtue of stepping on them. The colonialist perspective prevails. Colonialism is accepted as normative and Aboriginal perspectives are ignored.

In Chapter One I stated that Eurocentrism can also be found in the words that are selected to describe a component of Aboriginal society and a totally different word to describe the same component of non-Aboriginal society. The contrasting words are often patronizing and loaded with prejudice. The Grade 6 course contains a classic example of this contradiction. Ironically, one of the expectations states that students should be able to recognize the bias in Champlain's drawing and descriptions of "Mohawk villages" (p. 32). This Eurocentrism is used again in the same course when it is suggested that students could build a model of a "Mohawk village" (p. 32). The settlers, on the other hand, built "towns" in their "development" of the prairies as stated in the Grade 8 course (p. 61). In this context, "village" evokes a rustic and simple organization of primitive dwellings whereas a "town" is a more advanced and complex collection of buildings that only the European newcomers were capable of constructing. The final example of Eurocentrism is contained in the Grade 8 course: "….-describe the causes and results of the Red River Rebellion of 1869-70 and the North-West Rebellion of 1885" (p. 61).

These historical events have historically been called "rebellions" because the popular stories about them have always been told from the perspective of the colonizers. The "rebels," of course, are the First Nations and Métis participants and Poundmaker, Big Bear, Gabriel Dumont, Louis Riel are the rebel leaders listed in the expectations. The reasons and motives for these events are varied and complex. Métis, First Nations, and non-Aboriginal settlers alike had a lengthy list of grievances against the federal government. Scholars have demonstrated that the events of 1869 and 1885 were not full-scale uprisings or rebellions as the popular version has called them. Rather, they were "only sporadic and isolated reprisals by small groups from small bands" (Miller, 1991, p. 171). But like the contrast between "villages" and "towns," the connotations of the word "rebellion" are prejudiced in favour of the colonizer, the Dominion of Canada. It bestows innocence and virtue upon the federal government and casts aspersions upon those who chafed under the weight of the government's heavy-handedness and inertial response to their grievances. History has traditionally been told from the perspective of the victor. In 1927, the Grand Council Fire of American Indians told the mayor of Chicago: "We know that [school histories] are unjust to the life of our people....They call all white victories, battles, and all Indian victories, massacres ....White men who rise to protect their property are called patriots – Indians who do the same are called murderers" (Wright, 1991, p. x). Like stereotypes, Eurocentrisms distort the truth and serve to maintain the colonizer's position of power. In the words of Nez Percé soldier, Yellow Wolf: "The whites told only one side. Told it to please themselves. Told much that is not true. Only his own best deeds, only the worst deeds of the Indians, has the white man told" (Wright, 1991, p. 4). Unfortunately, the curriculum falters in that it does

not tell more than the Eurocentric side of the story. Eurocentrism is interwoven into the theme of the curriculum and into the perspectives and vocabulary that were chosen to write it.

Mythologies

There are a few myths in the curriculum that could steer students onto the wrong course. The first one is found in the Grade 9 Applied Geography course. The expectation is that students will "compare Canada's quality of life with that of other countries e.g. by constructing a rating scale, by studying the United Nations Human Development Index" (p. 38). The assumption with this expectation is that the rating scale is applicable to all groups of Canadians and is therefore indicative of the quality of life of everyone. The United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) has been used since 1990 to compare countries in terms of "human development," defined as "the enlargement of choices made possible by education and literacy, a decent material standard of living, and a long and healthy life" (Cooke, 2007, p. 2). As of 2009, Canada placed fourth overall in the world, behind Norway, Australia, and Iceland, in the category of "very high human development" (UNHDR, 2009). This is a very impressive standing that belies the reality that many Aboriginal people endure. A recently published study conducted by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada statisticians, among others, used the HDI to measure the living conditions of Aboriginal people living in Canada and placed them in a dismal thirty-second spot, a far reach from fourth place (Cooke, 2007). That situates them in the same ranks as the Czech Republic. Aboriginal children fare even

worse. First Nations children living on reserve fall to a pathetic seventy-eighth place, with the likes of poor countries like Peru and Brazil, and thus have the poorest quality of life of any group in the nation (NCA, 2005). The HDI leaves the impression that Canadians are very well-off in one of the richest countries in the world. This may be true for a majority of Canadians, but when applied to Aboriginal people, it is mythical. The HDI statistic is a deceptive number that conveniently allows Canadians to ignore the poverty that is in their backyards. The HDI myth does not arouse students to critically examine the Third World conditions that many Aboriginal people, and especially children, endure.

The Grade 6 course contains two myths. The first one states that students need to explain the benefits that both First Nations and Europeans reaped when they formed military alliances to fight against a "common enemy" (p. 32). This expectation leaves the impression that military alliances were a "good thing" for First Nations people. Unquestionably there were some benefits such as gaining advantages over neighbouring nations in the fur trade or bolstering security against the intrusions of other nations. But the unfortunate outcomes of military alliances with the colonial powers generally outweighed the advantages. Miller (1991) called the alliances with the Europeans "disastrous" (p. 80). As I maintained earlier, First Nations influenced their fates to a certain point; however, massive casualties from decades of warfare and disease, enormous losses of their traditional territories, and the assimilation policies of Great Britain and Canada inflicted irreparable stress and damage on many First Nations. Despite their long-standing alliance with Great Britain, most First Nations were rewarded with disdain once Great Britain no longer needed them as pawns against the French and

the Americans. They were seen as an encumbrance upon the public purse and an impediment to the settlement of more immigrants – the colonizer's response was to enforce policies of removal from their traditional lands and assimilation into a European way of life (Miller, 1991). Abandoned and forsaken by his military allies, a Mississauga chief lamented, "You came as a wind blown across the Great Lake. The wind wafted you to our shores. We received you – we planted you – we nursed you. We protected you till you became a mighty tree that spread thro our Hunting Land. With its branches you now lash us" (Miller, 1991, p. 98). Clearly, the advantages to be gained by the First Nations from colonial alliances were heavily balanced in favour of the colonial powers.

Similarly, the second myth in the Grade 6 course is found in an expectation that asks students to "explain how the fur trade served the interests of both the Europeans and the First Nation peoples" (p. 32). Those interests that were served were primarily commercial in nature, but like the military alliances, the scales tipped in favour of the European traders. And although the First Nations who participated in the fur trade did so willingly, the negative consequences eventually surpassed the initial benefits. The fur trade exacerbated violence, including homicides (Dickason, 1994). The introduction of firearms magnified the deadliness of warfare and hunting. Alcohol was another popular trade good that was often abused and caused or intensified many social ills (Miller, 1991). The sheer magnitude of the drain on natural resources that the fur trade incurred also eroded many First Nations' traditional subsistence base and fostered dependence on European trade goods (Dickason, 1994). Once the trade was diminished, many First Nations were left impoverished and dependant on government subsidies (Miller, 1991). Thus, the benefits of the fur trade appear pale in the face of the problems that the trade

created for the majority of First Nations. The fur trade is often romanticized for the lusty adventures of the voyageurs and the "pristine" and "idyllic" Aboriginal people with whom they traded. But a close examination unveils that the ruthless realities of the fur trade overshadow the stereotypical romance that has been passed off as history. At first glance, the military alliances and fur trade may seem like they bequeathed valuable benefits to the First Nations participants. The curriculum does not recognize that the alliances and trade generally caused more harm than good and leaves the impression that they were equally beneficial to both First Nations and Europeans alike. This impression is far from the truth.

Omissions

Specific omissions can be found in every course curriculum that I studied except for the Grade 7 course. I have already demonstrated that all of the courses are written from a Eurocentric perspective and widely exclude Aboriginal perspectives. This constitutes a severe omission that colours the entire curriculum. There are also specific omissions in some learning expectations that leave out or cloud particular facts or perspectives pertaining to Aboriginal people. The "Confederation" unit of the Grade 8 history course provides the first omission: " – identify the reasons for the exclusion of certain groups from the political process e.g. First Nation peoples, women, the Chinese and Japanese" (p. 59). On the surface, this expectation is completely factual and wants for nothing. All of these groups were excluded from the political establishment on discriminatory grounds. However, there is a key fact distinguishing First Nations from

the other groups that is missing and is not covered anywhere else in the curriculum: First Nations had their own governance structures for millennia that were unilaterally dismissed by the Canadian government under the *Indian Act* of 1876. The government imposed a uniform system of elected band councillors who would be "responsive puppets" of the newly-formed Indian Affairs department (Wright, 1991, p. 317). Chiefs were deposed and matrilineality and other traditional government structures were abolished. Far from being excluded from the political system, many First Nations strived to exclude themselves from the imposition of the colonial government. In 1898, the clan mothers of the Mohawk Nation at Akwesasne prevented band elections from being held twice (Wright, 1991). One year later the Mounted Police barged in to Akwesasne to force the elections, but they were run out of town by two hundred Mohawks. And although a parallel elected band council was established at Six Nations, Canadian officials never succeeded in ousting the traditional sachems. In fact, the Haudenosaunee hereditary chiefs are presently involved in the Six Nations specific land claims negotiations. So the curriculum neglects the fact that some First Nations have been endeavouring to exclude themselves from Canada's political process ever since the federal government started forcing it on them, rather than the other way around.

The omission contained in another learning expectation seems so ludicrous, one must question the seriousness of the authors' intentions. In the Grade 9 academic geography course, students are expected to "predict various global environmental changes (e.g. global warming) and the impact they may have in the future on the occupations of Canadians (e.g. wheat farming in the Arctic)" (p. 33). Perhaps, someday, wheat farming in the Arctic will become a reality, but in the intervening centuries, the

radical changes that many Inuit and other northern peoples are facing due to global warming are daunting. Their traditional lifestyles are being transformed by changes in areas such as transportation, hunting, fishing, and resource extraction. Many Inuit depend on the one hundred and ninety-four species of animals that have been a staple part of their diet for generations, and everything from polar bears to arctic char to caribou are rapidly diminishing due to the catostrophic changes in their environment. As Shiela Watt Cloutier observed, "You go to the supermarket – We go on the sea-ice. Eating what we hunt is at the very core of what it means to be Inuit. When we can no longer hunt on the sea-ice, and eat what we hunt, we will no longer exist as a people" (as cited in Johansen, 2007, p. 282). Rather than predicting the likelihood of wheat farming in the Arctic, the curriculum should focus on the imminent and pressing dangers of global warming that threaten the traditional diet and identity of the Inuit.

The authors of the grade 9 geography courses also missed the mark concerning the Inuit in another learning expectation. In the academic course, students are expected to "explain the role of selected international organizations and agreements and why Canada participates in them" (p. 32). Among the ranks of the United Nations, Commonwealth of Nations, World Health Organization, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the authors listed the Inuit Circumpolar Games (ICG) as the only Aboriginal representation. It is bewildering why a sports event would be chosen to represent a signficant Aboriginal "international organization" or "agreement." The ICG does not even match those categories. It leaves one to question the authors' knowledge, motivation, and efforts. In the very least, the Inuit Circumpolar Conference could have been chosen, which is a major international, non-governmental organization that

represents approximately 150,000 Inuit of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, and Russia. The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, the United Nations Declaration of Indigenous Rights, and the International Indigenous Women's Forum are other excellent examples that would have been far superior choices to the ICG. To be fair, the authors were not negligent when they included the ICG as an example of an international trade, cultural, or sporting event in the corresponding grade 9 applied geography learning expectation (p. 39). But choosing the ICG to represent significant Aboriginal international organizations or agreements gives one the impression that compared to major bodies or agreements like the UN or NATO, all that Aboriginal people have to offer is an international Inuit sporting event. It is a negligent representation that constitutes a serious omission. The authors should reconsider their choice of the ICG and exert a little more effort conducting their research.

The geograhy course authors also omitted another significant Aboriginal issue in the "Human-Environment Interactions" unit of the applied course. Like the ICG, the authors chose a weak example: "Students will identify the ways in which the traditional ecological knowledge and perspective of Aboriginal peoples influence how they interact with their environments today e.g. Aboriginal views of hot springs as traditional sacred sites, not tourist attractions" (p. 38). This expectation is also contained in the academic course with the exception of the hot springs example. This learning expectation is a candidate for the noble environmentalist stereotype to which I referred earlier, but I chose to categorize it as an omission because the example was such a poor choice. The authors have cited a rather obscure example to illustrate Aboriginal traditional ecological knowledge. Since there are minimal hot springs in Canada, this issue does not have

sweeping significance to Aboriginal people in comparison to other issues. There are far more relevant, and controversial, issues that could have been highlighted. Resource extraction projects such as hydro-electric dams or oil sand projects may pose wrenching dilemmas. Although not necessarily the case for all First Nations who find themselves in similar positions, some First Nations, such as the Innu in Northern Quebec who are affected by Hydro Quebec's hydroelectric projects or the First Nations on Vancouver Island who are harvesting logs from old-growth forests, have wrestled with seeking a balance between ecological values and the need for economic development. In communities that are impoverished, there is great pressure to foster economic activies, whether it is by signing agreements with large corporations to exploit natural resources on traditional territories or starting venture capital companies and so forth. Quite often ecological values clash with the pressing need to address the overwhelming social and economic conditions through resource development. The hot springs example seems trivial in comparison. The curriculum authors should have selected an issue of greater significance and relevance to Aboriginal people and all Canadians.

The next omission falls in a time period of great historical significance to Aboriginal people. Métis and First Nations were struggling for their rights on the prairies of the territory that would become Canada in the late nineteenth century. There were clashes between Aboriginal people and the forces of the colonial government. For many, it marked the end of an epoch when Aboriginal people were free to govern themselves and live as they please without the encumbrances of colonialism. The Grade 8 unit, "The Development of Western Canada," covers this historical period and expects students to "formulate questions to guide research on issues and problems" (p. 61). The

example question concerns Chief Big Bear: "Why did Big Bear receive the treatment he did from Canada's legal system?" (p. 61). The question of Big Bear's treatment is an important one, but the potential answers do not necessarily entail the context in which Big Bear was imprisoned. The authors missed the opportunity to ask a question of broader scope regarding the context of Aboriginal and government relations. Big Bear was treated brutally out of hatred toward Aboriginal people and the racist efforts to suppress the Métis and First Nations people. He was imprisoned for treason-felony in 1885, but historians today have concluded that Big Bear's involvement in the incidents leading to his arrest did not warrant his conviction (Miller, 1991). Several of Big Bear's peers were hung for their involvement in the events of 1885, resulting in one of the two largest mass-hangings ever on Canadian soil (Dickason, 1994). More importantly, the question of Big Bear's treatment should point to the fact that the Canadian government was intent on the subjugation of all Aboriginal people. The question skirts the escalating oppression that the government applied to Aboriginal people after 1885 through assimilation policies that confined them to reserves, banished their governments and leaders, and outlawed their religious ceremonies. I have already established that the curriculm is fixated in a Eurocentric perspective. The curriculum authors entitled this unit, "The Development of Western Canada." Perhaps if the curriculum had been written by a panel of Aboriginal authors, who were not on the government's payroll, the unit would have been called, "The Destruction of Western Turtle Island." The omission of the subjugation and assimilation tactics of the Canadian government is not surprising, but terribly regrettable.

The final omission of this analyis is found in the Grade 6 unit, "First Nation

Peoples and European Explorers." The curriculum expects students to be able to "explain how differences between First Nation peoples and early European explorers led to conflicts between the two groups (e.g. lack of common language, differing world views and spiritual beliefs, introduction of European diseases, differing views about property ownership)" (p. 33). These examples highlight some significant issues, but exclude the most paramount issue of all that divided the two groups: racism. Both First Nations and European explorers were guilty of this offence. The first known Europeans to have come into contact with Aboriginal people, the Norse, thought that the First Nations people they encountered were mythical creatures, like trolls, who appeared to be "small, ill-favoured men with ugly hair on their heads" (Dickason, 1994, p. 87). Cartier's impression was no more positive: "This people may well be called savage, for they are the sorriest folk there can be in the world" (as cited in Miller, 1991, p. 28). Some First Nations, on the other hand, reacted to the newcomers with contempt, thinking them to be ugly, inferior and less intelligent as demonstrated from many early accounts of early contact, including this passage of the *Jesuit Relations*:

> For they are droll fellows, and have a word and a nickname very readily at command, if they think they have any occasion to look down upon us. And certainly (judging from what I see) this habit of self-aggrandizement is a contagion from which no one is exempt, except through the grace of God. You will see these barbarians.... holding their heads so high that they greatly underrate us, regarding themselves as our superiors (Thwaites, 1896, p. 123).

Many Aboriginal people were appalled by the newcomers' inability to survive without their help or their incompetence at repairing their own tools (Miller, 1991). Some

Indigenous peoples also considered the newcomers uncivilized due to their ignorance of how to behave properly according to Aboriginal customs, including how to properly greet others or the correct procedures for conducting business (Miller, 1991). Racist reactions were common to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike upon encountering one another. Racism was, and still is, at the heart of the conflict that has infested the relationship between the two. The curriculum authors missed the opportunity to raise the role of racism in historical conflicts. Considering one of the Ministry of Education's curriculum goals is to nurture students who "will take a stand against racism," their omission of racism in this learning expectation is glaring.

Chapter Three
Conclusion

I conducted this case study of the compulsory Grade 6-9 Social Studies curriculum in order to ascertain if the Ontario curriculum contributes to the appalling ignorance that Ontario's secondary school graduates display regarding Aboriginal people and their histories. Ignorance of Aboriginal people and the issues that compose their realities yields negative consequences. Most Aboriginal people lack position and privilege in a country that protects its elite through the perpetuation of systems and structures that are designed to suppress the unprivileged. Colonialism has subjugated Aboriginal people for centuries. The result has been a standard of living for many Aboriginal people that lags far behind the non-Aboriginal population. One would be hard-pressed to distinguish between the living conditions on many reserves and those found in the shanty towns of Third World countries. It is imperative for Canadians to understand why....why do so many Aboriginal people in Canada suffer? What has led them to their current state? What are their histories? How has Canada treated Aboriginal people? What have they contributed to Canada and what do they have to offer? Discovering the answers to these questions is crucial to healing the scars that past Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations have inflicted. The curriculum, as part of the foundation of our education system, should contribute and must contribute to those answers. But it does not. It fails to adequately provide more than a superficial and spotty sketch of the realities of the Aboriginal population in Canada. It frames Aboriginal people like Curtis framed them in his photos – a people whose time has come and gone. The curriculum is tainted with stereotypes, Eurocentrisms, myths, and

negligent omissions. The curriculum fails to encourage students to think critically about Aboriginal people and the circumstances , institutions, and events that have led them to where they are today. It fails to provide Aboriginal voices that would infuse students' learning with lavish Aboriginal perspectives. The curriculum does not live up to its own learning expectation of nurturing students who will appreciate diversity and equity and "take a stand against racism."

There are some lights of hope on the horizon. The Government of Saskatchewan, recognizing that "we are all Treaty people," has mandated that all students learn about the Treaties and has invested considerable resources to ensure that curriculum resources are available for every grade (McLean, 2008). The Aboriginal Education Office of the Ministry of Education in Ontario has produced an Aboriginal Education Strategy that includes building the capacity of the education system to foster an appreciation of Aboriginal perspectives, values, and cultures by all students, school board staff, and elected trustees (OME, 2007). One of the stated objectives of the strategy is to integrate Aboriginal histories, cultures, and perspectives throughout the Ontario curriculum. Additionally, the strategy aims to increase the knowledge of all Ontario educators regarding Aboriginal people by encouraging faculties of education, the Ontario College of Teachers, school boards, teacher federations, professional associations, and trustee organizations to provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers, principals, supervisory officers, and trustees (OME, 2007). The Ministry of Education has recently launched a number of pilot initiatives that are developing curriculum that is more inclusive of Aboriginal content (OME, 2009). The strategy is ambitious and ambiguous. The strategy policy framework claims that the Ministry has

already integrated Aboriginal content into the curriculum documents that I have studied (OME, 2007, p.28). But this thesis has demonstrated that the curriculum needs a substantial overhaul from its current position of general disregard for Aboriginal people and their perspectives. Hopefully the pilot initiatives will bring even greater change to the curriculum. Knowledge of Aboriginal people, and their cultures and histories, should not be optional. It is critical to the success of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal relations. It is critical to the health of Aboriginal communities. It is critical to Canada. As Cree scholar Kirkness (1992) argues, "First Nations education must go beyond the bounds of being only for First Nations. Our place in this land must be understood by all Canadians so that we might work together toward building a more harmonious world" (p. 103). It is time to purge the curriculum of the misrepresentations and distortions that are clouding the viewpoints of secondary school graduates for "there is no longer any excuse for ignoring the viewpoint of the colonized....Few things are so dangerous as believing one's own lies" (Wright, 1991, p. 8).

REFERENCES

Absolon, K. & Willet, C. (2005). Putting ourselves forward: Location in Aboriginal research. In Brown, L. & Strega, S. (Eds.), *Research as resistance: Critical, indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches.* (pp. 97-126). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Agbo, S. (2001). Enhancing success in American Indian students. Participatory research at Akwesasne as part of the development of a culturally relevant curriculum. *Journal of American Indian Education, 40,* 1-44.

Aikenhead, G. (2001). Integrating Western and Aboriginal sciences: Cross-cultural science teaching. *Research in Science Education, 31,* 337-355.

Alfred, T. (1999). *Peace, power, righteousness: An indigenous manifesto.* Don Mills: Oxford University Press.

Allan, B. (2006). Remembering, resisting: Casting an anti-colonial gaze upon the education of diverse students in social work education. In Dei, G. & Kempf A. (Eds.), *Anti-colonialism and the politics of resistance.* (pp. 257-269). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Anderson, G., & Arsenault N. (1998). *Fundamentals of educational research (2nd ed.).* London: Routledge Falmer.

Apple, M. (1979). *Ideology and curriculum.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Apple, M. (1993). *Official knowledge: Democratic education in a conservative age.* New York and London: Routledge.

Apple, M. & Christian-Smith, L. (Eds). *The politics of the textbook.* New York: Routledge.

Barrera, J. (2009). *First Nations leader demands meeting with Harper over 'colonialism' comment.* October 1, 2009. The Province. Retrieved December 17, 2009, from http://www.theprovince.com/life/First+Nations+leader+demands+meeting+with+Harper+over+colonialism+comment/2055897/story.html

Behrendt, L. (1996). At the front of the class. At the back of the class: Experiences as Aboriginal student and Aboriginal teacher. *Feminist Review, 52,* 27-35.

Berkhofer, R. (1979). *The White man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the present.* New York: Vintage.

Buscombe, E. (2006). *'Injuns': Native Americans in the movies.* London: Rektron.

Canadian Education Association. (2009). Policy landscape: Aboriginal peoples. Retrieved September 14, 2009 from www.cea-ace.ca/foo.cfm.

Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies. (2002). *Learning about walking in beauty: Placing Aboriginal perspectives in Canadian classrooms.* Retrieved September 12, 2009 from http://www.crr.ca/content/view/252/538/lang,english.

Canwest News Service. (2007). *Urban natives report 'disturbing' increase in racism.* Retrieved February 3, 2009 from http://www.canada.com/saskatoonstarphoenix/story.html?id=acb46ac4-c01b-44bf-a83f-c038e7cc1498&k=2957&p=1

Cardinal, P. (1999). *Aboriginal perspective on education: A vision of cultural context within the framework of social studies.* Edmonton: Alberta Learning.

Carr, P. (2007). The whiteness of educational policy-making. In Carr, P., & Lund, D. (Eds.), *The great white North: Exploring whiteness, privilege and identity in education in Canada.* (pp. 223 – 233). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Carr, P., & Lund, D. (2007). *The great white North: Exploring whiteness, privilege and identity in education in Canada.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Cherubini, L. (2009). Re-interpreting sustainability: Ministry policy and Aboriginal education in Northern Ontario schools. Proceedings of the *International Conference on Inspiration and Innovation Teaching and Teacher Education,* Memorial University, St. John's Newfoundland.

Churchill, W. (1992). *Fantasies of the master race: Literature, cinema, and the colonization of American Indians.* Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press.

Cockburn, B. (1976). *Red brother, red sister.* Retrieved January 3, 2010 from http://cockburnproject.net/songs&music/rbrs.html

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education.* London: Routledge Falmer.

Cooke, M., Mitrou, F., Lawrence, D., Guimond, E., & Beavon, D. (2007). Indigenous well-being in four countries: An application of the UNDP's Human Development Index to Indigenous Peoples in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States. BMC International Health and Human Rights, 7, 1-11.

Curtis, E. S. (1907). *The North American Indian,* supplementary plates, vol. 1. Retrieved January 31, 2010 from http://www.smithsonianmag.com/specialsections/heritage/33518369.html?c=y&page=19

Dei, G. & Asgharzadeh, A. (2001). The power of social theory: The anti-colonial discursive framework. *Journal of Educational Thought, 35*, 297-323.

Dei, G. & Kempf, A. (Eds.) (2006). *Anti-colonialism and the politics of resistance.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Deloria Jr., V. (2003). *God is red: A Native view of religion.* 3rd Ed. Golden, CO: Fulcrum.

Deloria,V. Jr. (2004). Marginal and sub-marginal. In Mihesuah, D., & Wilson, A. (Eds.), *Indigenizing the academy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities.*(pp. 18-36). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Dickason, O. (1994). *Canada's First Nations: A history of founding peoples from earliest times.* Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.

Doxtator, D. (1992). *Fluffs and feathers: An exhibit on the symbols of Indianness.* Brantford, ON: Woodland Cultural Centre.

Foucault, M. (2000). *Essential works of Foucault 1954-1984. Volume 3: Power.* New York: New Press.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed.* New York: Continuum.

Gionet, L., (2009). *First Nations people: Selected findings of the 2006 Census.* Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

Gionet, L., (2009). *Métis in Canada: Selected findings of the 2006 Census.* Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.

Giroux, H. (1987). Literacy and the pedagogy of political empowerment. In Freire, P., & Macedo, D. (Eds.), *Literacy: Reading and word and the world.* (pp. 1-27). South Hadley, MA: Bergin and Garvey.

Giroux, H., & McLaren, P. (1997). Writing from the margins: Geographies of indemnity, pedagogy, and power. In McLaren, P. (Ed.), *Revolutionary multiculturalism: Pedagogies of dissent for the new millennium.* (pp. 34-49). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Goddard, J.T., & Foster, R.Y. (2002). Adapting to diversity: Where cultures collide: Educational issues in northern Alberta. *Canadian Journal of Education, 27*, 1-20.

Grant, J. W. (1984). *Moon of wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in encounter since 1534.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Hales, J. (2006). An anti-colonial critique of research methodology. In Dei, G., and Kempf, A. (Eds.), *Anti-colonialism and the politics of resistance.* (pp. 187-256). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Hardiman, R., & Jackson, B. (2007). Conceptual foundations for social justice education. In Adams, M., Bell, L., & Griffin, P. (Eds.), *Teaching for social justice and diversity (2nd ed.).* (pp. 16-29). New York: Routledge.

Harding, R. (2007). *Re/framing Aboriginal social policy issues in the news: Old stereotypes and new opportunities*. Doctoral dissertation, Simon Fraser University.

Hunkins, F., & Ornstein, A. (2009). *Curriculum: Foundations, principles, and issues.* Boston, MA: Pearson.

Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. (2009). "Mandate for the Truth and Reconciliation Agreement." Retrieved September 24, 2009, from http://www.trc-cvr.ca/overview/html.

Johansen, B. (2007). *The Praeger handbook on contemporary issues in Native America.* Westport, CN: Praeger.

Joseph, P., Bravmann, S., Windschitl, M., Mikel, E., & Green, N. (2000). *Cultures of curriculum.* Mahwah, New Jersey and London: Erlbaum.

Kempf, A. (2006). Anti-colonial historiography: Interrogating colonial education. In Dei, G., and Kempf, A. (Eds.), *Anti-colonialism and the politics of resistance.* (pp. 129-158). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Kilpatrick, J. (1999). *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and film.* Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Kirkness, V. (1992). *First Nations and schools: Triumphs and struggles.* Toronto: Canadian Education Association.

Krippendorp, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kulchyski, P. (1994). *Unjust relations: Aboriginal rights in Canadian courts.* Toronto: University of Oxford Press.

Luke, A. (1988). *Literacy, textbooks, and ideology: Postwar literacy instruction and the mythology of Dick and Jane.* Philadelphia: Falmer.

McLaren, P. (1997). *Revolutionary multiculturalism: Pedagogies of dissent for the new millennium.* Boulder, CO: Westview.

McLean, J. (2008). *Moving forward with mandatory treaty education.* Regina: Government of Saskatchewan. Retrieved July 2, 2009 from http://www.gov.sk.ca/news?newsId=5a502966-90b4-43a2-89b5-b6d492905f7b

Mihesuah, D. (2004). Academic gatekeepers. In Mihesuah, D., & Wilson, A. (Eds.), *Indigenizing the racademy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities.* (pp. 37-56). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Mihesuah, D. (2004). American Indian history as a field of study. In Mihesuah, D., & Wilson, A. (Eds.), *Indigenizing the academy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities.* (pp. 141-155). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Mihesuah, D., & Wilson, A. (Eds.) (2004). *Indigenizing the academy: Transforming scholarship and empowering communities.* Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

Miller, J.R. (1991). *Skyscrapers hide the heavens: A history of Indian-White relations in Canada.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Minister's National Working Group on Education. (2002). *Our children – Keepers of the sacred knowledge. Final report of the Minister's National Working Group on Education.* Ottawa: Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.

Morrow, R., & Torres, C. (2002). *Reading Freire and Habermas: Critical pedagogy and transformative social change.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Munslow, A. (1997). *Deconstructing history.* New York: Routledge.

Nabavi, M. (2006). The power of oral tradition: Critically resisting the colonial footprint. In Dei, G., and Kempf, A. (Eds.), *Anti-colonialism and the politics of resistance.* (pp. 175-192). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

National Children's Alliance. (2005). *National Children's Alliance Policy Statement on Aboriginal Children.* Retrieved January 31, 2010 from http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.com/nca/pubs/2005/aboriginalchildren.pdf

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2002). *Aboriginal education in Ontario: Backgrounder.* Retrieved February 6, 2010 from http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/aboriginal/supporting.html

Ontario Ministry of Education. (1993). *Antiracism and ethnocultural equity in school boards: Guidelines for policy development and implementation.* Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2004). *The Ontario Curriculum – Social Studies, Grades 1 to 6; History and Geography, Grades 7 and 8.* Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education. (2005). *The Ontario curriculum - Canadian and World Studies.* Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2007). *Ontario First Nation, Métis, and Inuit education policy framework.* Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2009). *Realizing the promise of diversity: Ontario's equity and inclusive education strategy.* Toronto: Queen's Printer for Ontario.

O'Sullivan, E. (1999). *Transformative learning: Educational vision for the twenty-first century.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Paterson, S. (2009). School sheds its warrior image over Aboriginal stereotypes. *Globe and Mail.* December 9, 2009. Retrieved December 14, 2009, from http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/school-sheds-its-warrior-image-over-aboriginal-stereotypes/article1390945/

Perkins, T. (1979). Rethinking stereotypes. In Michelle Barrett (Ed.), *Ideology and cultural production.* (pp. 135-151). New York: St. Martin's.

Pohl, A. (2002). *Unlearning to learn: Participatory decolonising exercises for Canadian educators. First steps toward walking in beauty.* Report, written for the Coalition for the Advancement of Aboriginal Studies, November 18, 2002. Toronto: CAAS Group.

Pratts, A. (2002). *Invisible Natives: Myth and identity in the American western.* Ithaca & London: Cornell University Press.

Purchas, S. (1625). *Hakluytus posthumus or purchas his pilgrims. Vol. 19.* Glasgow: University of Glasgow Press.

Regnier, R. (1995). Warrior as pedagogue, pedagogue as warrior: Reflections on Aboriginal anti-racist pedagogy. In Ng, R., Staton, P., & Scane, J. (Eds.), *Anti-racism, feminism, and critical approaches to education.* (pp. 67 – 86). Toronto: OISE Press.

Reynolds, H. (1992). *The law of the land.* Toronto: Penguin.

Robson, C. (1993). *Real world research.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996). *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.* Ottawa: Canada Communication Group.

Ruck-Simmons, M. (2006). Invisible violence and spiritual injury within post-secondary institutions: An anti-colonial interrogation and response. In Dei, G., & Kempf A. (Eds.), *Anti-colonialism and the politics of resistance.* (pp. 271-292). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Shick, C., & St. Denis, V. (2005). Troubling national discourses in anti-racist curricular planning. *Canadian Journal of Education, 28,* 295-317.

Smith, L.T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples.* London: Zed Books.

Stewin, L. & McCann, S. (1993). *Contemporary educational issues: The Canadian mosaic.* Toronto: Copp, Clark, Pittman.

Terwell, J. & Walker, D. (2004). *Curriculum as a shaping force: Toward a principled approach in curriculum theory and practice.* New York: Nova.

Thwaites, R.G. (1896). *The Jesuit relations and allied documents.* Cleveland.

Tylor, E. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art and custom.* London: John Murray.

United Nations Human Development Report (2009). Retrieved January 30, 2010 from http://hdr.undp.org/en/reports/global/hdr2009/

Wardekker, W. (2004). Curriculum as vision. In Terwel, J., & Walker, D. (Eds.), *Curriculum as a shaping force: Toward a principled approach in curriculum theory and practice.* New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Warry, W. (2008). *Ending denial: Understanding Aboriginal issues.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Watter, J. (2008). Reproducing Canada's colonial legacy: A critical analysis of Aboriginal issues in Ontario high school curriculum. (Master's Thesis, Queen's University, 2008). Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada.

Weatherford, J. (1991). *Native roots: How the Indians enriched America.* New York: Fawcett Columbine.

Weber, R. (1990). *Basic content analysis (2nd ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wheeler, W. (2000). *Decolonizing tribal histories.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California.

Wilson, A. (2004). Reclaiming our humanity: Decolonization and the recovery of Indigenous knowledge. In Mihesuah, D., & Wilson, A. *Indigenizing the academy:*

Transforming scholarship and empowering communities. (pp. 57-89). Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press.

Winny, B. (2000). Canadian fiction for adolescents from 1970-1990: The rise of the Aboriginal voice and the decolonization of the curriculum of Ontario. (Master's Thesis, Trent University, 2000). Ottawa: Library and Archives Canada.

Wright, R. (1991). *Stolen continents: The "New World" through Indian eyes since 1492.* Toronto: Viking.