NORMALIZING WHITE SETTLER INNOCENCE:

AN ANTI-COLONIAL ANALYSIS OF THE SASKATCHEWAN SOCIAL STUDIES FOUR CURRICULUM

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By

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Abstract

Using poststructural tools of analysis, this thesis analyzes how Saskatchewan's grade four social studies curriculum (2010) continues to preserve White settler innocence and normalize Indigenous dispossession despite its intent to be inclusive of Indigenous content and knowledge. Conducted through an anti-colonial lens, this research investigates the notion that provincially mandated moves to include Indigenous content and knowledge in provincial curriculum, driven in part by dominant national discourses of reconciliation, are enough to confront and unsettle Canada's racist, colonial structures and practices which produce and naturalize the racialization, dispossession and dislocation of Indigenous peoples while preserving White settlers as innocent. Using poststructural methods of analysis, this study aims to determine the productive, identity-making potential of the national discourse found within the outcomes and indicators of the Saskatchewan grade four social studies curriculum document. The interpretation of the curricular discourse, framed by theories of settler colonialism and Whiteness studies, finds that well-intended attempts to include Indigenous perspectives and knowledge continue replicate and reinforce racist, colonial strategies that preserve Canada's racial hierarchy. By circulating discourses which naturalize White settler belonging; distort Indigenous sovereignty; maintain Indigenous Otherness; regulate Indigenous exteriority through recognition; and attempt to maintain colourblind race neutrality, this thesis demonstrates how the curriculum effectively functions to exalt (Thobani, 2007) White settler subjectivity and secure the settler state. The implications of this research suggest that education systems and teachers must move beyond a reliance on models of Indigenous inclusion to promote racial equity and therefore must receive an adequate, ongoing pre-practice and professional education in identifying and challenging ongoing forms racism and colonialism.

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Dedication

In memory of

My aunty Cindy
Thoughts of your laughter and encouragement carried me through writing.
&
My cousin Tyson
I think of you often. I wish the world would have been a safer place for you.

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Introduction

Research Statement

This research investigates the production of Canadian national identity within an ongoing context of colonialism, racism and White supremacy. I aim to understand how discourses of the Saskatchewan social studies four curriculum (2010) contributes to the production of national identity in ways that reinforce the colonial conditions of anti-Indigenous racism, dispossession and White settler supremacy in Canada. I consider this question within the broader scope of provincial education directives which suggest that anti-Indigenous racism can be addressed through curricula that is inclusive of Indigenous culture and knowledge and promotes the principles of Truth and Reconciliation (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). I question what curricular discourse accomplishes through these inclusive, justice-driven moves given the racialized power structures and hierarchies well established in Canadian society. To study the identity producing facets of curricular discourse I frame this study by drawing from poststructural theories which delineate how language and communication, written or spoken, can serve as corpus with which to analyze the operation of power and its effect on identity production. Poststructural theory reveals how signifiers of difference simultaneously produce the terms of what is taken for granted as normal and demonstrates how identities become fixed within this network of power as belonging or non-belonging. The analysis is interpreted alongside Whiteness and settler colonial theories that situate the productive effects of curricular outcomes and indicators within social systems and practices already at play. The findings of the analysis locate the specific ways curriculum reinvests in colonial structures and race hierarchies that preserve White innocence, illuminating how and where curriculum needs to be improved to work more effectively towards anti-colonial, anti-racist ends in Canada.

Context and Research Questions

Research suggests that White settler Canadians can struggle to recognize how their identities are produced, oriented, and implicated within the ongoing structural processes and relations of settler colonialism (Lawrence, 2002; Mackey, 2016; McLean, 2013; 2018; Razack, 2002; Schick; 2014; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; St. Denis, 2011b; Thobani, 2007). Such scholars contend that dominant national discourses, along with other structural, racialized practices and policies, work to forge a sense of territorial belonging, innocence and legitimacy for White settler colonizers that distorts the ways they have benefited from colonial produced systems of racial inequality. National stories of benevolent settlement erase the anti-Indigenous racism and genocidal violence inherent to colonialism, obscuring the racially stratified social structure they produce thereby normalizing Settler innocence and entitlement (McLean; 2018; Razack, 2002; Schick, 2014; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Thobani, 2007). Rendered innocent/ignorant to how they have been positioned through these relations of power as superior, White settlers can reproduce anti-Indigenous racism and colonial violence in ways that appear to be a rational and justified banal national practice.

It is not difficult to find evidence of expressions of settler entitlement and the racist violence it entails. As I write this, Canada has sanctioned an aggressive military-style assault on the Wet'suwet'en land defenders working to protect unceded Wet'suwet'en territory from an unapproved pipeline expansion project (Bracken, 2021). How is it that much of Canada's citizenship sees little issue with this invasion of sovereign Indigenous lands? In schools across Canada, Indigenous students (and teachers) experience discipline and surveillance by administrators and their non-Indigenous peers for expressing their Indigenous identity. For instance, in September of 2021, an Indigenous student attending a Winnipeg high school was

reprimanded by a teacher for not standing during the school's daily observance of the Canadian national anthem (Coubrough, 2021). This is similar to the 2014 experience of a Saskatchewan high school student who was disciplined by administration after her White settler peers suggested they were made uncomfortable by her sweatshirt which bore the phrase "Got Land? Thank an Indian" (CBC News, 2014) How is it that Canada and Canadians have been produced in such a way that Indigenous sovereignty can be trampled on and regulated with impunity? And how does this relate to the sense of entitlement and belonging that manifest through Whiteness on the prairies? What role does education play in this process?

Saskatchewan anti-racist education scholar, Carol Schick (2014) situates Canadian public schools as deeply racialized, White settler spaces in which expressions of entitlement and belonging are reified through acts of anti-Indigenous resentment and resistance. As a Métis high school teacher in rural Saskatchewan, I am troubled by the ease with which White settler students continue to access and recite racist discourses and display resistance to Indigenous content through their body language, open expressions of displeasure, and expectations that curriculum be adapted to suit their comfort. Schick (2014) explains these types of performances not as

> individual emotional responses, but ones that are collectively organized and understood in ways that exhibit various formations of white racial identity, that include entitlement, superiority and belonging… [They reflect a] socially sanctioned racial ideology that can be taken-for-granted in this place that has everything to do with the storied context that produces the heroic white Canadian citizen/subject (p. 92)

While there are many routes to analyze this ongoing problem, as a teacher I feel compelled to question how the curricula of Saskatchewan education continues to circulate discourses which

story national narratives and identities in ways that reinforce White settlers as innocent to the racism and colonial violence on which their natural sense of belonging is premised.

Adding a layer of complexity to this problem is Saskatchewan Education's approach to racial justice and equity which is rooted in a tradition of Indigenous inclusivity and culturally-responsive pedagogy (see St. Denis, 2011a). This approach to education emerged from mid-20th century culturally essentialist anthropological theory which framed Indigenous students experiencing low success in White, colonial schools as suffering the effects of "psychological trauma" and "cultural discontinuity" associated with primitive Indigenous peoples 'losing culture' in adapting to rapid cultural change (St. Denis, 2011a, p. 170). Rather than looking to the systematic violence of colonialism and racism to explain the marginalization of Indigenous students, cultural theories naturalized the restoration and revitalization of Indigenous culture as a remedy to educational disparities (St. Denis, 2011a, p. 170). Colonial education systems accepted the notion that the inclusion of Indigenous cultural education could improve the poor outcomes of Indigenous students and over time, this culturally responsive approach to pedagogy evolved to recognize additional benefits for non-Indigenous students as well. In 1989, the Saskatchewan Department of Learning collaborated with First Nations and Métis groups to develop a formal First Nations and Metis Education policy framework which "recogniz[ed] that…the [Aboriginal] peoples of the province are historically unique peoples occupying a unique and rightful place in society. [The Department of Learning] recogniz[ed] that education programs must meet the needs of [Aboriginal] students, and that changes to existing programs [were] also necessary for the benefit of *all students*" (Saskatchewan Learning, 1989, as cited in Bouvier and Karlenzig, 2006, p. 18, emphasis added). The policy specifically indicated that the cultural differences of Indigenous students necessitated culturally appropriate amendments to

"curriculum, programs, teaching methods and climate" (Saskatchewan Learning, 1989, as cited in Bouvier and Karlenzig, 2006, p. 18). Despite an extensive and ever-expanding body of research delineating the clear impacts of colonialism and racism in producing vast educational disparities between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in Saskatchewan public schools (Battiste, 2013; Gillies, 2021; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Schick, 2014; St. Denis, 2002; St. Denis, 2007; St. Denis, 2011a) government policy frameworks continue to endorse Indigenous cultural inclusion as the primary solution to promoting harmonious social relations and race equality. For example, the 2018 Indigenous Education policy document entitled, *Inspiring Success: First Nations and Métis PreK-12 Education Policy Framework,* replacing earlier 2003 and 2009 versions, follows the language of the 1989 document in restating its commitment to "ensur[ing] that Indigenous perspectives and ways of knowing continue to shape the learning experience for *all students*" (Government of Saskatchewan, p. 2, emphasis added). While this updated version specifies the inclusion of treaty education, mandatory since 2008, and supports a general commitment to reconciliation, it continues to frame these additions as matters of Indigenous inclusion (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018, p. 2). While decades of collaborative work between Indigenous leadership and Saskatchewan Education have produced significant and meaningful progress, this thesis considers how well-established discourses of inclusion are taken up in Saskatchewan's social studies curriculum in ways that implicate the production of national and racialized subjectivities in a context of ongoing colonialism.

This research focuses on analyzing the Saskatchewan Social Studies Four Curriculum (2010) to answer the following questions:

1) How does the discourse of the Saskatchewan Social Studies four curriculum reinforce power relations that naturalize and normalize White settler innocence and belonging?

2) What discourses of nationhood does the Saskatchewan Social Studies four curriculum draw from and produce?
3) What do discourses of cultural inclusion achieve in the Saskatchewan Social Studies four curriculum? How do discourses of inclusion materialize in the Saskatchewan Social Studies four curriculum?

Research Intent

This research follows an anti-colonial aim in its attempt to "subvert dominant thinking that re-inscribes colonial and colonizing relations" (Dei & Kempf, 2006, p. 3). Understanding the operation of colonialism and racism in seemingly benign, justice-oriented, educational practices is a first step to interrupting the discursive preservation of White settler innocence. By doing so, I hope to illuminate the ways in which curricular knowledge is not a neutral, objective, and fixed presentation of fact, but rather that "all knowledge can be located in the particular social contexts from which it emerges" and can operate in ways that remake dominant/subordinate racialized relations of power and secure colonial interests (Dei & Kempf, 2006, p. 3).

Rationale

The vast inequalities that exist between White settler and Indigenous peoples in Canada are a structural production made to appear inevitable and natural through racist national discourses circulated through social practices and public institutions. As a site of knowledge distribution impressed upon the nation's citizenship, public education can play an instrumental role in interrupting narratives and national stories that reinforce the normalization of social inequality. However, before this can happen effectively, the education system must interrogate its complicity in contributing to the maintenance of racist and colonial structures which normalize the inferiorization, dispossession, and erasure of Indigenous people on their own

lands, and which render White settlers innocent to the reciprocal benefits they procure through these structures. The ongoing problem of White ignorance can be challenged by identifying how the nation building discourses mobilized through the Saskatchewan social studies curriculum produce problematic knowledge and reinscribe colonial power relations.

Curriculum is an essential site of investigation due to its discursive potential as an identity producing text. In particular, social studies curricula that circulate national narratives have the potential to reproduce racialized subjectivities and stabilize inequitable power relations (Stanley, 2006). Drawing on Britzman (1993) and Willinsky (1998) Schick and St. Denis (2005) have explained that "although racial identifications are incorrectly thought to be something that racial minorities alone possess, the identifications of all students and teachers are invariably produced through the curriculum" (p. 297). The content and knowledge circulated through national discourses of curriculum represent what George Sefa Dei (1999) defines as "stable knowledge" — the commonsense knowledge which works to legitimize, naturalize, and preserve power and knowledge for dominant groups. Subject to the discourses of "stable knowledge," student identifications are inscribed within networks of power and meaning already in play. This process of subjectivation defines and distorts how we come to understand ourselves, creating a "fragmentation" of self (Pinar, 1995, p. 328). It is important to recognize how all identities come to occupy discursively constituted subject positions that limit our ability to engage and act in ways that represent our full humanity.

Curriculum theorist, William Pinar, writes

> If what [national citizens] know about themselves— [their] history, [their] culture, [their] national identity— is informed by absences, denials and incompleteness, then [their] identity — both as individuals and [national citizens] is fragmented ... the self's capacity

for intelligence, for informed action, even for simple functional competence is impaired. (1995, p. 328)

While non-Indigenous people benefit from colonialism and anti-Indigenous racism, lacking this awareness can harm their capacity for full expressions of humanity. When the curriculum restricts access to knowledge of Canada's colonial and racist foundations, White settler identities remain fixed as normative, and thus dominant, subject positions with broader access to social and economic opportunities and resources. If education systems are committed to processes of reconciliation and racial justice, they must consider how identity and inequitable power relations are negotiated and produced through the national discourse on offer.

I situate the analysis conducted in this research within the Saskatchewan social studies fourth grade curriculum for two reasons. Initially, the social studies four curriculum is the first of the Saskatchewan K-12 social studies curricula to explicitly introduce students to nation and province building narratives. Here, children are immersed in the foundational knowledge of national identity, national history, citizenship, social relations and belonging, therefore the curricular discourse is reflective/productive of dominant social narratives. Even for young children, these narratives demonstrate language that operationalizes the production and regulation of social identity, positionality, belonging and access to citizenship within the national structure. In a poststructural sense, the national curricular discourse offered in this curriculum reveals the signifiers through which individuals (students) become subjectivated within power relations of the state. Secondly, the grade four social studies curriculum is the first of the K-12 social studies curricula to explicitly introduce students to nation and province building narratives that include the relationship between the state and Indigenous peoples. It is through the representations and identifications of Indigenous peoples in relation to national discourse, that I

analyze how these identities are co-produced in ways that implicate the racialized and colonial signifiers affixed to national subjectivity and their positionality within state power relations. While it would be useful to investigate how these learnings evolve over the continuum of the social studies curriculum, it is necessary to trace where national subjectivity is rooted in order to determine what needs to change as students begin learning of their national identity.

Theoretical Foundation

Dei and Kempf (2006) contend that, "the power of anti-colonial thinking lies in its ability to name the domination and imposition of colonial relations" (p. 11). Here, language, as a form of discourse, provides an access point with which to illuminate the ongoing colonial, racialized power relations that characterize Canadian society. Poststructural theory thus complements an anti-colonial approach to research by providing the tools necessary to challenge the taken-for-granted nature of social structures, identities and regulatory patterns constituted through communicative processes (Weedon, 1997, p. 76). Drawing from Barthes (1972; 1977), Bazzul explained that applications of poststructuralism are "grounded in a commitment to trouble the self-evident, which, when presented as natural, rather than the result of historical, social, and political development, exercises a kind of violence" (2014, p. 422). Therefore, in critiquing the Saskatchewan social studies four curriculum, I am troubling a multiplicity of dangerous things: the assumed neutrality of curricular knowledge; the ongoing normalization of colonial power relations, and the assumption that inclusion of Indigenous knowledge possesses the potential to transform racial hierarchies. As Cary succinctly stated: "There remains a place [within the study of curriculum] to interrupt positions of privilege and provide spaces from which to work against normalizing institutional and pedagogical practices that reinforce the epistemological position of whiteness" (2006, p. 97). Poststructuralism helps us to name and thus interrupt the "danger of

reinscribing normalizing practices" (Cary, 2006, p. 97) which, in Canada, produce profound racial inequality between White settler and Indigenous peoples.

In the discussion and interpretation of the analysis of curriculum I draw from theories of settler colonialism and Whiteness. These theories situate the research within the social, political, and racial contexts already operating, allowing the narration/analysis of "discursive material [to] move backwards and forwards between what could be described as the 'established' and 'constitutive' aspects of discourse" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 86). Settler colonialism is theorized as an enduring logic which, in establishing permanently settled, resource extractive colonies, premised on the erasure of Indigenous peoples, evokes the use of discourse in storying itself, and its settler citizens, as innocent, rightfully belonging and legitimate (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Starblanket & Hunt, 2020). Settler colonial theory encourages the identification of ongoing settler colonial structures, and it illuminates, particularly for those socialized as colonially dominant, how these structures operate and produce unequal material outcomes for both settlers and Indigenous people as they relate to sovereignty and the control of lands, resources, and capital. By framing the interpretation of curricular discourse within the project of settler colonial invasion and the attempted elimination of Indigenous peoples, the analysis locates where and how curricular discourse produces identities of innocence/ignorance to the violent operation of this project.

This research further considers that race and the manufacturing of anti-Indigenous racism and White supremacy are defining elements which continue to justify the seizure of Indigenous lands and the exercise of colonial violence that structures power relations and social identifications in the Canadian settler state. Therefore, making sense of settler colonialism also relies on concepts of White territorialism and possessiveness (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) and

other elements of Whiteness theory. Moreton-Robinson's (2015) work describes British settler colonialism as a distinct form of territorialism that is evoked and justified through the racial logics of White supremacy. As a state founded in British imperialism, investments in White racial superiority and a racial hierarchy have been integral to rationalizing and structuring the appropriation and control of Indigenous lands, and the violent attempts at erasure of Indigenous peoples in the colonial settlement of Canada (Mackey, 1999; Thobani, 2007). Therefore, I use aspects of Whiteness theory to draw out how Whiteness functions as part of settler identity and performs in ways that can be identified in the curricular discourse.

In using this layered application of theory to locate how White settler innocence is produced, I find the spaces where it is possible to interrupt the White supremacist, settler colonial discursive formations that maintain ongoing settler invasion and Indigenous displacement. This research recognizes that discursive shifts in the production of national knowledge may materialize a settler citizenship who, in having a greater understanding of their subjectivity in racialized, colonial power relations, may engage in building "nation to nation" (Miles, 2021, p. 264) relationships outside of colonial motives and anti-Indigenous racism.

Limitations

This analysis primarily focuses on how the Saskatchewan social studies curriculum upholds and maintains the knowledge necessary to reproduce and resecure power relations which subordinate Indigenous peoples, through racist, colonial systems, and thus preserve the normalization of Whiteness as a signifier of national innocence and belonging. As a result, this research remains focused, perhaps narrowly, on the racialized systemization of power. I do not offer an intersectional analysis and therefore do not explicate the connections between patriarchy, heteronormativity, capitalism, and ableism despite their inherency within the

structures of colonialism. I recognize a broader, more complete analysis could be drawn by considering these interrelated systems of power.

To understand the ongoing, systemized marginalization of Indigenous peoples within a hierarchy of power relations means I focus on the operations that normalize Whiteness at the expense of Indigenous peoples. The findings of this research offer a limited analysis of the disruptive potential of curriculum, however, I do attend to the ways teachers of this curriculum may work towards a more critical pedagogy as I draw my conclusions and implications.

In terms of the discursive data drawn from the body of curriculum, I recognize that I focus only on one grade level, despite the Saskatchewan social studies curriculum spanning 12 grade levels. Therefore, I cannot conclude that the knowledge of this curriculum is a definite reflection of the sum total of social studies discourse spanning the remaining curricula. However, it is worth considering these discourses do reflect a broader national narrative and social meaning that is likely to influence the way subsequent curricula frame and represent knowledge.

Lastly, this research does not follow the curriculum into the living spaces of the classroom. While teachers are responsible for teaching to and reporting on the specific outcomes of curriculum, teachers do have some autonomy to interpret the outcomes based on their own knowledge of national discourses and their own awareness of racism and colonialism. The teacher's knowledge has the potential to influence the way curricular knowledge is presented and spoken about in an active discourse with students.

Researcher Positionality

I enter this research as a White Métis educator who is a beneficiary of White settler colonialism and is deeply troubled by the ongoing, structural reformulations of racism and

colonialism that have had significant impacts on my own family system, Métis nationhood, and those of all Indigenous peoples and nations.

It is likely that having a Métis identity has predisposed me to this area of research, however that does not mean anti-colonialism and anti-racism have come naturally. I have had to do a significant amount of unlearning and reimagining while conducting this research and can only speak to my own experiences of race and identity. Although I have been raised in a Métis family, like most Canadians, I have been socialized through dominant discourses of race and nation that have positioned me to prioritize a Canadian national identity in ways that maintain the logics of White settler supremacy. Further, because I have three White settler grandparents, and one Métis/Dene grandparent, I am assumed into the norms of Whiteness, and benefit from this through access to property, mobility, education, and economy (See McLean, 2018). In these ways, I have been complicit in maintaining and privileging from the racialized violence of Indigenous marginalization and genocide, even as these same systems impact my social positioning and the lived experiences of myself and my family.

It was not until I experienced an anti-racist, anti-oppressive course offered in post-secondary education that I began to understand the ways my identity had been subjected to broader structures of colonialism and racism and was thus implicated as part of a White supremacist system. I describe this time of learning as giving me a new "language" with which to interpret the dissonance of racism and Whiteness I had felt and observed all my life (ex: my ability to deflect racism in ways that my visibly Indigenous relatives cannot; the structural disparities between my family's northern Métis community and my White, southern suburban community) but did not previously have the access to theory to make sense of.

Perhaps most importantly, I learned that race is not biologically real, and thus categories of racial identity are not fixed, but are fluidly defined and evolve over time and circumstance depending on the norms and needs of different contexts and have always been co-formulated within the constraints of Whiteness (Baker, 2006). My identity attests to this: in some contexts, being a White Métis renders me outside the signifiers of Indigeneity, while in other contexts, like the White suburban community where I grew up, being a White Métis constructs me as an anomaly that does not quite fit White norms. This is not to say I feel the effects of racialization and racism in ways that visibly Indigenous peoples do, but it demonstrates that the construction of racial meaning and categorization is contingent and malleable, and thus can be challenged, interrupted, and transformed.

This learning has been carried with me into all aspects of my life and has had significant influence on my work as a high school educator in Saskatchewan. However, I have rarely felt effective in challenging racism because of the constraints of curriculum and the resistance of mostly White settler students. As much of teacher professional development offered focusses on Indigenous cultural inclusion, residential schools, and reconciliation, I became interested in what these approaches to education, while meaningful and important, were doing, or not doing, in terms of their ability to address Canada's investments in a racial hierarchy. After almost a decade of questioning, I decided to pursue graduate research to understand the ways curriculum, as one cog in the machinery of public education, contributes to the ongoing maintenance of racist, colonial systems, and in doing so better position myself to interrupt this process.

While I intend to trouble the maintenance of White innocence and the ways in which White superiority is constituted through marginalization, I am not aiming to imply that White people, teachers, curriculum developers, students, citizens are actively malicious and or

participate in overt racism. When I write of White settler dominance (or similar iterations), I am referring to the ways national processes, policies, and discourses have specifically protected and enshrined those who are both White and settler, thus naturalizing their access to resources and opportunity as part of normalized national identity (Thobani, 2007). I do however see this research as unsettling for those unfamiliar with the complicity of themselves, and the role of public education curricula in supporting the normalization of Whiteness and the reinforcement of Indigenous racialization and dispossession in Canada. It is my intent to explicate how such processes operate in curriculum so those who write and teach the curriculum are better equipped to locate discourses and knowledges, that despite good intentions, can fix unequal relations of power. From this awareness, educators are better able to interrupt the problematic processes that maintain racism and colonialism.

Thesis Organization

I open this research by providing the background information necessary to challenge common sense notions of Canada and reframe the nation in its colonial and racist foundations. I demonstrate how common-sense national discourse disfigures this troubling history. Then I discuss how colonialism has been imprinted on the education system by reviewing literature relevant to the study of public education and curriculum as a mechanism of settler colonialism and racialization. In chapter two I explore the theoretical foundations of this research, detailing the three bodies of theory and methods I used to conduct and interpret my curricular analysis. In chapter three I narrate the analytical process, drawing from settler colonial and Whiteness theories to trace how national subjectivities are produced, signified and situated. I conclude this thesis with a brief observation of my findings and the implications of the research in terms of how the education system may move forward with redefined awareness.

Chapter One:

Background and Literature Review

The purpose of providing a background section of this chapter is to contextualize the study of curriculum within broader patterns of race and identity formation that are rooted in dominant discourses (narratives, stories, histories) of Canadian nationhood. My intent is to provide an account of how nationalist discourse, on offer through many sites, including public education, delimits the way that the nation can be collectively imagined and remembered by forgoing inclusion of its colonial, racist foundations. In the second part of this chapter, I narrow the focus of literature to research that situates public education within a colonial framework. I draw from scholars like Willinsky (1998); Battiste (2013) and Dei (1999) who aptly illustrate the implications and legacy of imperialism and colonialism in shaping the project of Canadian public education. Then, following Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández' (2014) suggestion that settler-colonial education systems be investigated as distinct from the broader scope of colonialism (p. 75), I investigate the relatively recent research demonstrating how North American public education operates as a manifestation of ongoing White settler colonialism. Considering the body of literature and my own research context, I articulate research questions regarding the role of Saskatchewan curriculum in producing national identity and norms within a context of ongoing White settler-colonial supremacy.

An 'Unspoken' Canada: Colonialism, White Supremacy and Racial Stratification

Critical cultural studies scholars, Thobani (2007), Mackey (1999; 2005; 2016) and Bannerji (2000) contend that colonialism, White supremacy, and racism are foundational to Canada's social organization, producing the often unspoken, deeply inequitable/unequal ordering of racialized power relations between state subjects. The work of these scholars defamiliarizes

the normalized discourses of Canadian nationhood and history that are commonly reproduced in curricula and classrooms across the nation (Richardson, 2006; Schaefli, Godlewska & Lamb, 2019; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Stanley, 2000, 2006). While often taken as impartial and objective, the nationalist curricular discourses portraying Canada as an innocent and valiant nation, welcoming and tolerant to all people, effectively distorts the ways in which race, and in particular, Whiteness, have come to matter in Canadian society (Schick, 2014; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Stanley, 2000, 2006; Thobani, 2007). The work of Thobani (2007), Mackey (1999; 2005; 2016) and Bannerji (2000) provide the historical and socio-cultural context necessary to trace how discourses found in Canadian education work to normalize colonial and racist practices and processes and regulate inequity between Indigenous and White settler peoples.

Canada's Colonial Foundation

In *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*, Sunera Thobani (2007) challenges the popular discourse celebrating Canada's peaceful origins by providing an account of the racialized colonial violence which cleared the land of Indigenous peoples and brought the Canadian nation into existence. Thobani contends that "the colonial encounter was structured as a racial one: the violence necessary to bring into being the colonial order fashioned and propagated a racial order" (p. 38). This racial organization was premised on the classification of Indigenous peoples as the antithesis of civility — "not simply as ignorant of ethics, morals, and values (Christian or other), but … as the very 'negation' of these values, ethics and morality" (Thobani, 2007, p. 38). Through the supposed racial inferiority of Indigenous peoples, colonizers to North America naturalized themselves as a racially superior form of humanity, bearing civilization and embodying the qualities of 'lawfulness.' Thobani (2007) argues that the conflating of racial supremacy with lawfulness sanctioned the exercise of

violence necessary to both expel Indigenous peoples from their lands and claim the rights to territorial sovereignty. Applying Fanon and Mbembe's conceptualization of colonialism's dependency on violence to the Canadian context, Thobani (2007) demonstrates how the violent process of Indigenous dispossession was carried out through acts of displacement that ranged from genocide to banal regulatory policies — all of which intended to destroy the lives and sovereignty of Indigenous peoples (p. 41).

Thobani (2007) contends that national subjectivity was conflated with the lawfulness necessary to rationalize/condone the violent expelling of Indigenous peoples in the establishment of the state. (Reword) Of the Canadian national Thobani remarks, "even when these subjects were engaged in the murder, enslavement and torture of Natives, as many were in the founding of the nation, these acts of commandment were constituted/instituted not only as acts in law but also as the very Law of civilization (p. 13). The violence carried out by settlers, Thobani argues,

> was the necessary condition for the preservation of the colonial order...the adroit national was the one who was able to actualize [state] sovereignty on the ground as he cleared, settled, and laid claim to the land; as he hunted down Indians and drove them away; as he hounded them out of fishing, hunting, logging, and otherwise harvesting the lands he brought under his control. (p. 56)

In exercising and embodying the authority of the colonial state on the ground through such violence, the settler colonial was constituted, as Thobani articulates, an *exalted* (emphasis added) subject— "deemed the legitimate heir to the rights and entitlements proffered by the state" (p. 3-4). In this elevated position the rights and privileges of the 'worthy' national citizen were bestowed: access to land, property ownership, mobility rights, economy, protection and belonging (p. 55-56). Naturalized as the embodiment of the "body politic," the process of

exaltation has "ennobled this subject's humanity and sanctioned the elevation of its rights over and above that of the Aboriginal and the immigrant" (Thobani, 2007, p. 9). Taken as a superior form of humanity, the "natural" state subject is both permitted to commit and relieved of the acts of colonial violence "that [mark] the origin of the national subject" (Thobani, 2007, p. 10). Both Mackey (1999) and Thobani (2007) further investigate how national subjectivity/citizenship was/is organized to maintain White supremacy through national policy and practice.

White Supremacy and National Citizenship

As part of the establishment of national legitimacy, belonging in the emergent Canadian nation-state continued to be organized along racial lines with the enactment of citizenship policies that were highly invested in preserving and naturalizing Canada as a White settler nation. Mackey's (1999) research demonstrates that Canada's desire to build and maintain a racially homogenous, White nation was propagated by pseudo-scientific racial theories which reasoned the nation should be populated with 'northern races' — that is White Europeans (British or French) whose ability to 'survive' northern climates supposedly demonstrated their racial superiority, and whose traditions would lend traits of civility and liberty to the emerging settler state (p. 30). This logic of White, "northern" supremacy rationalized the exclusion of "southern" races — primarily Black and Asian peoples, who were marked as lesser evolved, climatically unsuitable, lazy, and uncivilized — from the opportunity of citizenship based on claims of racial unsuitability (Mackey, 1999, p. 30). However, as both Mackey (1999) and Thobani (2007) point out, the nation was forced into a balancing act of populating the nation through immigration with their desire to maintain a White nation. As immigration from "White" European nations floundered, those considered non-White became essential for nation building, but only if the threat they posed to the "development and maintenance of a [White] national

population and a [homogenous] national identity" could be managed through exclusive policy (Mackey, 1999, p. 32).

Ongoing Racial Stratification in Canadian Society

Mackey (1999) makes the case that the state made (and continues to make) use of flexible strategies of racial inclusion, so long as those marked as 'non-preferred' races served the economic interest of the state and racial 'difference' could be positioned to reinforce White dominance (i.e.: White generosity) in order to strengthen the viability of the nation (p. 34). This is evidenced by Canada's move to allow 'non-White' Europeans into citizenship as a means to procure labour and agrarian settlers to fill the gap created by a decline in British settlement. It was reasoned that these settlers were more attuned to agriculture and could be more easily assimilated into the Whiteness of the state (Mackey, 1999, p. 33). Similarly, throughout the early 20th century Chinese immigrants were permitted entry into the country only to provide an inexpensive and expendable labour supply in the building of the national railway, but were not extended opportunities for citizenship (Mackey, 1999, p. 33). Following the completion of the railway project, over twenty racist exclusionary national policies, including the Chinese Immigration Act of 1885, were implemented to impose severe restrictions on Chinese immigration in order to satisfy the nationalist campaign, often led by British women, to "Keep Canada White" (Mackey, 1999; Thobani, 2007). This protection of White settler interests preserved their access to economy, property, and citizenship, effectively cementing Canada as a nation intentionally structured for the benefit of those marked White.

Noting the mid-twentieth century growth of racial heterogeneity in Canada, Thobani explains how racial boundaries continued to be secured through the

> 'popular nationalism' of [Canada's] White subjects, who actively enacted the dispossession of Native peoples on the ground, as they did the exclusion of 'non-preferred' races from equal access to land, mobility, and employment. The popular racism these subjects articulated forged a common interest in them as *nationals* through their exclusion of outsiders. (2007, p. 84)

While overtly racist policies of immigration and citizenship were rescinded in the 1970s, the racialized social landscape they produced fixed a racial ordering of Canadian citizens that continues to render those classified non-White as "unwelcome strangers" (Thobani, 2007, p. 95). Of her experience as a non-White immigrant in Canada, Bannerji explained:

> Even years after being an 'immigrant,' and upon swearing allegiance to the same Queen of England from whom India had departed, I was not to be a 'Canadian.' Regardless of my official status as a Canadian citizen, I, like many others, remained an "immigrant." The category 'Canadian' clearly applied to people who had two things in common: their White skin and the European North American (not Mexican) background...There were two colours in this political atlas - one a beige-brown shading off into black and the other White. These shades did not simply reflect skin colours- they reflected ideological, political, and cultural assumptions and administrative practices of the Canadian state. (2000, p. 64)

This regulation of identity along racial lines has stratified Canadian 'citizenship' into three categories, each with a differential relation to national belonging, access to resources and identity (Bannerji, 2000; Thobani, 2007). The 'true' citizen, or the "national we" (Bannerji, 2000, p. 42) is the White settler, "exalted as worthy of citizenship and membership" (Thobani, 2007, p. 75). In the category 'Other,' Indigenous peoples are marked for displacement and erasure, "deserving

of citizenship only upon abdication of indigeneity;" and the racialized immigrant, known as the "unwelcome intruder" (Thobani, 2007, p. 75). The social theory provided by these scholars demonstrates how the power relations of Canada's social landscape are deeply racialized and founded in the preservation of White supremacy.

The literature of critical Canadian studies works from the assumption that we cannot take Canada as it has been imagined through Eurocentric narratives (discourses) of peace, order, and benevolence. These scholars emphasize the deeply entrenched systems of colonial and racist power at play in the weaving of Canada's social fabric and the meaning attributed to our social identities. Their work challenges popular Canadian nationalism which largely accepts the image of Canada as a lawful and moral entity and rarely contemplates the deeply inequitable and racialized social landscape (reality), nor the meaning this imparts on its subjects/themselves (Thobani, 2007, p. 35). Lawrence (2002) indicates that because Indigenous peoples have been written out of the historical telling/narration of Canada, "we cannot see colonization *as* colonization. We cannot grasp the overall picture of a focused, concerted process of invasion and land theft" (p. 26). The Eurocentric "grand narrative" (Stanley, 2006, p. 82) foundational to Canada's self-conceptualization "obscures the *processes* that enabled colonizers to acquire land, and the policies that were put into place to control the peoples displaced from the land" (Lawrence, 20002, p. 26). The work of these scholars compels me to wonder how public schools, and in particular, curricular discourses contribute to the obscurification of the ongoing processes of colonial violence, racism and dispossession that structure the nation in ways that protect and naturalize White settler supremacy and legitimacy. In the next section of the review, I survey literature regarding the dominant narratives of Canada and trace the productive effects of

Canadian mythology/discourse in legitimating colonialism and rendering national citizens "conveniently ignorant" to its violent and ongoing nature (Perkel, 2021).

Constituting an 'Imagined' Canada: National Discourse and the Settler State

Because this research analyzes the maintenance/normalization of colonial and racialized power relations and subjectivity through *nationalist* discourses of Canadian nationhood found in the Saskatchewan Social Studies curriculum, I begin this section by asking the question: how has the desire to construct and maintain a sense of Canadian national identity come to appear as a natural and commonsense process in Canadian institutions? Why does the construction of national identity matter to Canadians?

National Identity as Settler Colonial Security

Canadian social anthropologist, Eva Mackey (1999) suggests that the origins and motivations of Canadian nationalism are bound up in European models of nation-building "engendered by structures, narrative forms, desires, and classifying and differentiating practices which are essential to Western modernity" (Greenfield, 1996, as cited in Mackey, 1999, p. 4). Within the sphere of Western modernity, in which Canada defines itself, cultivating a national culture, identity and social organization are naturalized as a precursor to international recognition as a distinct and valid political entity with a "legitimate claim [to] rights and powers" (Mackey, 1999, p. 11). However, Canada's ability to acquire the "rights and powers" naturalized through the establishment of a recognizable national culture are ultimately undermined by the White supremacy and colonial violence exercised in the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands and territories through processes of genocide and displacement. While a goal of Canada has been to "transcend" itself as a colonial project (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 26), the threat to its security posed by the resistance of Indigenous peoples remains salient.

A recent proliferation of research problematizing the violent structures and practices of settler colonial nation-states (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Mackey, 1999, 2016; Razack, 2002; Veracini, 2011; Wolfe, 2006) echoes the well-established positions of Indigenous scholars and activists in challenging the common-sense conceptualization of Canada as a legitimate political entity (Adams, 1975/1989; Cardinal, 1969; Coulthard, 2014; Hunt & Starblanket, 2020; Simpson, 2014). Settler colonial societies like Canada are distinct from other forms of colonization in that they are severed from their metropoles in order to establish themselves as permanent, self-sustaining entities driven by and reliant on the resources and capital accumulated through the 'settlement' of colonial/Indigenous lands (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Veracini, 2011; Wolfe, 2006). This form of colonialism, unlike other strains of colonial exploitation, is premised on the erasure and replacement of Indigenous peoples in order to claim access to the land and resources and secure possession and power (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015). However, as Battell Lowman and Barker (2015), Mackey (2016) and Simpson (2014), observe, the enduring survivance and resilience of Indigenous peoples presents a perpetual source of anxiety for settler societies which must continually fabricate the justification for their occupation of Indigenous lands. Mackey observes that 'uncertainty' becomes a condition of settler nation-states "because the vibrant presence of Indigenous people is a constant and uneasy reminder that the settler colonial project is incomplete and unsettled (2016, p. 35). That Indigenous peoples refuse to relieve the settler colonial project reveals to settler nations "the impermanence of state boundaries and the precarious claims to sovereignty enjoyed by liberal democracies" (Simpson, 2011, p. 211). This places settler nations in a perennial crisis of legitimacy which must be contended with to preserve the sovereignty of the state.

The crisis of identity, legitimacy and belonging that confronts settler societies means they must "'undertake the process of national formation urgently, visibly, [and] defensively'" (Bennett 1994, in Mackey, 1999). Without an ancestral lineage or sense of unifying tradition tethering colonists to the site of settlement, the tenure of Indigenous peoples undermines colonial power and validity, leaving the state to forge a legitimacy of place in an attempt to secure the national project (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 58). Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) observe that

> before settler colonial collectives construct obvious legal and political relationships that bind them to the land, they first construct narratives that justify their belonging on the land at all, and that begins the process of shifting their identity from rootedness in original homelands to the new settlement. (p. 59)

The process of drawing on historical narrative (discourse) to naturalize a settler nation constructs what Anderson (1983, 2006) refers to as an "imagined political community" (p. 6). In defining nations as *imagined communities* (emphasis added), Anderson draws on Gellner who argues "nationalism [as a binding national discourse] is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it *invents* nations where they do not exist" (p. 6, emphasis in original). Therefore, the *'invention'* of the settler nation of Canada, per se, is a process of strategic and selective rendering of particular narratives to devise a collective national identity which Schick and St. Denis (2005) explain is "predicated on forgetting parts of traditions that do not add up to a heroic stature" (p. 302). Forgoing the racist policies that have justified the attempted erasure and replacement of Indigenous peoples distort the outcomes of colonial violence in ways that appear the rational and inevitable consequence of inferiority. Being socialized in discourses of nationhood that forget national investments in a race hierarchy and colonialism means White

settler citizens can disregard their complicity with the projects of settler replacement and racial dominance in a context of ongoing colonialism. In this thesis, the goal of understanding the operation of discourse is to unsettle Canada as the sole arbitrator of citizenship and center the notion that racist and settler colonial processes of erasure, replacement and land theft have been integral to producing White settler entitlements to belonging and legitimacy. By identifying how innocence and belonging continue to be produced at the expense of Indigenous peoples and nationhood through Saskatchewan curriculum, this research hopes to contribute to the re-imagining of anti-colonial, anti-racist "nation to nation" (Miles, 2021, p. 264) relationships through which the restoration of Indigenous sovereignties, rights, power and humanity can be recognized, acted on and materialized by citizens critically aware of their place within state power relations embedded in colonialism.

Discourse and the Production of Canada's National Identity

According to Hall (1992), "a national culture is a discourse — a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves" (p. 293). Hall (1992) accounts for five discursive strategies employed in the making of nations as 'imagined communities' which are typified as: the narrative of the nation; origins, continuity, tradition and timelessness; the invention of tradition; foundational myth; and pure, original people or 'folk.' These forms of story are "representational strategies [sic] deployed to construct our commonsense views of national belonging or identity (Hall, 1992, p. 293). What constructs the naturalized image of Canada then, is derived from the selective meanings produced and transmitted through what the literature refers to as colonial imaginaries (Willinsky, 1998), settler fantasies (Mackey, 2016, p. 9) and historical grand narratives (Stanley, 2006) and national myths that are, as Schick and St. Denis contend, "necessary to cover over and forget that the land was

taken by coercive means through a process that depended on inferiorizing and racializing a people" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 302). A distorted national mythology, circulated through discourses of the nation, serves to obscure the settler colonial project of Indigenous racialization and erasure, producing the normalization of settler identity as dominant while rendering Indigenous dislocation and marginalization the inevitable result of racial inferiority; stories of nationhood determine who gets to belong (Stanley, 2006). In a settler colonial state, the collective meanings and memories produced through a national narrative are premised on a forgetting of colonial and racist violence and the *invention* of a binding national memory which renders the nation *imagined,* but most importantly secure. Next, I discuss some of the common national discourses which work to mythologize Canada while obscuring colonialism and racism entrenched in power relations.

Bouchard (2017) argues that social myths matter because they possess the power to construct collective identities while mitigating anxiety about the pressing challenges that face a society (p. 108-109). While myths can

> promote noble ideals expressing profound truths about a society, myth can conceal and disguise other, less honourable truths that people refuse to admit to themselves and to others. Here we are in the domain of denial (taboo?) ... in the realm of the blind spots of thought and culture, through which a society seeks to mask its abdications, faults, denials, and failures, often by placing blame on others. (Bouchard, 2017, p. 26)

To transcend its colonial identity, forged through violence, dispossession and exploitation, settler societies use strategies of concealment to "[become] so deeply established that [the state] is naturalized, normalized, unquestioned and unchallenged" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 26). Canada "obscure[s] the violence of persistent invasion and dispossession" by offering a

"whitewashed" history with "sanitized emphasis on practises of benevolent or philanthropic colonialism involving peacemaking, treaties, and the giving of gifts...to overwrite the realities of how the nation was formed through warfare, terrorism, subjugation and theft" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 26).

Myths Normalizing Settler Belonging

Understandings of Canada are largely framed by what Canadian historian Timothy Stanley (2006) refers to as an "English-Canadian grand narrative" of nationhood that fixates on following the events significant to British colonization and Canadian settlement (p. 34). This is the Eurocentric story of nationhood forged as a familiar public memory through public education. This history begins "most often with Leif Ericsson and the Vikings….and focuses on the progress of European resettlement, emphasizing 'nation building' by far-seeing 'great men'...The confederation of four British North American colonies in 1867 is taken as its major turning point" (Stanley, 2006, p. 34). In this grand narrative, Battell Lowman and Barker (2015, p. 59) suggest that settlers are emphasized as dispossessed themselves through stories of "victimization and escape from a prior homeland, and opportunity and redemption in the settlement colony" (p. 59). While these experiences may be true, the weight placed on this narrative effectively "displaces Indigenous peoples' histories" and allows settler Canadians to forget "that the present bounty and opportunity in Canada are rooted in profits from lands unjustly taken from Indigenous nations" (Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 59). In this well-known "east to west" recitation of Canada's founding, the experiences of Indigenous peoples are largely silenced except for situations where Indigenous resistance has impeded the 'natural unfolding' of national progress (Stanley, 2006, p. 34). For example, it is common for Métis peoples to be completely omitted from discourses of national history, except for the instances where Louis Riel

led Métis resistances to Canada's "westward expansion" at Red River and Batoche in the late 19th century. Further, this narrative, ignorant to the intentionality of processes of colonial erasure, renders Canada a "naturally occurring and unquestioned" entity— an historic inevitability, rather than a construction founded on explicit policies and practices of racial exclusion (Stanley, 2006, p. 36).

The construction of Canadian public memory ordered around the exclusion of Indigenous peoples and the erasure of colonial violence has a significant effect on identity, belonging and power relations for citizens. Stanley contends that these exclusions produce

> part of our taken-for-granted understandings of the categories that frame who and what is Canadian and who and what is not, and hence whose history counts and why. The resulting inclusions and exclusions racialize people living in Canada—that is, they make normal the idea that there are innately different kinds of people who can be sorted hierarchically on a scale from the most Canadian to the least, from those who naturally and unproblematically belong in the country to those who do not. (2006, p. 36)

If one's racial identity aligns with the Eurocentric Canadian narrative, that is they can identify with or produce signifiers of a White, British or European, English speaking settler identity, they can expect to be taken as the natural Canadian citizen. This identity is afforded "authentic" citizenship, established through common historical narratives and explicit policies of racial preference. They are rendered dominant in relation to Othered racial groups, particularly Indigenous peoples. The lack of attention to the systemization of racial preferability in Canada's founding obscures the White settler from recognizing how their sense of belonging is bound up in strategies of Indigenous displacement and erasure.

Fantasy of Settler Possession. The myth of *terra nullius* is commonly drawn on in settler discourse to further legitimize a sense of rightful territorial possession in North America (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015; Calderón, 2014; Mackey, 2016). Due to its foundation in 'natural law,' *terra nullius* is regarded as the legal basis for claiming "first possession" of land not considered under human control or ownership (Mackey, 2016, p. 46). Based in "the law of first possession, [*terra nullius* comes to mean]: 'What presently belongs to no one becomes by natural reason the property of the first taker" (Watson, 1985, in Mackey, 2016, p. 45). While tropes of *terra nullius* imply that colonial powers mis/understood the land to be literally "empty" and thus open for claiming and occupation, Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) and Mackey (2016) point out the incongruency of this interpretation. They note that in carrying out relationships and negotiations with Indigenous leaders, colonizers did indeed conceive of Indigenous peoples as populations with "political leaders or 'chiefs' as akin to monarchs and 'kings,' underscoring that colonists recognized the authority of these figures" over the so-called 'empty lands' (Battell Lowman & Barker, p. 61). However, in the pursuit to establish their own colonial possession through settlement and property ownership, *terra nullius* provided a 'legal' pathway to undermine and racialize Indigenous peoples by distorting their sovereignty in order to justify the seizure of the land in pursuit of a settler-capitalist economy.

Mackey explains how Lockean notions of land use and property drawn on in *terra nullius*, permitted settler-colonists to define North America as an "empty land" despite its obvious prior occupancy (Mackey, 2016). Because the land was regarded as untilled and unallocated through a possessive property regime, colonizers considered North America to be in "a state of nature" meaning "lands that were *uncultivated* [were] therefore *not possessed* or owned as property according to European standards" (Mackey, 2016, p. 48). The equating of

cultivation with property/possession was derived from John Locke's 18th century philosophy which argued humanity was obliged to "subdue" the earth through labour and industriousness in obeisance to god's command. Working to fulfil the supposed benefits of god's provision not only proved one's civility but conferred to an individual the possession of titled property (Mackey, 2014, p. 50). In essence, Indigenous peoples were constructed as too primitive to have devised forms of "civilized" land and capital development/ownership, thus the land in which they were sovereign was defined as open for possession. This shifting of *terra nullius* from a concept of vacancy to *constructed* vacancy meant North American "lands were only seen as *occupied* — not *owned* — and therefore *empty of people and societies that mattered*" (p. 48, emphasis in original). *terra nullius* was thus implicated within a fantasy of supremacy rooted in moral duty—European conceptions of land use in the name of development and capital gain were regarded as superior against the supposed lack of industry and neglect of Indigenous peoples which served to justify European claim to Indigenous land (Mackey, p. 50).

Further, to settler colonizers the "[Indigenous] inability (or unwillingness) to control land was interpreted to mean that they needed to be under the control of colonizing, sovereign, settler subjects" (Mackey, p. 53). Mackey (2016) argues this application of *terra nullius* has significant implications in that it constructed Indigenous peoples as inferior (uncivilized) to White Europeans in their relationship to the land and thus established the basis of settler superiority and "racialized rationales that are still drawn on today" (p. 48). The myth of the moral/racial supremacy of resource driven 'development' perpetuated through *terra nullius* has naturalized a settler relationship to land in which the entitlement to possess, buy, sell, or trade Indigenous land in the acquisition of capital (Mackey, 2015, p. 46) is ordinary and justified.

Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) suggest that the endurance of the narrative of *terra nullius* as "empty lands" maintains the innocence of settler colonists in the ongoing occupation of Indigenous lands. (p. 60) They argue this discourse also protects settlers as a well-intentioned peoples who built a prosperous nation out of "wilderness," and like Mackey (2016), determine the racist impact in which "tropes of civilization and development… [continue to] cast Indigenous peoples and lands in need of saving from their own savagery" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 60). Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) conclude that the taken-for-granted notions of Canadian progress and development continue to rely on *terra nullius* in understanding Indigenous peoples as a feature of the landscape "but without the markers that would indicate sovereign polities, able to challenge our own [settler] pre-emption of those lands" (p. 61). The discourse of *terra nullius* works to validate the innocent occupation of settlers, justifying the settler occupation of sovereign territory, and establishing a sense of racial supremacy through the attributing moral value to land use, development, and capitalism.

Immigrant Nations. By narrating themselves as nations of immigrants, it is argued that settler colonial societies like Canada and the United States co-opt Indigenous peoples by positioning them as immigrants who are arrived prior to subsequent waves of European immigration (Calderón, 2014). That Indigenous peoples can be constructed as part of North American "flora and fauna" while being simultaneously cast as autonomous immigrants speaks to the incongruency within which settler mythologies operate. The construction of Indigenous peoples as early immigrants functions in a way that undermines Indigenous claims to sovereignty by negating Indigenous histories of prior occupancy. (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 27: Calderón, 2014, p. 322). Calderón's (2014) analysis of American social studies textbooks finds that "Indigenous peoples are merged into narratives of immigration and settler nationalism,

thereby erasing a central tenet of Indigeneity – that Indigenous peoples originate from particular places in North America" (p. 321). Calderón explains that the narratives tracing America's origins to the Bering Strait Theory frame Indigenous peoples within the US national story as "the first immigrants, which later waves of European settlers simply replaced" (p. 322). In this narrative Indigenous people are reduced to an immigrant status and assimilated into the grand narrative of the nation. This construction regards Indigenous peoples as early immigrants within the nation, effectively erasing representation of their sovereignty as it predates the temporality of the settler colonial state. With "first immigrant" status, sequential waves of immigration naturalize Indigenous peoples as non-threatening, irrelevant "relics of the past," (p. 322) negating the threat of inherent sovereignty and securing settler belonging and justifying innocence.

Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) and Calderón (2014) suggest the currency of the land bridge narrative further normalizes the silencing and inferiorization of Indigenous knowledge which attests to the origination of Indigenous peoples in North America. Battell Lowman and Barker (2015) consider the Bering Strait Theory a "form of narrative transfer, in which stories are told and retold until they are taken as truth and used to undermine Indigenous peoples' claims to land." (p. 27). Calderón (2014) suggests that despite the theory being ever-changing and contested within Western science, it is portrayed as "largely fact, accomplished by including the Western scientific sources to provide the necessary authority to cement this view" (p. 322). This demonstrates how Western scientific, archaeological, and anthropological fields provide contributions that further invalidate Indigenous knowledge and validate the national mythologies settler nations require to dispossess Indigenous peoples and ensure their own dominance and security (Calderón, p. 322). This theory naturalizes the notion of settler replacement in which the

sovereignty of Indigenous people is distorted or erased, allowing for the settler to be naturalized as ‘indigenous.’

Myths Normalizing Canadian Values

Canada is glorified as a peaceful, diplomatic, benevolent, meritocratic, equitable and multicultural nation through dominant national discourses that secure systems of oppression and normalize White settler dominance in Canada (Mackey, 1999; Mackey, 2016; McLean, 2018; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Starblanket & Hunt, 2020). Schick and St. Denis (2005) argue that myths of Canada as a welcoming, tolerant and raceless nation protect the innocence of settlers by obscuring the nation’s reliance on racist and White supremist systems to rationalize the exploitation of Indigenous peoples through the processes of colonization.

This image of Canada

> is necessary to cover over and forget that the land was taken by coercive means through a process that depended on inferiorizing and racializing a people ... Aboriginal people had to be racialized to justify their being economically exploited. (2015, p. 302)

By obscuring colonialism through professing an ethical set of core values emphasizing benevolence, grit, opportunism and multiculturalism, White settler Canadians often fail to see themselves implicated within structures of White supremist violence and domination and are thus protected from recognizing and addressing the inequitable power relations and oppressive structures producing and securing settler belonging. In this section I draw on the literature which examines what discourses of Canadian progressiveness accomplish in terms of national identity and racial subjectivity.

The Myth of Benevolence and Peaceful Settlement. In their anti-colonial analysis of the murder of Colten Boushie at the hands of a White-settler farmer Gerald Stanley, Starblanket

and Hunt (2020) illuminate the enduring processes of Canadian settler colonialism which have shaped the "asymmetrical structural patterns of relationships between Indigenous and Settler peoples on the prairies" (p. 24). Through their work, they unsettle the dominant narratives and colonial logics of western-Canadian settlement which have naturalized Indigenous racialization, dehumanization, and erasure on the prairies as a commonsense practice. Starblanket and Hunt (2020) argue that the Canadian prairies, the context in which this research is conducted, are home to the widely known, romanticized myth of peaceful settlement in which the vast open plain awaited industrious settlers who would cultivate and improve upon the untouched fertile lands. They contend that common treaty-making discourses regarding the ceremonious negotiations and signing of the numbered treaties reinforces notions of "peaceful settlement and development [which] either highlights Indigenous consent to the theft of our land and cessation of our political authority, or glosses over it under the guise of partnership and nation-building" (p. 30). The emphasis on the diplomatic relationship between Indigenous peoples and settlers in popular treaty-making discourse has effectively silenced Indigenous knowledge that insists treaty signatories never agreed to the surrender of the land nor their sovereign rights contrary to their appearance in the documents of the numbered treaties (Cardinal, 1969, p. 32; Krasowski, 2019). This focus also neglects the failure of the Canadian government to adhere to the agreements of the numbered treaties (Cardinal, 1969; Starblanket & Hunt 2020, p. 55) while instead pursuing a genocidal program to clear the plains for settlement. The Indian Act, the reserve system, the residential school system, the pass, and permit system, along with practices of over-policing, over-incarceration and forced starvation all served to confine, control, and harm in an attempt to eliminate Indigenous being on the prairies (Cardinal, 1969; Daschuk, 2013; McLean, 2018).

Starblanket and Hunt (2020) analyze how early 20th century settlement campaigns distorted the reality of colonial violence, portraying imagery of the west as the "'land of opportunity'... free of any Indigenous peoples ... geared towards exploration, occupation, and cultivation" (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 34-35). In determining their effect, Starblanket and Hunt find that such illustrations "produced, perpetuated and appealed to ideas and ideals that prioritized a form of settlement that heavily romanticized prairie life in an effort to expand the Canadian state's reach as well as its legitimacy across the landscape" (2020, p. 43). In a similar analysis, Mackey (1999, 2005) finds that the image of the red-coated mountie figures prominently in the glorification of colonization, representing the benevolence of British law and order in the peaceable settling of the west. Through this "'benevolent Mountie myth'" Canada is able to relieve itself of the brutalities of colonial dispossession by normalizing "the belief that colonization did not occur through violent conquest" but rather through the lawful and stoic presence ushered into the untamed Canadian west by the Royal Northwest Mounted Police (Mackey 2002, as cited in Mackey, 2005, p. 15). Further, even as Indigenous peoples were being actively eliminated through Canada's genocidal policies, Mackey (1999) suggests the way in which Indigenous images were symbolically positioned through nationalist media and imagery produced a national identity in which Canada was made innocent and noble through its "gentle, tolerant, just and impartial" dealings with Indigenous peoples (Mackey, 1999, p. 39). The well-guarded discourse of Canadian peace and benevolence fabricated through the colonial imagination of virtuous Mounties, western development, national benevolence and generosity through treaty-making processes and the careful use of Indigenous imagery/caricatures obscure the structures of elimination including "land theft, genocide, gendered violence, and

dispossession" foundational to the creation and maintenance of Canada (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 31).

Myths of Meritocracy. Framed within settler notions of Canada's bountiful supply of natural resources and economic opportunity, the myth of meritocracy suggests that with industriousness and ingenuity anyone can achieve success in Canada. The work of Mclean (2018) demonstrates that, within a prairie context, White settlers are deeply invested in family histories that rationalize the growth of familial prosperity as a natural result of the labour and unrelenting determination of previous generations of settlers. The notion of meritocracy, "that success in life can be attributed to personal merit such as hard work and natural talent," is rooted in philosophies of liberalism which suggest humans are autonomous agents capable of controlling their destinies (Mclean, 2018, p. 32). Therefore, if one is unable to succeed, failure is attributed to the individual rather than broader systems that provide or limit opportunity. McLean (2018) demonstrates how opportunities in Canada work/ed to secure White settler success while dispossessing Indigenous peoples through policies of genocide. While White settlers were granted the rights to (free) land ownership, establishment social institutions, receiving government relief and participating in political organization, Indigenous peoples were faced with policies of starvation (Daschuk, 2013), land theft, deceitful treaty negotiations (Cardinal, 1969, p. 32; Krasowski, 2019, p. 211), pass and permit system, restricted livelihoods, residential schools, and cultural suppression to clear the plains for those same settlers (McLean, 2018, p. 33). By ignoring how race determines the policies and practices to which one is subject, White settlers regard their social and economic dominance as a result of their determination and efforts, while Indigenous peoples are naturalized as racially deficient, unable to achieve economic success through an inherent lack of ability and fortitude. The racist discourse of meritocracy is

deeply entrenched in Canada. The racist motivations are normal and common-sense for White settlers — if only Indigenous people worked harder, were more educated, and joined the economy, they could be successful like regular Canadians. Schick and St. Denis (2005) contend that this discourse is a "well known trope of blaming the victim, [in which] the one who feels the negative effects of inequality is the one who is burdened with overcoming the discrimination" (p. 296) meaning ongoing colonial and racist policy and practice refuse Indigenous participation, yet the myth of meritocracy protects settler peoples from having to recognize the inequitable structures of colonial White supremacy that have placed them at an unearned advantage.

Myth of Multiculturalism. Through multicultural discourse, Canada is imagined as a welcoming, tolerant, and pluralist society where all people, regardless of race or nationality can find belonging and opportunity. Canada takes pride in distinguishing itself from the assimilative 'melting pot' of the United States by celebrating its 'mosaic' in which the rights, cultures and uniqueness of all cultural groups are said to be equally valued and protected (Bannerji, 2000; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Thobani, 2007, p. 144). This reputation has defined Canada, internationally, as a progressive and open nation. Of Canada's official Multicultural Policy (1971) Thobani (2007) explains:

> The adoption of multiculturalism enabled the nations' self-presentation on the global stage as an urban, cosmopolitan, and at the cutting edge of promoting racial and ethnic tolerance among western nations. This redefinition of national identity was said to signify the nation-state's commitment to valuing cultural diversity. (p. 144)

However, as Bannerji (2000) points out, the reality is that people of colour often experience the "paradox of both belonging and not belonging [in Canada] simultaneously" (p. 65). Bannerji explains that

> as a population, we non-Whites and women (in particular, non-White women) are living in a specific territory. We are part of its economy, subject to its laws, and members of its civil society. Yet we are not part of its self-definition of 'Canada' because we are not [marked] 'Canadians.' (2000, p. 65)

Despite the multicultural image that Canada projects, Whiteness remains a precursor to accessing legitimacy as an accepted national citizen.

Mackey (1999) suggests the enshrinement of multiculturalism as national policy lends credence to this discourse as it accumulates further authority through its appearance in official government reports and documents (p. 24). Mackey adds that: "the cultural pluralism of the present is often represented as on a natural continuum with Canada's history, even heritage, of tolerance" (1999, p. 24). Mackey argues that the nation selectively draws on aspects of the Royal Proclamation (1763) and Quebec Act (1774) to serve as historical evidence of the state's innate pluralist tradition (1999, p. 24). Further, the comparison so often drawn between America's conquest style warfare with Canada's supposedly peaceful settlement provides further rationale to support the nation's enduring altruistic character (Mackey, 1999, p. 25).

Schick and St. Denis (2005) contend that the multicultural image of Canada protects the settler-colonial state and White settler citizens from recognizing and acting against ongoing practices and structures of colonialism and racism. The authors argue that Canada needs the image of tolerance and generosity in order to "forget that the land was taken by coercive means through a process that depended on inferiorizing and racializing a people" (Adams, 1999; Battiste, 2000; Cardinal, 1969; Monture Angus, 1995, as cited in Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 302). By celebrating culture through song, dance, folklore and food, Schick and St. Denis (2005) argue that Canada is able to subvert recognition of the nation's racism, promoting itself as a

"raceless and colour-blind" nation (p. 296). Racism is framed as belonging in the confines of history or far-away geographies — like American slavery, South African Apartheid or the Holocaust, serving to amplify Canada's image as a racism-free "safe haven" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 305). Further, a free-from-racism discourse has the effect of neutralizing the effects of racial inequality by framing inequities as a result of so-called "cultural difference" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 306). This means that instead of addressing the structural effects of racism, cultural solutions are proposed as the answer to problems of colonial and racist inequities (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 306). Multiculturalism "obscures the fact that differential access to power is produced through racial formations…. [which] sanctions ignorance of racializing systems including the production of White identities and the taken-for-grantedness of racial dominance" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 307). It fails to disrupt systems of power operating along racial lines and thus maintains the status quo, protecting the innocence and supremacy of White settlers (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 307). Deeply invested in the belief of their own goodness and tolerance White citizens (students) struggle with being implicated in structures of race privilege (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 310).

In a subsequent article, St. Denis (2011b) contends that Canada's multicultural discourse has the effect of undermining Indigenous peoples claims to sovereignty. St. Denis (2011b) maintains that multicultural discourse marks Indigenous peoples as having equal status to other cultural groups within the Canadian state, obscuring their rights as sovereign nations that pre-date Canada and its settlers. St. Denis writes: "Aboriginal groups suggest that multiculturalism is a form of colonialism that works to distract from the recognition and redress of Indigenous rights" (2011b, p. 308). Without critical awareness of the nation's colonial past nor their resulting privileges, the discourse of multiculturalism produces Canadians "as advocates of

fairness and equality, [who] can feel legitimate in rejecting Aboriginal claims to justice" (St. Denis, 2011b, p. 310). Because multiculturalism is marked by the extension of tolerance and equality to "Other" groups, assertions of Indigenous sovereignty are regarded as overextending the boundaries of multiculturalism— leading settlers to feel resentful or as though they are victimized by those they have graciously welcomed (St. Denis, 2011b, p. 310).

In the Midst of Reconciliation. In more recent years, public discourse reflects a growing recognition of the historical wrongs Indigenous people have experienced throughout Canada's history. In particular, the work of the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a) has forced the state and Canadian citizens to reckon with the violence committed by the state in its attempt to eliminate Indigenous peoples through its colonial policies. The hearings, findings and reports of the Truth and Reconciliation commission focus extensively on the Residential School system, documenting, through emotional public hearings, the abuse, neglect, disease, indoctrination, and horror experienced by children, now adults and elders, survivors, who were forced into the Residential School system (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a). Documents released by the Commission detail Canada's colonial history as it unfolds into policies of assimilation and the Residential School system, while the Commission's final reports provide specific direction for Canada to systemically reform and redress the colonial harm and injustice caused by the state. In 2015, the Commission's "94 Calls to Action" were released to provide actionable steps for governments and institutions to make in contribution to the national practice of Reconciliation (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015b). The 94 Calls to Action brought the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's efforts to establish "a mutually respectful relationship between

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples" within public purview (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015a).

Because the national process of Truth and Reconciliation is a more recent phenomenon, studies investigating the productive effects of Canadian national discourse regarding reconciliation are limited. However, the research available points to some troubling issues with how the public receives and "talks about" reconciliation in ways that limit its potential to change and re-orient power relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples. Public survey work conducted by Wotherspoon and Milne (2020) on the Canadian prairies suggests that public discourse in response to Reconciliation in education commonly draws on and reinforces the racism endemic to settler society. Participants in Wotherspoon and Milne's study recited common tropes about the unfair advantages being offered to Indigenous students through an increased emphasis on Indigenous education. For example, participants suggested there was far too much focus placed on Indigenous content throughout the curriculum which they equated with discrimination against non-Indigenous Canadians (Wotherspoon & Milne, 2020, p. 451). Other participants suggested reconciliation has already been achieved and that it is time to move on; these participants argued that it is Indigenous people's turn to take responsibility for the future rather than burdening non-Indigenous peoples with the past (p. 451-452). Wotherspoon and Milne (2020) conclude that although the notion of reconciliation appears to be widely supported across the country, problematic, racist discourses of settler resistance remain glossed over despite the limitations and threats they pose to institutional progress towards Truth and Reconciliation (Wotherspoon & Milne, p. 454).

On the other hand, as Gebhard's (2017) poststructural analysis points out, even those who consider themselves well-intentioned and invested in the principles of Truth and Reconciliation

can reproduce racialized subjectivities through the discourse of residential schools and reconciliation. Analyzing interviews with educators, Gebhard finds that "talk" about residential school

> position[s] settlers as empathetic and critically conscious, and Aboriginal peoples as collectively lacking … an emphasis on the residential schools as a past event means there are no present-day perpetrators of racism, leaving Aboriginal peoples to shoulder the blame for ongoing inequality. (Gebhard, 2017, p. 4).

Several of Gebhard's participants reasoned that the underachievement of Indigenous students could be attributed to the "degenerate" home and family lives resulting from the intergenerational trauma of the residential school era, rather than the effects of ongoing systemic racism (Gebhard, 2017, p. 18). These discourse place racism in the past while simultaneously reinscribing racialized notions of the inherent inferiority and degeneracy of Indigenous peoples. At the same time non-Indigenous peoples are positioned "to take on roles of helpers and saviours" to Indigenous peoples (Gebhard, 2017, p. 21). Through common, well-intentioned discourses of residential schools, White settlers and their institutions, again, are relieved of culpability in the ongoing subjugation of Indigenous peoples and render the efforts of reconciliation unable to reconfigure power relations between Indigenous and Settler subjects (Gebhard, 2017, 21-22). Breaking the patterns of racialization is not as simple as having good intentions.

Like Wotherspoon and Milne (2020) and Gebhard (2017), Miles (2021) considers the effect of reconciliatory curricula in addressing ongoing settler colonialism in British Columbia schools. As part of Miles' (2021) research, he analyzes Reconciliation in Canada, arguing that Canada's drive to "secure settler permanence and futurity" governs its approach to reconciliation

(p. 254). Balancing its progressive national image with the need to maintain occupation of Indigenous lands means Canada has constructed "a discourse of state-led reconciliation that both establishes and limits what is for discussion" meaning that support for decolonization and Indigenous sovereignty are off the table (p. 254). Miles further suggests that Canada's use of the language transitional justice, including formal apologies, commissions, compensatory atonement, produces a Canada which "imagine[s] itself as undergoing, or even having already undergone, a transition from a colonial past to a reconciled present" (p. 254). Like reflected in the research of Wotherspoon and Milne (2020) and Gebhard (2017), Miles argues that through reconciliatory discourse Canada "has imagined settler colonialism as a thing of the past by narrowing its attention to specific aspects of the settler colonial project while ignoring structures and unequal relationships that remain in place (p. 255). The emphasis on redress for residential schools, while absolutely necessary, can function to obscure the need to focus on the entirety of the historic and ongoing project of settler colonialism. Drawing from Coulthard (2014), Miles argues that discourses of reconciliation again position Indigenous people as an "'object of repair, not the colonial relationship" (as cited in Miles, p. 255). Together, Miles (2021), Gebhard (2017) and Wotherspoon and Wilne (2020) provide critical insight as to the ways discourses of reconciliation are taken up in educational spaces on the prairies, arguing that what appears to be a progressive and well-intentioned national movement ensuring historical justice and establishing equitable relationships may not necessarily be producing what it intends. Given the relative infancy of the Truth and Reconciliation process, more research is needed to determine how this discourse plays out in ways that reproduce or interrupt well-established patterns of national subjectivity for Indigenous and settler people.

Conclusion

The rendering of a national identity based in discourses of belonging, peaceful settlement and multicultural acceptance and sanctifies Canada's settler colonial foundation and serves as "more of a cultural artifact than a serious history" (Stanley, 2000, p. 82). Despite their mythic qualities, the national narratives explored earlier operate with 'truth-value' as legitimate discourse which invokes the productive power necessary to constitute "social identifications" (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 296) and power relations within the state. As Hall (1992) indicates, beyond serving as "a point of allegiance, bonding and symbolic identification" an 'imagined community' acts as "a structure of cultural power" (p. 296).

I spent considerable focus exploring the literature of Canadian nationalist discourse in order to begin drawing connections between the broader social imaginary/imagined community and the role that Canadian public education plays in circulating these identity making discourses. Education scholar, Richardson (2006) expresses the relationship between the national identity production and education stating:

> In most nations, national curricula have been created to perpetuate, and in many cases manufacture, national myths for the twin purposes of grounding national consciousness in some kind of legitimizing historical tradition and garnering the allegiance of the people to the existing status quo. (p. 286)

Thus, public schooling is a social institution through which students are socialized into a national identity and the normalized power relations of the White settler state, in part through the circulation of curricular knowledge rooted in the national "grand narrative" (Stanley, 2006). The teaching of Canada's history, rooted in the discourses discussed, has produced a binding national imaginary based on notions of Canadian historical inevitability, peace, tolerance,

multiculturalism, and reconciliation; a White settler citizenship is thus marked by innocence, or perhaps complicity, to its own colonial, racist identity.

Colonial Foundations of Curriculum

While curricular knowledge is often taken as neutral, objective, and factual, as a form of spatially/temporally situated cultural discourse it possesses the productive power necessary to reproduce the systems and structures of national and racial hegemony that pattern power relations, belonging and a race hierarchy in ways that appear benign, ordinary, and common sense in Canada. Examining Canadian national discourses and what they accomplish in terms of normalizing national and racialized identities marked by settler innocence (ignorance) to ongoing racism and colonialism prepares me to identify, distinguish and analyze how such ordinary/banal discourses and their iterations are recited or perhaps interrupted in a social studies curriculum that claims to be progressive, inclusive, and socially just (see Government of Saskatchewan, 2018).

By delineating the connection between Canada's status as a settler colonial nation and the nationalist mythology/discourse through which it distorts this violent reality, I situate curriculum as a site through which Canada continues to naturalize its sense of belonging even as it actively racializes, marginalizes, displaces, and eliminates Indigenous peoples in their own lands. In the following section of the review, I study how racism, colonialism and settler colonialism continue to shape public education in Canada.

Colonialism, Racism and Education

As a state-regulated social institution, the public education system plays an important role in the circulation of dominant national discourses that maintain colonial supremacy and settler/national security (Battiste, 2013; Calderón, 2014; Dei, 1999; Schick & St. Denis, 2005;

Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). The common-sense notion that curricular knowledge represents a neutral and equitable set of facts that is beneficial to all students must be disrupted given the observation that all knowledge is rooted in a particular socio-political context marked by certain histories, power-relations, and political interests (Dei, 1999; Dei & Kempf, 2006).

The work of Willinsky (1998), Dei (1999) and Battiste (2013) demonstrates the ways in which the Canadian education system is premised on the logics of colonialism that naturalize the dispossession of Indigenous peoples and uphold White colonial supremacy. Through a study of imperial influence on education Willinsky (1998) asserts that the powerful theories of "race, culture and nation" which asymmetrically ordered colonizer/Indigenous power relations throughout the colonized world have left an educational legacy in which patterns of social identity and difference continue to be normalized throughout public education in ways that "regulate the lives of the young" (p. 3, 5). Indicating how imperialist knowledge production has influenced public education, Willinsky states:

> Much of the knowledge achieved through conquest and colonization was understood to legitimate the political and cultural domination of imperialism...We cannot readily sort through and discard colonially tainted understandings we carry, without devoting attention to how our view of the world has been shaped by imperialism's educational projects, which included fostering a science and geography of race; renaming a good part of the world in homage to its adventurers' homesick sense of place; and imposing languages and literatures on the colonized in an effort to teach them why they were subservient to a born-to-rule civilization (1998, p. 4).

The knowledge that serves as the foundation of public education is deeply rooted in the philosophies, sciences, geographies, and literatures derived out of European encounters with the

world during the imperialist era— this knowledge, thought to be objective, neutral, superior, is rooted in the ideas of European supremacy which served to rationalize, justify, and maintain racialized division, brutality and control as colonialism pilfered Indigenous nations globally (Willinsky, 1998).

Both Dei (1999) and Battiste (2013) contend that Eurocentrism, the privileging of White colonial epistemologies, remains a significant and pervasive driver of educational inequity. Dei (1999) explains that "Eurocentric [educational] practices continue to impose colonial/imperial control on the processes of knowledge production, interrogation, validation and use" and in turn, regulate what is taken as legitimate, and thus dominant, knowledge (p. 399). Battiste has devised the term "cognitive imperialism" to refer to the way schools "rely on colonial dominance as a foundation of thought, language, values, and frame of reference as reflected in the language of instruction, curricula, discourses, texts and methods" (2013, p. 159). As a tool of colonialism, racism creates and reinforces White colonial supremacy through "selective readings of the histories, cultures and knowledges of minoritized groups" (Dei, 1999, p. 403). Racist exclusion and inferiorization of Indigenous peoples and racialized 'Others' through the official discourses of educational programming establish a "'discursive regime of truth'" that maintains the naturalization of White dominance through public schooling (Foucault, as cited in Dei, 1999, p. 403).

Settler Colonialism and Education

While the aforementioned scholarship offers compelling conceptualizations of the ongoing legacy of colonialism within education, Calderón (2014) and Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) argue it is necessary to investigate curriculum through the particularities of a settler colonial framework "because [settler colonialism] is different from other forms of

colonialism in ways that matter" (p. 75). Settler colonialism differentiates itself from other forms of colonialism because it is a project in which the colonizer depends on Indigenous erasure and dispossession to establish legitimacy and permanence in a 'new' territory. However, the resistance of Indigenous peoples to attempted erasure renders the settler colonial state in a perpetual state of fragility; thus, the project of completion and replacement must be structured into the workings of the state. Calderón (2014) and Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) position curriculum as instrumental to securing the legitimacy and permanence of the settler colonial state through discourses and practices that regulate Indigenous erasure and replacement while upholding the logics of White settler supremacy.

Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) argue that the entire field of curriculum theory and development, from its inception, has been invested in "vanish[ing] Indigenous peoples and replac[ing] them with settlers, who see themselves as the rightful claimants to land, and indeed, as *indigenous* (p. 73, emphasis added). These scholars exemplify the historic and ongoing aims of education to replace Indigenous bodies and knowledge, relieve settler tension and secure settler futurity, highlighting manifestations of replacement through a brief analysis of influential curriculum theorists, Spencer, Bobbit and Dewey. Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) critique the current field of curriculum theory as a site that continues to see "White curriculum scholars re-occupy the 'spaces' opened by responses to racism and colonization in the curriculum…" (p. 73). The progress made by Indigenous and scholars of colour in broadening the field of curriculum is re-colonized by White settler scholars and scholarship. The effect of this replacement is that it secures "settler futurity, which always indivisibly means the continued and complete eradication of the original inhabitants of contested land." (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 80). Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013) contend that "Anything that

seeks to recuperate and not interrupt settler colonialism, to reform the settlement and incorporate Indigenous peoples into the multicultural settler colonial state is fettered to settler futurity" (p. 80). The conceptualization of logics that maintain settler colonial project offer significant contributions to the framing of this research.

In *Uncovering Settler Grammars in Curriculum*, Calderón (2014) contends that settler colonialism is central to and remade through curricular knowledge disseminated throughout settler states and focuses her work on identifying how American social studies textbooks maintain the "grammars" of settler colonialism. She suggests that in order to engage in effective decolonizing practices, reproductions of settler colonial dominance must be located and understood. Calderón finds social studies an appropriate site of investigation as it represents a "palimpsest— a document in which previous writings are erased and written over yet old knowledge bleeds through" (Johannessen, 2012, as cited in Calderón, p. 315) meaning the logics of settler colonial supremacy and Indigenous inferiority, which established the nation continue to persist, despite discursive shifts. Calderón (2014) analyzes the representations of Indigenous absence and presence as they appear in national narratives to locate the (re)productions of settler ideologies. She finds that the organization of Indigenous representation in curriculum perpetuates myths of empty lands, settler superiority, and territoriality which maintain the "inevitable outcome of settler ideologies that work to erase and reconstruct Indianness to maintain settler futurity" (p. 332).

Similar excavations of settler colonialism in Canadian curriculum are beginning to take root. The work of Miles (2021), Schaefli, Godlewska and Lamb (2019), and Sinke (2020) contributes to a small but significant study of the way in which curricular discourses and resources work to maintain settler colonialism in Canada. Miles (2021) analysis investigates how

reforms to British Columbia's social studies curriculum to include historical injustice and reconciliation interrupt or reinforce aspects of settler colonialism. Miles (2021) finds that within the curriculum topics of historical injustice are often "segmented as a separate historical event from key foundational aspects of the nation state" which has "the effect of encouraging a nation building on one hand while also ignoring erasure, removal and forcible assimilation of Indigenous peoples as part of this nation building process" (p. 259). He points out that Indigenous history is treated similarly — as a separate entity to Canadian history— a practice which "allows non-Indigenous Canadians to teach and learn that Indigenous sovereignty, governance, and ways of knowing are also outside comprehension and acknowledgement" (Miles, 2021, p. 260). Miles' research contends that while attempts were made to include content that represented redress, the curriculum continued a long-standing colonial pattern in which "Thinking beyond or outside the settler nation is rendered impossible or unimaginable" (2021, p. 261). Schaefli, Godlewska and Lamb's (2019) research which investigates the settler colonial contours of Newfoundland and Labrador, Ontario and British Columbia's K-12 curricula and textbooks draws a similar conclusion. The authors demonstrate that common to the provincial curricula is the maintenance of "silence around Indigenous philosophies and territories, apologia for colonial incursions on Indigenous territories, and reinforcement of racialized hierarchies of being [which] all work to minimize colonial violence and preclude imagination of distinct, vital, and self-determining Indigenous nations" (p. 146).

Lamb and Godlewska's (2020) comprehensive study of British Columbia's curriculum from 1995-2010 suggests that, while the province has improved its recognition of role Indigenous knowledge plays in addressing anti-Indigenous ignorance and discrimination, the curriculum has remained marginal in its intentional inclusion of Indigenous knowledges. There

has been little meaningful support for teachers to ensure inclusion occurs consistently, throughout the curriculum and across the province, and as such, Indigenous education remains on the "peripheries" of education. In a similar study of the Ontario curriculum, Schaefli, Godlewska and Rose (2018) argue that the 2003-2015 provincial curricula remain invested in producing settler colonial epistemologies of ignorance. They find that through the "segregation and past placement of Indigenous content, omission of Indigenous critical perspectives, philosophies and territories, denial of colonialism, and reinforcement of racialized hierarchies of being, the curriculum and texts encourage a logic of relation premised on Indigenous disappearance" (Schaefli et al., 2018, p. 82). Findings were similar in a study of Newfoundland and Labrador's curriculum. Godlewska, Rose, Schaefli, Freake and Massey (2016) report that aside from the grade seven and nine curricula,

> Indigenous content is either used as a light flavouring applied here and there … or segregated … taking the Indigenous out of both place and time and reinforcing the view of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador as made by settlers, heirs of the great civilization of Europe. (Godlewska et al., 2016, p. 82)

The work of these scholars in tracing the settler colonial contours of education across the Canadian provinces continues to find problematic re-investments in curricular knowledge that erases Indigenous epistemologies, colonialism and racism, thereby protecting settler colonial futurity in Canada.

Sinke's (2020) dissertation draws on settler colonialism to study how elementary school children come to understand their role in the nation and their occupation of Indigenous lands through the Ontario social studies curriculum. While Sinke (2020) affirms the colonial

problematics of the curriculum studied, he offers hope in reminding readers that subjectivity is a malleable construction. In his observations of young students, he notes:

> Whereas adult White settler Canadians often reject alternative portrayals of Indigenous peoples and Canadian society which would challenge settler colonial perspectives, the students in this study demonstrated an openness to learning and an eagerness to continually expand their understandings beyond simplistic settler narratives (Sinke, 2020, p. 151)

This observation underscores the importance of creating an environment that challenges settler colonialism, racism, and erasure in educational settings. In identifying the ongoing maintenance of settler colonialism through public school curriculum, the work of these scholars provides avenues for those working in education systems to interrupt, challenge and de-mystify practices and discourses that remain colonial and racist, particularly in instances where they appear well-intentioned, inclusive and justice driven.

Conclusion

Sunera Thobani (2007) writes that it is an absurdity that Canadians fail to see the violence of colonial and racism systems operating within their midst. However, the insights gleaned through critical analysis demonstrate how through widely reproduced, common-sense discourses of the nation, a shared social imaginary is produced, which minimizes, distorts, and silences the systemic, structural, and ongoing nature of settler colonialism, racism, and genocide. The picturesque, imagined community which is taken-for-granted by Canadian citizens certainly reduces the capability of White settlers to recognize and interrupt their complicity in benefiting from and protecting the racist and White supremacist processes and structures that support settler colonialism. It produces a White settler subjectivity marked by innocence and superiority, in

which deep lack of awareness rationalizes resistance, defiance, deflection, ignorance and minimization of colonial truths. This is a subjectivity in which the active naturalization, denial, or minimization of ongoing patterns of colonial and race oppression works in service of the state, maintaining a normalized version of Canada through which ongoing settler colonialism and Indigenous displacement are rationalized to be the natural course of an inevitable nation and an inferior people.

It is clear that the 'good intentions' of Canadians cannot interrupt the structural nature of deeply imbedded, racialized power relations normalized in Canada. Because educators, like all Canadians, are socialized in colonial myths of the nation which obscure their racial/colonial positioning, it is imperative that they come to recognize and discern how colonialism and racism continue to operate through the curricular discourses they are tasked with circulating. Educators must recognize how what is taught in the classroom produces racialized identities which are either normal or Other, and we must recognize how displacement and erasure of Indigenous nations and sovereignty are obfuscated in ways that appear ordinary, natural, and even socially just. If it is true that educators are committed to social equity, the work begins with critiquing and identifying how our curricula secure settler colonialism and White racial dominance and then move to teach in ways that disrupt patterns of dominance.

This research tells a different, perhaps uncomfortable, story about the Saskatchewan social studies curriculum. I use a poststructural approach to challenge what many perceive to be common sense: that our curricula are inclusive, that they value all students, that they work toward producing harmony and equity between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples, that they foster reconciliation and that they produce benefits for all learners. Using poststructural discourse analysis I identify, and interrupt, the curricular productions of national citizenship and

racial subjectivity that normalize White settler dominance and racism. I deconstruct how the language of curriculum positions Indigenous and settler identities in relation to one another in ways that preserve and reify inequitable power relations deeply imbedded in colonial structures. I draw from theories of Whiteness and Settler Colonialism to contextualize these findings and determine how the reproduction of national subjectivity and relations of power that occur through curricular knowledge/discourse operate in settler colonial society that relies on White supremacy, racism and acts of dispossession to justify its possession and belonging.

Chapter Two:

Theoretical Framework

Why Poststructural, Whiteness and Settler Colonial Theories?

To position, conduct and interpret a discourse analysis of Saskatchewan's grade four Social Studies curriculum, I draw from three bodies of theory. First, I ground this research within a poststructural framework. Because poststructuralism emphasizes "the mechanisms by which structures are produced and maintained through language and social interaction" (Mease, 2016, p. 6) this theory offers a suitable ontological foundation for studying how the dominant versions of Canada and national subjectivity are constituted through national and historical narratives (discourses) of curriculum. The tools and theory offered by poststructural theorists allow me to investigate the productive functioning of the curricular text. Foucault's articulations of discourse, power/knowledge and subjectivity reframe curriculum as part of the social network of power while Derrida's extrapolation of the concept of *différance* demonstrates how practices of language work to inscribe subjects, in relation to one another, as normative or Other (Graham & Slee, 2008). Secondly, I utilize elements of Whiteness and Settler Colonial theory to contextualize my interpretation of the curricular material analyzed. Wetherell and Potter (1992) discuss how discourse "take[s] place in history, it feeds off the social landscape, the social groups, the material interests already constituted" (p. 86) therefore Whiteness theory and settler colonial theory contribute a critical race and anti-colonial read of the existing social landscape in Canada. This layering of theory allows me to discern productive effects of curriculum in relation to the deep inequality between White settlers and Indigenous peoples that are normalized and concealed in the dominant discourses of Canada.

Poststructural Theory

Poststructural theory emerged in the 1960s as a reaction to the limitations of structuralist interpretations of social reality (Youdell, 2006, p. 33). Postructuralism moves beyond a conceptualization of society as a natural, stable, and rational patterning of structures to theorize the way in which the perceived normativity and inevitability of social structures and identities, including what counts as knowledge or truth, can be deconstructed to reveal its constitution within a network of socio-historical power relations and language-based social interactions (Mease, 2016, p. 5). In its work to dismantle the constitutive forces which render social meaning, including the value inscribed to particular subject or objects, poststructural theories are well-suited to discern and challenge the inequitable relations of power embedded within the common-sense, "mundane" conditions of everyday life (Mease, 2016, p. 1). Thus, poststructural theory offers a framework for discerning how the national narratives of curriculum, which appear neutral, ordinary, and inevitable, distort the way in which citizens are able to recognize themselves and others within the inequity rooted in ongoing colonial violence.

The critical disposition of poststructural theory urges a critique of the ordinary and cautions suspicion in sites where discourse appears liberatory or well-intentioned. Of the appearance of emancipatory discourse, Wetherell and Potter (1992) explain that "oppressive social relations can be maintained with an illusion of solidarity and can operate through the mystifying premise that society is working for the benefit of all...the powerful can also be persuaded they are acting in everyone's interest, and thus also become reconciled to the power exercised in their name" (p. 85). This means asymmetrical relations of power can be maintained even as social practices and discourses exude an appearance of justice and social change. This caution propels this research as I analyze the curriculum to understand if its production of

normativity and subjectivity facilitate the transformational social change indicated through the reconciliatory and Indigenous justice-oriented policy intentions of Saskatchewan Education (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018). While the aim of this research is not a slight nor an interrogation of the morals and ethics of those who write curricular policy nor who teach curriculum, it does highlight the way in which such individuals and the language they engage, along with the documents they draw from, are agents in the recirculation of power-laden discourses that produce social norms and hierarchies. Even when language and actions are well-intentioned, they are inscribed within a broader network of power-relations and discursive meaning which constrain what we are able to say and express (Foucault, 1991, as cited in Mills, 2003, p. 64).

Kumashiro (2000) asserts that perhaps poststructuralism's greatest contribution to challenging oppressive structures is its consideration of not only the productive power of what is said, but also how perceptions of the world are formed by silences (p. 42). This suggests the importance of discourse analysis to consider not only what is said, but what gets excluded, and what sort of social structure and relations of power are made possible through this exclusion. Mills (2004) writes that discursive absences and exclusions demarcate the boundaries and possibilities for the discourse one can produce: "Whilst what it is possible to say seems self-evident and natural, this naturalness is a result of what has been excluded, that which is almost unsayable" (p. 11). Therefore, the discourse analysis in this research centers the need to examine what absences and denials inform the narratives of curriculum in ways that produce and rationalize racial, territorial, and national belonging for some and exclusion for Others. A recognition of these silences illuminates the way in which our understandings of truth are constituted and recirculated within a system of power (Foucault, 1977, p. 133).

Foucault Power/Knowledge & Curriculum

The dominant discourses which circulate through curriculum, producing our social reality and identities are an exercise of power. Historian/philosopher/social critic Michel Foucault's theorizations of power/knowledge influence the foundations of poststructural thought in his assertion that truth, like knowledge, is neither naturally occurring nor objective, but rather a production. Foucault suggests that

> Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it induces regular effects of power. Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (1977, p. 131)

Simply put, truth is a process of selective rendering. Power is synonymous with knowledge production because determining who and what gets represented, and thus who and what gets excluded, within the discursive body of truth (re)produces relations of power. The knowledge circulated through public schooling is regulated within this power-laden process. Mills (2004) contends: "what is studied in schools and universities is the result of struggles over whose version of events is sanctioned" (p. 19). Wetherell and Potter (1992) explicate such questions, stating: "The crucial aspect [in accounting for discourse], as always, is whose story will be accepted and become part of the general currency of explanation, whose version of events, whose account of the way things are?" (p. 62). These matters of curriculum theory are encapsulated within the essence of Spencer's (1860) often cited question: "What knowledge is of

most worth?" While Spencer attempts to rationalize an objective response, through the lens of Foucault, this question is invariably one of power-relations— "whose" knowledge is represented through the authority of curriculum becomes the currency of social truth, and thus regulates norms and power-relations.

Canadian public education has sanctioned Eurocentric, nationalist grand narratives as the knowledge of "most worth" and in doing so has silenced talk of anti-Indigenous racism and colonial violence. This operation of inclusion/exclusion has the power to determine "who belongs in the nation and in what ways" (Stanley, 2000, p. 82). Stanley explains: "the categories and assumptions at work within [the grand narrative] mean that young people are confronted with curricula that define some of them as 'Canadian,' those whose great-grandmothers got the right to vote in the 1910s, and defines others as non-Canadian, those whose great-grandmothers did not" (Stanley, 2006, p. 37). Those who find a reflection of themselves in the knowledge belong as normal; those who do not are positioned as Others. This is consequential in terms of the power curriculum has to regulate and position identities in terms of belonging and citizenship. In a Foucauldian sense, individuals are subject (subjectivated) to the meanings of truth/knowledge circulated in curricular discourse.

Curriculum theorists Pinar and Castell (1995) argued that a curriculum forged in "absences, denials, and incompleteness" was fit to produce fragmented and repressed identities ill equipped to participate or contribute meaningfully to the social context (as cited in Pinar et al., p. 328). In an American context, they argued that the absence of African American representation in curriculum not only harmed Black students but harmed White students as well. They explained that because White dominance is constructed in relation to the racialization of Others, "for European-American students to understand who they are [i.e.: their positions of race

privilege], they must understand their existence is predicated upon, interrelated to, and constituted in fundamental ways by African-Americans" (Pinar et al., 1995, p 328). Drawing from the Canadian context in which curricula negates anti-Indigenous racism and colonial dispossession, Schick and St. Denis (2005) come to a similar conclusion, asserting that "curriculum is one of the significant discourses through which White privilege and 'difference' are normalized" (p. 298). Through the ignorance of colonialism and racism White settler innocence is sanctioned. As a body authorizing a particular version of knowledge, curriculum "induces the effects of power" and accomplishes the regulation and positioning of racial (also gender, sexuality, class, ability) identity (Foucault, 1977, p. 52).

Subjectivity

Subjectivity provides a more precise way to discuss the categories of meaning and forces of normalization/power contained in discourse in/to which individuals are "*at once rendered a subject and subjected to relations of power*" (Youdell, 2006 p. 41, emphasis in original). In referring to the subject, Foucault is not referring to a self-determining person, but rather an individual who has been constrained by the discursive possibilities provided within their social context (Youdell, 2006, p. 37). For example, a body marked as female is subject to discourses of femininity in which "she" is subjectivated— that is, categorized within constraints of appearance, occupation, size, political involvement, sexuality, intelligence that regulate her positionality within the social order- this includes internalizing such discourse and self-subjectivating to stay in line with social norms (Youdell, 2006, p. 43). If one recognizes and acts outside of these social norms, they are rendered outside; perhaps her involvement in politics marks her dangerous, unbecoming, bossy. Subjectivity is therefore a position in which meaning is affixed to markers of identity that are inherited through networks of discourse and power that

(re)produce the social meanings which we inhabit. The concept of subjectivity requires us to reconsider our perception of the individual as a self-determining, naturally occurring, biologically based agent, to consider that each individual has been "subjected to relations of power as s/he is individualized, categorised, classified, hierarchized, normalized, surveilled and provoked to self-surveillance" (Youdell, p. 41). The regulations and possibilities that exist for normalized roles are understood to be "constructed from the interpreted resources — the stories and narratives of identity — which are available, in circulation, in our culture" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 78).

In discussing the impact of curriculum and the production of subjectivity, it is important to differentiate between individual agency and subjectivity. When talking about the normalization of White supremacy and settler territoriality and dominance, I am not implying that people identified within these categories of meaning are bad or immoral people, but rather, I am indicating supremacy and dominance as markers of a subjectivity normalized through discourse. This is a production in which "the dominant presence is always defined… *in terms of what it is not*" (Youdell, 2006, p. 39, emphasis in original). While one may not "act" as a White supremacist, the access to institutional and territorial belonging naturalized for White settler subjects that simultaneously constitutes and rationalizes the active erasure/marginalization of Indigenous peoples means that supremacy, possession, control, and dominance are naturalized as part of the meanings affixed to Whiteness. While acknowledging the social production of subjectivity does not relieve individuals of the responsibility for ongoing racism, I recognize that looking at subjectivity beyond 'individual agency' helps to demonstrate that an individual's behaviours and actions are entrenched within broader, socio-historical, and hierarchical subject-

making discursive patterns that are offered through many identity producing sites including the public school curriculum.

Discourse

For poststructural analysts, discourse provides an entry point with which to begin investigating social constitution. Influenced by the genealogical and socio-archaeological work of Foucault, the analysis of curriculum undertaken here is conducted at the level of discourse. While there are innumerable ways to define the term, simply put, discourse "consist[s] of utterances which have meaning, force and effect within a social context" (Mills, 2003, p. 13). Discourses are most often expressed through statements/language, both textual or spoken, and while they can be located everywhere, they are not "a disembodied collection of statements, but [rather] groupings of utterances or sentences, statements which are enacted within a social context, which are determined by that social context and contribute to the way that social context continues its existence" (Mills, 2003, p. 10-11). In short, discourse refers to how the way in which we talk, write and narrate our existence is drawn from an archive of discursively/historically produced relations of power (social meaning) that attaches these meanings to regulate the present (Mills, 2003, p. 64) Stanley (2000) makes sense of this in a Canadian context, stating: "While nationalist grand narratives purport to trace the origins of the 'imagined community' that makes the nation, they in fact constitute it" (p. 82). The way the national story is narrated, through various inclusions and exclusions, thus produces collective social meaning and regulates power relations.

Discourse is validated through institutional authority (Mills, 2004, p. 55) and its iterations invoke/cite a history of discursive meaning which is brought forth to reinforce the way we make meaning of the present (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 42). Discourse is thus considered "thoroughly

constitutive" (Wetherell & Potter, 1992, p. 62) in the way it "repeat[s] and so inscribe[s] these systems of meaning, and is doing, contribute[s] to the ongoing constitution and bounding of what makes sense" (Youdell, 2006, p. 35). In other words, discourse determines what material and relation conditions are taken as 'normal' — it possesses the regulatory power to determine the limits or acceptability of what can be said in a given social context (Mills, 2004, p. 43). It also marks the limits of belonging— subjected to the power of discourse, so are rendered as subjects who belong, while others are rendered Other.

Bazzul (2014) argues that discourse is important for educators to consider. His work stresses the importance of analyzing curricular knowledge and resources because of the "limits they set on possible thought or action" (Bazzul, 2014, p. 424). Because of its effects, Bazzul reiterates Davies (2006) suggestion that "educators should take responsibility for examining the discursive practices that are taken for granted in schools and universities, and ask: what conditions of possibility are they maintaining for us [educators] and for our students?" (2014, p. 424). In this research I take up Bazzul's question, asking what sort of Canada is accomplished through the nationalist and historical discourse of Saskatchewan's social studies curriculum? And what possibilities does this construction of Canadian identity produce for national subjects in a state characterized by settler colonial violence and White supremacy?

Poststructural Tools of Analysis

Linda Graham and Roger Slee's (2008) use of Derrida's deconstructionist theory in their read of Australian inclusive policy serves as a model for the discourse analysis undertaken here. Recognizing that Saskatchewan curriculum policy regards the current inclusion of Indigenous content as socially transformative (Government of Saskatchewan, 2018), I am particularly drawn to Graham and Slee's (2008) assertion that the turn to inclusive policy is often "used as a means

for explaining and protecting the status quo" (p. 277). While Graham and Slee's (2008) work focuses specifically on the inclusion of students with disabilities in an Australian context, their theoretical approach can be applied to broader contexts of inclusion. Their argument suggests that inclusive policies fail to achieve true inclusivity "due to the existence and extension of uninterrogated normative assumptions that shape and drive policy" (p. 278). Thus, their analysis focuses not on the excluded, as so often is the case, but rather in making visible the normative assumptions which naturalize exclusion (2008, p. 281).

The Inner Workings of Language

Graham and Slee (2008) enter their analysis through discourse, following Deleuze, who theorized that a study of language can "conjure up the illusory interiority in order to restore words and things to their constitutive exteriority" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 43, as cited in Graham & Slee 2008, p. 278). In essence, language reveals how some things, in this case people, are marked for exteriority, that is outside of the norm— a space referred to as the interiority. Drawing on Foucault's concept of normalization, Graham and Slee (2008) determine how the discourse of policy "affirm[s] or negate[s] particular ways of being" and in doing so spatially arranges identities in relationship to each other (p. 282). Using a spherical representation, Graham and Slee demonstrate how the norm comes to occupy a privileged center-space through its dependency on the "subjection and marginalisation of the Other" (2008, p. 284) who are relegated to the margins of the sphere. Thus, the norm is derived in its absence of a "fixed and universal essence" (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 285) meaning there is nothing which constitutes or defines the norm other than the marking of 'Other' peoples' difference.

Drawing on Derrida, Graham and Slee (2008) explain how the construction of normative space is dependent on the signification of difference. This signification "results in an *appearance*

of centeredness within the social imaginary that is spoken into existence through tactical statements that allude to a natural human essence by discursively constructing an/other" (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 285). Derrida's concept of *différance* not only signifies the Other but refers to the way in which meaning is deferred onto the Other, rather than the centre, thus rendering the norm without signification- or an invisible, "uncontested, naturalised domain" (Graham & Slee, p. 286). A tool then for investigating the operation of discourse in curriculum is locating the way in which language demarcates *différance* and in doing so illuminates the (re)constitution of a privileged centre which has historically gone unrecognized. In this research I use the concept of *différance* to locate the "interiority" of curriculum, that is to name the normalized notions of race, nation and national subjectivity marked through the relational signifiers denoted to White settler and Indigenous representations in curricular discourse. I consider what and who gets produced as natural, the unmarked center space, or as foreign, the marked outsider, through notions of *différance*.

Poststructuralism and Whiteness Theory

Whiteness scholarship draws on the poststructural principle of difference to deconstruct the production of Whiteness and the position of normative dominance Whiteness has long secured in colonial societies. Considering its socially constructed nature, Whiteness can be defined as an unmarked space of "emptiness, absence, [and] denial" (Dyer, 1988, p. 44). In deconstructive fashion, this definition accounts for the way in which Whiteness derives its substance by defining itself in relational contrast to who or "*what it is not*" (Youdell, 2006, p. 39). By discursively constructing difference and inferiority as attributes of racialized "Others" considered Black, Indigenous or people of colour, Whiteness materializes itself as a raceless, normative center-space to which all racialized Others are positioned as marginal. As Youdell

(2006) indicates: Whiteness is a normative position that “depends on the Other even as it disavows it” (p. 39). Therefore, Whiteness cannot exist as a dominant identity without contrasting itself to those it inferiorizes as Other. Whiteness, thus, has “no cultural content other than the reinforcement of racial hierarchies” through which it secures supremacy (Leonardo, 2013, p. 85).

Strengthened by “unrecognition,” Whiteness is able to retain supremacy, in part, “by seeming not to be anything in particular” (Dyer, 1988, p. 44). As an “unremarkable/unmarked norm” Whiteness parades as “good values or a universal human nature, when in fact it is particular and partial...it is a form of investment” (Leonardo, 2013, p. 84-85). Whiteness is characterized by its ability to “shape shift” in accordance with challenges to its dominance; by redefining the terms of what Whiteness is not/is, the boundary between White and Other is reified, and the White norm remains secure (Leonardo, 2013, p. 85). For well-intentioned White educators, and a White education system, the unawareness to or relative invisibility of systems of Whiteness represent a challenge in disrupting its normative power. For those marked within the space of Whiteness, the system of White supremacy masquerades as the status quo—– a raceless, power neutral and rational condition of everyday life. The racist disavowals which undergird/produce White dominance “often [go] unnoticed for those who benefit from [them], but for those who don’t, Whiteness is often blatantly and painfully ubiquitous” (Applebaum, 2016). Castagno’s (2014) study of the operation of Whiteness in education offers tools with which the operation and maintenance of White supremacy can be named, and thus sufficiently addressed in education.

Whiteness in Education

Whiteness theory challenges the pervasive belief that schools and curricula are neutral and inclusive spaces by illuminating White complicity and reinvestments in racist structures that maintain White dominance. (Leonardo, 2013, p. 84). Therefore, in this research, schools are identified as sites where students learn Whiteness everyday, (Leonardo, 2013) and curriculum is regarded as “one of the significant discourses through which White privilege and difference are normalized” (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). The study of Whiteness necessitates remaining critical of the way in which Whiteness continues to function despite the appearance of progressive discourses because of its ability to evade challenges to its dominance. Leonardo (2013) suggests that for educators to work against White supremacy they need to be able to “locate it, demystify it, and if possible discontinue its hold on education” (p. 91). In illuminating how racial difference is produced and maintained in curriculum, the reinforcement of Whiteness becomes visible.

Marking Whiteness

Consistent with poststructuralism, Whiteness theory suggests that analysis of racist power relations is especially crucial when discursive shifts appear well-meaning and racially progressive as they have the potential to protect Whiteness in unintended ways (Leonardo, 2013). As Leonardo suggests, the now common-sense approach of multicultural education in schools represents a renewed site of racial struggle as “the possibility for cooptation [into Whiteness] becomes real as diversity and difference are accepted as the mantra of education” (Leonardo, 2013, p.4).

Castagno's (2014) tracing of the operation of Whiteness in schools provides evidence of Leonardo’s assertion, finding that [White] *niceness* “compels [White educators] to embrace diversity-related policy and practice uncritically and to praise any effort tagged with words like

multicultural, diversity, and *equality*" (p. 4). Castagno (2014) articulates that Whiteness interferes with challenges to inequity by using its identification with niceness to carefully evade engagement with "ugly, tense, or otherwise hurtful things" like the naming of race, racist practices, and White supremacy (Castagno, 2014, p. 9). Thus, well-intentioned niceness functions to protect the White status quo from engagement with race and evades being implicated within a racist system, ultimately guarding the norm of White supremacy. I draw from both Leonardo's (2013) and Castagno's (2014) critique of progressive educational discourses to question and highlight the ways in which "nice" and inclusive curricular discourse might evade or neutralize the necessary knowledge to bring about structural change. Of the endurance of Whiteness, Castgano (2014) identified the following patterns and their effects on transformative pedagogy:

> Because majoritarian [White] perspectives and knowledge are normalized, particular kinds of niceness are valued (so dialogue and action related to power and race are avoided), social harmony and unity are valued (so anything that might disrupt those goals is avoided), and meritocracy and equality are valued (so oppression is ignored and reproduction ensues). In addition, race, structural arrangements, and inequity are obscured or ignored. This is achieved by centering the individual and by othering groups, perspectives, knowledge, and experiences that fall outside the norm. (Castagno, p. 80- p. 81)

The protection of Whiteness is therefore evident in the discourses which seek to maintain what is perceived as neutrality or the status quo— harmony, equality, hard work, individualism— however, because that status quo is White supremacy, such values do little to rupture the systems that sustain the asymmetrical power relations that uphold White dominance. Similar findings are

reflected in Schick and St. Denis' (2005) work in which the national narratives of multicultural discourses of celebration, cultural tolerance, and traditions of benevolence found in Canadian curricula "[sanction] the ignorance of racializing systems including the production of White identities and the taken-for-grantedness of racial dominance" (p. 307). These evasive techniques of "well-intended" Whiteness have real consequences in upholding race inequality. Situated in a context of White supremacy, a curricular analysis can reveal how discourses of inclusion can simultaneously maintain difference in a context where White superiority is the normative condition.

Whiteness and Settler Colonialism

In Canada, the constitution of Whiteness as a social identification cannot be fully understood without extrapolating its relationship to settler colonialism. McLaren contextualizes Whiteness, suggesting the origin of its production resides "at the nexus of capitalism, colonial rule, and the emergent relationships among dominant and subordinate rule" (1997, as cited in Cary, 2006, p. 100). Similarly, Bonds and Inwood (2016) suggest that "Theories of whiteness that do not engage with indigenous geographies and the ongoing processes of colonization not only risk reinforcing the disappearance of Native peoples, they minimize the multiple processes of racialization producing race-class identities in these places (p. 4). Therefore, in a colonial context, the system of White supremacy must be further understood as racial domination produced through colonial territorialism, resource extraction and capitalism.

Settler colonial theory offers a lens to view White supremacy as a possessive and territorial logic which has driven and rationalized the historic and ongoing colonial occupation and resource use of Indigenous lands and the violent, genocidal dispossession of Indigenous peoples (Moreton-Robinson, 2015). Moreton-Robinson's work extrapolates how "Racism is [sic]

inextricably tied to the theft and appropriation of Indigenous lands in the first world" (2015, p. xiii). In the settler colonial landscape of Canada, White settlers, through discourses and practices reinforcing their racial superiority, have been naturalized as sovereign subjects, rightfully belonging to and possessing the land, while Indigenous peoples have been racialized outside of title and sovereignty through genocidal dispossession (Thobani, 2007). As Lipsitz (1998) contends, the colonial process of racializing belonging, ownership and resource wealth has produced a "powerful legacy" in which opportunity and reward lie in Whiteness (p. 371). In emphasizing the structural processes of territorial and possessive invasion, theories of settler colonialism offer insights as to the "inextricable link between White possession and Aboriginal sovereignty and its articulation through the possessive logics of patriarchal White sovereignty" (Moreton-Robinson, 2015, xxi).

Settler Colonial Theory

As a distinct field of colonial study, settler colonial theory seeks to identify and make visible the ongoing, dominating structures and processes of settler colonialism (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 427). Unlike other forms of extractive or labour driven colonialism, settler colonialism is distinguished by its drive to establish permanent, politically independent, resource and capital driven states that "come to stay" through the appropriation of Indigenous lands and territories and the strategic elimination of Indigenous peoples (Wolfe, 2006, p. 388). Ultimately, those who stay, described as *settlers*, aim to "replace" the Indigenous inhabitants by regulating histories and discourses of place in which they naturalize themselves as indigenous" (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013, p. 74). The settler state's goals of acquisition, security and replacement/naturalization are premised on an ongoing disavowal of the Indigenous Other whose resistance to dispossession and erasure presents a perennial challenge and source of anxiety for

the establishment of a permanent sovereign state (Mackey, 2016, p. 35). In addressing the "problem" Indigenous existence presents to settler colonial security, violent regulatory structures, rationalized through White supremacy, have institutionalized genocidal policies of erasure (Wolfe, 2006). Wolfe makes it clear that settler colonialism, as a logic of elimination, operates as a structure, not an event— meaning that the invasion of Indigenous lands and the desire for Indigenous elimination are not buried in history as a fixed event, but rather invasion and dispossession remain an active effect of the laws, policies, practices, institutions, and discourses that maintain, and effectively secure settler states (2006, p. 388). Thus, settler colonialism "informs all spaces of our society, and manifests powerfully in our collective desires, fantasies and needs" (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013, p. 432).

Settler Colonialism, Territorialism and White Supremacy

The territorialism and possessiveness that drives settler Canada's entitlement to Indigenous lands and resources are harnessed in Lockean and Hobbesian notions which equate land ownership, agricultural/resource development with moral righteousness and White racial supremacy (Mackey, 2015, p. 48-49). A primary way North American Indigenous peoples have been racialized as inferior is through their relationship to land and place which is rooted in spirituality and respect for the sanctity of all life (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 20). Colonizers use/d the lack of a titled, private property system driven by extractive capitalism to rationalize the inferiorization of Indigenous peoples as uncivilized and underdeveloped; they were described pejoratively as living in a primitive "state of nature" (Mackey, 2015, p. 48). Canadian occupation and settlement, involving the seizure of vast tracts of land and the removal and containment of Indigenous peoples was authorized through this racist logic (LaRocque, 1991, p. 74). The use of racially preferred White settlers to occupy land and cultivate title gave

the state a sense of permanence through which the entitlement to possession could be made certain through the settled notions of property, land development and the accruing of state capital (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 41-45). The racist beliefs that authorized this process of dispossession: that Indigenous peoples lack industry, resourcefulness, civility and are ‘stuck’ in the past continue to be circulated in public discourse and serve as justification for the ongoing use of resources and land for capital gain which characterize the apparent civility of the settler state (LaRocque, 1991, p. 74). Racist logic has naturalized the complete disregard for Indigenous sovereignty and rights and while permitting the reliance on and destruction of Indigenous lands in the name of capital. The continued exertion of state violence to protect corporate oil pipelines, mining, drilling, and fracking and clear-cutting operations and the subsequent environmental pollution that cuts through Indigenous territories exemplifies how settler governance continues to rely on notions of Indigenous inferiority to justify ongoing possessiveness and the forced dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their homelands (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 25-26). Despite being written out of nationalist discourses, White supremacy and anti-Indigenous racism remain deeply bound in Canada’s desire for and maintenance of White settler possession and accumulation.

Settler colonial theory frames state discourse as a form of mythology that operates to “cover [the settler colonial state’s] tracks” (Veracini, 2011, p. 3). The affirmation of the settler state’s belonging and sense of legitimacy depends on rendering structural and violent processes of Indigenous “erasure and replacement” unrecognizable to settlers as anything but ordinary and natural. Lowman and Barker (2015) write that the “intent to stay is a powerful drive, and is accompanied by the creation of equally powerful discourses of narrative belonging and legal and political power that provide ways that Canadians can claim to belong in the place they call

Canada" (p. 58). These discourses draw on *terra nullius,* familiar stories of immigrant and settler escapes to Canadian refuge and effectively justify, both in legal and personal terms, settler belonging on Indigenous land. Moreton-Robinson observes that "White possessive logics are operationalized within discourses to circulate meanings about ownership of the nation, as a part of common sense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions" (2015, p. xii). A narrative of belonging is instrumental in maintaining the violence and displacement necessary for state control.

In this research, the circulation of national discourses through multiple sites, including school curriculum, (Calderón, 2014; Miles, 2021; Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013) are taken as a reformulation of state constitution through a colonial discourse which eliminates, misrepresents, or selectively includes Indigenous peoples, and the violent histories and racist systems of erasure and control that mark Canadian colonial territory. This has the effect of obfuscating White settler complicity in ongoing colonial dispossession thus upholding White supremacy as a natural feature of the landscape. I draw from Settler Colonial theory to challenge the notion of Canadian schools as neutral spaces and situate them within the framework of "erasure and replacement" that maintains/secures the goals of White supremacy/settler colonialism. Following Tuck and Gaztambide-Fernández (2013), Calderón (2014), Schaefli, Godlewska and Lamb (2018), and Miles (2021), I situate Canadian public schools as institutions woven into the self-preserving fabric of settler colonialism which support the normalization of Indigenous dispossession and settler replacement that render White supremacy natural and stable. Tuck and Gaztambide Fernández (2014) demonstrate that curriculum has "long played a significant role in the maintenance of [White] settler colonialism…through logics of replacement in which the settler ultimately comes to replace the native" (p. 76). Calderón (2014) examines

how this settler colonial logic operates through the "grammars" of social studies resources, finding that settler replacement is naturalized through ongoing silence regarding settler occupation (p. 321). Further, Calderón finds that the narratives of "settler expansion [as] inevitable and indeed necessary…disconnect[s] the continued impact of settler expansion [from] Indigenous peoples today" (Calderón, 2013, p. 325). Given the Saskatchewan social studies curricular emphasis on provincial social history, Indigenous peoples, interdependent social relations, power and authority, and economic dispositions toward resource use and wealth accumulation, this provincially administered document provides a suitable site to excavate the ways in which settler colonialism, as a logic of White settler territorialism and racial dominance, continues to manifest within the nationalist discourses of curriculum.

The commitment to settler inevitability and permanence renders students unable to place themselves within ongoing structures and practices of settler colonial dispossession. The identification of curricular discourse as a mechanism of settler colonialism is a significant part of working against the institutionalization of colonialism and White supremacy. If curricular interventions are to have meaningful effect, we must identify the way discourse positions White settlers into innocence and interrupt the self-securing impulses of settler colonialism that remains despite good intentions. By paying attention to the way discourse works to produce norms that operate in the interest of the White supremist, colonial project, we are able to disrupt what has been long taken to be

> truth[,] as a kind of fiction, as something we busily construct around ourselves...as something less final; as something we can (re)make 'little by little… introducing modifications that are able if not to find solutions, at least to change the given terms of the problem. (Foucault, 1994, p. 288, as cited in Graham, 2012, p. 4)

Methodology

Conducting a Poststructural Discourse Analysis

The curricular discourse analysis I conduct within this thesis aligns with methods that support a poststructural approach to research. Graham (2012) points out that while there are no specific rules or methods governing a poststructural approach to research, particularly those that employ the use of Foucauldian concepts, there are some principles which distinguish this style of research. Of the poststructural approach Wetherell (2001, as cited in Graham, 2012) notes that "'the process of analysis is always interpretive, always contingent, always a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint'" therefore the way in which the discursive text is read and interpreted is left to the analyst; the intended meaning and authorship in which the text originates is less pertinent to a poststructural study than what the discourse accomplishes. From the reading of a discursive text, the analyst "looks to statements not so much for what they say but what they do; that is, one questions what the constitutive or political effects of saying this instead of that might be?" (Graham, 2012, p. 116). This means the analyst considers "why it is that certain statements emerged to the exclusion of all others and what function they serve" (Graham, 2012, p. 116). The overarching goal of a poststructural analysis is to determine "how the use of particular discursive techniques in the production of meaning present a particular view of the world" and in doing so organize and classify subjectivities and their relations within that same frame of meaning (Graham, 2012, p. 116).

Locating Discourse

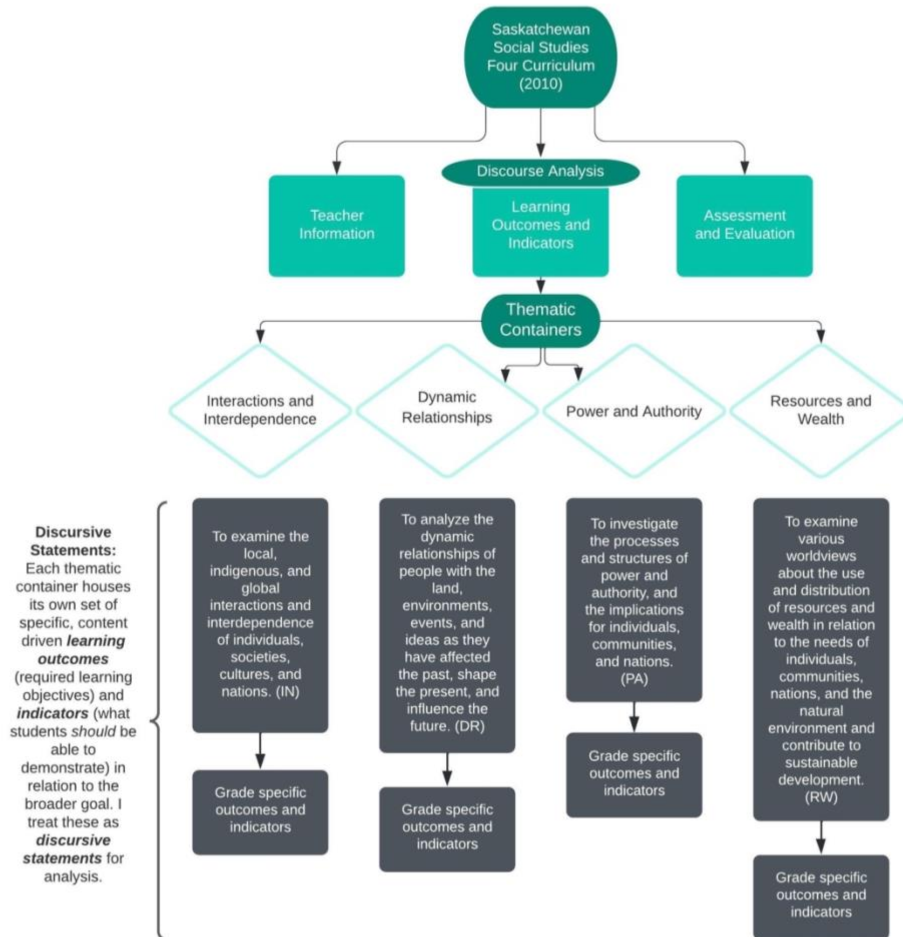
Graham (2012) writes: "words on a page, utterances, symbols and signs, statements, these are the start and end point for the poststructural discourse analyst (2012, p. 115). As a body of words and statements that produce social meaning and identity, the Saskatchewan grade four

social studies curriculum published by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Education (2010) makes a suitable corpus for this research. As an authoritative text legitimating systems of knowledge/power, the curriculum contains a wide range of discursive statements and representations of Canada and Saskatchewan that can be analyzed for their productive effects.

The curriculum document is broken into three major parts. The introductory preamble introduces teachers to the philosophical and pedagogical approaches to the subject, as determined by the province, along with explanations of cross-curricular competencies, broad learning goals and core concepts. This material prefaces the more intensive and student-centered section of curriculum, the curricular outcomes and learning indicators. The outcomes and indicators embody the learning goals and content which are foundational to teacher planned lessons and units, and ultimately ground the active instruction and learning that composes classroom discourse. Finally, to conclude, the curriculum provides teachers with broad assessment information. This analysis focuses primarily on the middle section of the curriculum to closely examine the way discourses of nationhood and provincehood are presented through the outcomes and indicators of curriculum in ways that produce and reinforce subjectivities and power relations within young children. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1

Locating Curricular Discourse



The curriculum defines outcomes as “what students are expected to know and be able to do” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). In the analysis, I refer to these as required or mandatory aspects of the curriculum. Several learning indicators accompany each outcome and are defined as what students “who have achieved [a particular] outcome should be able to do” (p. 19). Therefore, in the analysis I describe indicators as encouraged or suggested to capture the flexibility of the language (“*should*”) (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). Further, the Saskatchewan social studies curriculum organizes learning outcomes within four broad learning

goals or themes which I refer to as thematic containers. These include: interactions and interdependence; dynamic relationships; power and authority; and, resources and wealth. These goals act as particular containers for different goals and topics of study as communicated through specific learning outcomes and indicators. However, unlike the curriculum, I do not treat the specific outcomes, indicators, or broad goals/themes as independent compartments of knowledge. I consider each utterance found within this section of the curriculum its own *statement*, which Mills (2004) defines as "the most fundamental building blocks of discourse" (p. 11). Mills continues, suggesting that "statements are not the same as sentences but are those that can be seen to be grouped around one particular effect" (2004, p. 12). Rather than confine the analysis within the thematic containers, I allowed discursive statements to operate fluidly and relationally to trace the sum of their productive effect; however, I did notice how the segregation of particular themes and topics from one another produced particular effects.

Organizing Discourse as Data

To begin the process of organization I first familiarized myself with the data by engaging in several reads of the curriculum, noting general observations, initial reactions, and possible connections to theory. I then moved into cataloging the curriculum as a body of data by assigning descriptive codes (Saldaña, 2013, p. 88) to all outcomes and indicators. I used the software program Invivo to streamline the organization of data during the first round of coding. This allowed me to collate the data according to pertinent descriptors such as 'land,' 'culture,' 'treaty,' 'worldview,' 'settlement,' and so forth. While these codes were initially helpful in organizing the data according to related topics, the next phase of discourse analysis required me to begin drawing connections between the topics/descriptions identified. I then proceeded to work on the more rigorous third phase of the analysis, in which I questioned, observed and noted

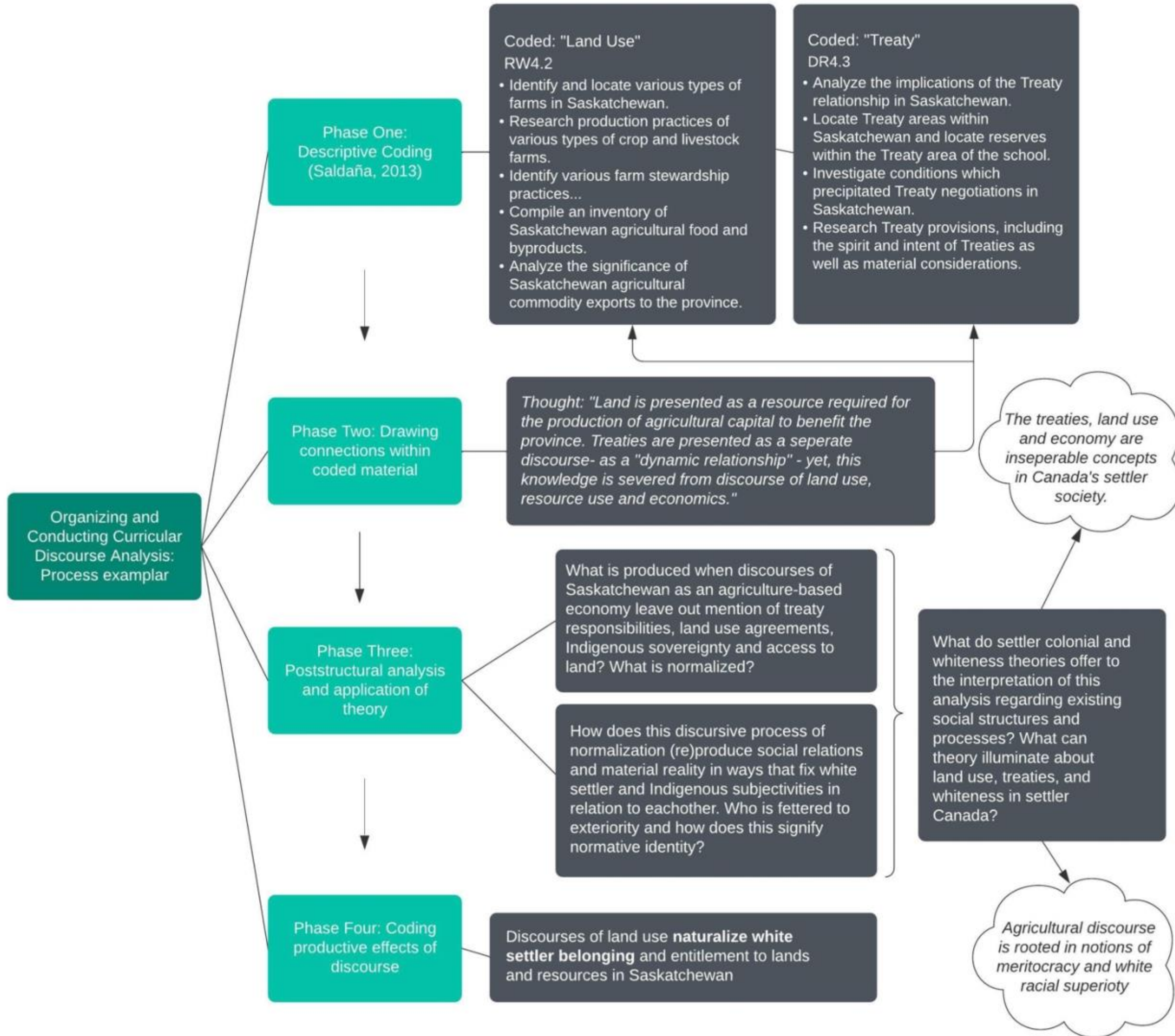
the productive effects of discourse within and between each of the topics and relevant statements which were emerging. I surveyed the discourse to determine which statements were most applicable to my research questions, then made detailed notes about the functioning of the discourse, framing my analysis with connections to theory. This led to a final round of coding where I tagged and arranged my analytical interpretations by their relation to theory and what they accomplished in terms of normalizing effects and subjectivity. (See Figure 2)

Structure of Analysis

Each section of the analysis in Chapter Three follows a loose structure. First, I introduce pertinent theoretical concepts related to the discourse being analyzed. Then I present the curricular outcome or indicator as a discursive statement, determining how it functions, through poststructural analysis, in relation to settler colonial or Whiteness theories. Then I examine how the discursive statement operates to produce, normalize, and naturalize aspects of the social order including how individuals come to be subjectivated— that is recognized and classified within the normative White settler colonial structure.

Figure 2

Organizing and Conducting Poststructural Discourse Analysis: Process exemplar



Chapter Three:

Analysis of Saskatchewan Social Studies Four Curriculum Document

Discourses of Land Use and the Naturalization of White Settler Belonging

Within the social studies curriculum, White supremacy is reinforced and normalized through the circulation of curricular discourse which draws on colonial notions of the inherent moral superiority of development-based, agricultural, and extractive, capital-driven dispositions toward land. The thematic topic reflecting this orientation, entitled "resources and wealth," requires students to examine the procurement and distribution of natural resources and their economic impact in and beyond Saskatchewan (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 23). To meet this goal, fourth grade students are expected to meet three learning outcomes. The first outcome requires students to "Analyze the strategies Saskatchewan people have developed to meet the challenges presented by the natural environment" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 23). Secondly, they are to "Investigate the importance of agriculture to the economy and culture of Saskatchewan" in which it is recommended they "Analyze the significance of Saskatchewan agricultural commodity exports to the province" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 24). Lastly, students are to "Assess the impact of Saskatchewan resources and technological innovations on the provincial, national, and global communities" which includes investigating the central role of several natural resources to Saskatchewan's economy, along with the impacts such resources have on their own community. They are also encouraged to investigate "the environmental impact of the development of natural resources on the local community, the province, and the world" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 24). While drawing connections between provincial land and resource use and economic growth is taken-for-granted as a straightforward and benign approach to educating young citizens, this analysis considers how the discourse of Saskatchewan

economic prosperity in relation to natural resources and assumptions of land ownership function to normalize Indigenous dispossession and reinforce racist power relations between White settlers and Indigenous peoples.

White Settlers as Fit for the Landscape

The concept of Saskatchewan "resources and wealth" is introduced by framing the province's landscape as severe and arduous, demanding fortitude and perseverance of its citizens. Students are to "analyze the strategies Saskatchewan people have developed to meet the challenges presented by the natural environment" which includes an emphasis on climate challenges and overcoming isolation both historically and in the present (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). In emphasizing the challenging nature of a harsh natural environment, the curriculum draws on nationalist discourses in which Canada is imagined as a beautiful but vast, empty wilderness which is at once brutal, isolating and threatening (McLean, 2013, p. 360). This notion not only imagines the landscape as one devoid of a thriving populace, effectively normalizing the erasure of hundreds of Indigenous nations (McLean, 2013, p. 360), but also reinforces the notion that land is an obstacle to which a particular brand of strength and determination are necessary to overcome. The notion of "Canadian" hardiness — that national citizens are of a strong, rugged stock can be traced to the Canada First Movement in which "decisions surrounding racialized inclusion/exclusion were justified through the notion that some populations [particularly northern Europeans] would fare better in the cold, harsh climate, or be better equipped to take on the hard labour of rural life than other populations" (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 43). Pseudoscientific racial theories reinforced long held beliefs about European supremacy, meaning White Europeans or European-Americans were defined as Canada's preferred race of settler as they possessed the hardy qualities to work and thrive in the harsh

northern geography (Mackey, 1999, p. 30). Through the process of racial exclusion, northern European settlers, racialized as White, were naturalized as the preferable national citizen, marking the national landscape as a White space (McLean, 2013). While the curriculum does suggest the inclusion of Indigenous climate survival knowledge, the repetition of this historically produced discourse of overcoming the challenging Canadian environment continues to reposition White settler subjects in the same national imaginary as the White "pioneers...who survived the hardships of Canada's wilderness, domesticating the land in order to found the nation" (McLean, 2013, p. 359). In reciting an already racialized trope this outcome does not even have to mention race or Whiteness to reproduce a historic discourse that normalizes White settlers as inevitable to the Canadian landscape. The recognition that Indigenous people shared climate knowledge with settlers does little to challenge the discursive production of White settler inevitability and belonging (Schick, 2014, p. 93). The discourse of environmental hardship and determination, while appearing relatively benign, emerges from and reproduces White settler belonging as earned through a superior resolve over the harsh landscape.

Agriculture and White Supremacy

The maintenance of White supremacy and White possessiveness (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) are supported by the central positioning of agricultural and resource extractive learning outcomes in the curriculum. The curriculum devotes an entire thematic container to "resources and wealth" in which fourth graders learn about the role of agriculture and extractive industries in securing Saskatchewan's economic wealth. Here, the importance of agricultural and resource development is taken as a commonsense economic practice. Agriculture is held in high regard as a foundational and binding element within the province's history and culture. Imagined as Canada's "breadbasket," provincial agriculture holds a nearly sanctified position in public

consciousness; problematizing agriculture's salience can be a dangerous offence. This is evidenced by the experience of a local rural school which was met with the outrage of prairie settlers after a group of students posted a fact regarding the damage of agricultural pollution on the school's outdoor bulletin board (Young, 2021). The students' message sparked an intense public outcry that led to the school division offering additional teacher training and 'balanced' curriculum materials to protect Saskatchewan students from 'anti-agriculture' knowledge (Atter, 2021). The students' message was immediately taken down and replaced with a remark attributed to George Washington which read: "Agriculture is the most healthful, most useful & noble employment of Man" (Young, 2021).

The curriculum of social studies four engages in a similar preservation of Saskatchewan's agricultural economy. Students are encouraged to research the different types of farms on the prairies, investigate the "stewardship" practices of farmers in caring for their crops and livestock, study the products farmers produce used in daily life and analyze the economic significance of farming to Saskatchewan's economy (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 24). While there is no doubt that agriculture plays a significant role in Saskatchewan's economy, in this analysis I consider what the discourse revering agriculture keeps in place for a settler colonial state.

The notion of agriculture as "most healthful, most useful & noble employment" can be traced to the rationale used by British colonizers in claiming possession of North American territory. Legally bound by *terra nullius* in which the right of first possession belonged to the "first taker," colonists drew on racism to negate Indigenous peoples' obvious status as first possessors (Mackey, 2016, p. 46). A clear distinction was made between the agrarian and non-agrarian societies, with the former being equated with evidence of White, European racial supremacy. As so-called non-agrarian societies, Indigenous nations were constructed as racially

inferior— that is, existing in a “state of nature” too primitive, undeveloped, disorganized and unpropertied to hold ‘legal’ possession over their own territories (Mackey, 2016). For colonizers, the European model agrarian lifestyle was the marking of racial superiority, legitimizing territorial possession and the rationale to engage in colonial violence and dispossession (Mackey, 2016; Moreton-Robinson, 2015).

As Indigenous people were racialized inferior, colonists simultaneously positioned themselves as the pinnacle of the racial hierarchy, drawing on Lockean philosophy to define the markers of their supremacy (Mackey, 2016, p. 49). According to Locke, the practices of agrarian societies including the tilling, cultivation and planting of land were considered to be a morally superior and advanced way of life characterized by a virtuous Christian drive to improve natural lands into a state of civilized productivity. In developing land, the rights to possession and title of land as property were naturalized (Mackey, 2016, p. 50). Constructing themselves as “mandated, colonizers felt the entitlement, even the duty, to appropriate, enclose, develop and ‘subdue’ the ‘vacant lands’ of America that were regarded as lying to waste by the inhabitants, who were seen as ‘actively neglecting’ the land” (Brace, 2004, p. 34, as cited in Mackey, 2016, p. 50). Engaging in agrarian land development marked settlers with the White racial superiority necessary to justify the possession and occupation of Indigenous lands. Neither this occupation, nor these racial markings have ceased.

Starblanket and Hunt (2020) assert that the sovereignty of settler peoples is under constant threat from “Indigenous people’s counter claim to these same lands” and as Indigenous people more strongly assert their authority, settler societies respond with more aggressive attempts to negate and deny these claims and maintain Indigenous exteriority (p. 78). In the poststructural sense, what becomes sayable, or more precisely, unsayable, are those things that

would further bolster the legitimacy of Indigenous ownership; the economic implications of treaty, the illegitimacy of a land, property and economic regime forged in genocide.

Curricular ignorance to the ways Saskatchewan's agricultural economy is premised on notions of White racial supremacy, Indigenous inferiority and colonial genocidal practices which physically cleared the way for White agricultural settlement continue to normalize the sanctification of agrarian life on the prairies (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020). Subject to discourses of prairie agriculture as productive and morally and economically superior, those defined within these parameters, which by historical affinity includes White settlers, are marked as righteous, independent, noble, defendable; while Indigenous life remains the antithesis— unproductive, dependent, immoral, in the way of progress, dangerous and unworthy of life:

> In the Canadian prairies, settlers mobilize demarcations of territory, property, citizenship, and national identity in order to affirm their own superiority and authority by way of contrast with Indigenous people. This involves processes of racializing, gendering, and othering Indigenous peoples that ultimately create protections around the normative, White, settler order while simultaneously subordinating Indigenous peoples. (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 81)

Immersed in knowledge that normalizes agrarian settlement and development, students are left without the necessary insight to recognize how the operation of crown lands, private property and corporate agriculture depend on the ideas of White, racial supremacy that linger in the minds of White settlers while the massive colonial project of land appropriation and Indigenous displacement is made unknowable.

Affirming White Settler Belonging through Meritocracy

The curriculum further reinforces White settler belonging as being earned through merit and land improvement in its framing of early 20th century prairie settlers as hardworking, diverse, collaborative peoples who “learned to work together for the common good” as exemplified by “agricultural fairs, service organizations, community celebrations, arts groups, barn raising, construction of community facilities” (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 20). This is a common historical memory on the prairies in which early generations of European settlers are imagined as forging communities, and the nation, from a barren prairie landscape out of sheer determination, hard labour, and a commitment to cultivating “a life from nothing” (McLean, 2018). While there is no doubt that settlers worked hard to build lives and communities, this meritocratic narrative silences how the construction of “the common good” or “the prairie good life” (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 32) was made possible through racist national policies that ensured the success of White settlers while at the same time excluding Indigenous peoples through genocidal national policies (McLean, 2018).

While Indigenous peoples were diseased, starved, displaced, and erased through policies of the Crown, British settlers were granted access to large tracts of Indigenous lands for nominal costs (Bergen, 2021; Daschuk, 2019). Treaties were negotiated in “attempt to settle the terms of occupancy on a just basis, legally and morally to extinguish the legitimate claims of [Indigenous] peoples title to the land,” (Cardinal, 1969, p. 29) and shortly thereafter, Canada’s implementation of the Indian Act committed to extinguishing Indigenous ‘Indian’ peoples through brutally destructive ‘assimilation’ policies. Métis title was extinguished on an individual basis through the scrip “swindle” in which Métis families were offered either a section of land, often in distant geographic regions, or a small payment in exchange for access to their land (Muzyka, 2019).

Unwilling to leave their families and communities, many Métis people sold their scrip and were forced northward, or onto Crown lands out of the way of White settlers (Muzyka, 2019). As the land was cleared of Indigenous peoples, White settlers continued to receive structural support through government policy.

White settlers were granted economic and political freedoms not afforded to Indigenous communities (Bergen, 2021; Carter, 1990/201; McLean, 2018). White settlers, or those who were assumed White, like the Eastern European and non-English settlers who forwent their languages to assimilate into British norms, were able to freely buy and sell grain and other commodities, accumulating proprietary wealth. Indigenous farmers who willingly adopted and experienced competitive success in their agricultural practices, had their productivity sidelined by government policies which, Carter (1990/2019, p. 216-217) contends, were devised to intentionally protect the economic interests of White settlers. Further, White settlers were free to engage in social and political organizing to improve their social and economic viability. Bergen (2021) writes:

> The National Farmers' Union, The Canadian Wheat Board, and the Saskatchewan Grain Growers, although cooperative, made the ongoing settler colonial project in the province possible through ensuring relative economic success for settler farmers. Consequently, these government supports and economic organizations were not historically available to similarly struggling Indigenous farmers. (as cited in Stonechild, 2005)

Bergen (2021) demonstrates that structural advantages continue to be conferred to White settlers through government policy by pointing out how "continuous government granting programs, and the consolidation of smaller family farms into larger, corporate farms or 'agribusinesses' has meant further economic advantage for the descendants of settler families, including those who

could sell their farmland, lease land to developers and resource extraction companies." At the same time, the provincial sale of Crown lands to private corporations continues to further appropriate Indigenous lands (Bergen, 2021).

While the Lockean philosophies that produced the fallacy of European agrarianism as evidence of race supremacy originated hundreds of years ago, the racialized discourses they initiated continue to materialize a society in which Indigenous people are marked as primitive and underdeveloped while the White settler accumulation of land and capital is regarded as the inevitable result of a natural disposition toward 'hard work' and a commitment to development and progress— turning the land into something from "nothing." The discourse of curriculum continues to position the industriousness of prairie settlers who forged "the common good" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 20) while forgoing an acknowledgement of the racist policies that have systematically structured the ongoing success of White agrarian settlers. The "nostalgia about the land and the emotional stories of homesteading are familiar tropes for narrating the histories of settler Canadians on the prairies" and they induce certain effects: "tales of heroism link settlers to a particular topographic site….romantic and heroic tales of the many challenges met and faced by homesteaders render White settlers innocent and removed from the effects of colonialism experienced by aboriginal others" (Schick, 2014, p. 93). Prairie settlers thus come to be naturalized as rightful inheritors of Indigenous territory through the imagined tethering to place reinforced by the agriculturally situated discourses of settlement. The marginal position of Indigenous peoples is explained as racial inferiority.

The racial supremacy and rightful belonging of White settlers forms what Starblanket and Hunt (2020) describe as "prairie settler common sense" (p. 43). This term encapsulates the sense of racial and territorial entitlement underlying "the 'values' held by settlers on the prairies [that]

can work to legitimize violence against Indigenous peoples at societal and institutional levels" (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 23). The allegiance to meritocracy and the inability to recognize how settler prosperity is rooted in Indigenous displacement and colonial violence promotes common-sense racism in which "Indigenous lives are seen to be of lesser value for our perceive failure to integrate with or properly contribute to neighboring non-Indigenous communities" (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 27). Schick argues these racist stereotypes are useful to White settlers as they "provide relief to descendants of White settlers who continue to benefit from unearned White privilege" (2014, p. 93).

The continued normalization of an agriculture-based economy that ignores Indigenous dispossession and racialization is a reminder of how little value Indigenous peoples have in a settler province, and how little White settlers understand about their identities and histories. A curriculum which naturalizes Indigenous land a source of settler capital but forgoes discussion of the colonial policies and practices of genocide and dispossession in securing the ongoing occupation and accumulation of resource wealth on those lands recommits to maintaining White settler dominance. Dispossession, displacement, and violence justified through racist rationales have not ended. Indigenous people live with the disparities resulting from an extremely marginal resource base while White settlers, education by popular discourses of nation building, fail to recognize that they occupy and derive "the prairie good life" from the resources from Indigenous territories (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 32). Curricular silence rescues White settlers from having to reckon with their complicity and it protects them from contending with the inequitable advantages they have access to.

Discourses of Resource Use and the Distortion of Indigenous Sovereignty

There is a unanimous erasure of Indigenous title, land rights and treaty agreements from curricular knowledge regarding the economic benefits procured through agricultural or extractive means. The curricular study of "resources and wealth" requires students to "assess the impact of Saskatchewan resources and technological innovations on the provincial, national, and global communities" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 24). This outcome recommends learning tasks such as: "represent[ing] on a map the major resources in Saskatchewan (e.g., minerals, potash, oil, uranium, natural gas, lumber, water, crop and livestock production)" and "locat[ing] on a map the major industries in Saskatchewan (e.g., agriculture processing, mining, manufacturing, forestry products, energy refinement, tourism, livestock production)" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 24). This knowledge frames Saskatchewan's extractive economic structure as ordinary and benign to the landscape, as simply "the way things are," however this knowledge leaves out the asymmetrical power relations that regulate the land use of Indigenous nations through a reliance on racism and Indigenous dispossession that results in profound economic inequality (Manuel & Derrickson, 2015). While the study of economy recommends students "examine the environmental impact of natural resources on the local community, the province and the world," there is a notable silence regarding how Saskatchewan's dependence on a resource driven economy impacts the title, rights and health of Indigenous communities and nations, while anchoring White settler possession and supremacy. Moreton-Robinson explains: "White possessive logics are operationalized within discourses to circulate sets of meaning about ownership of the nation, as part of commonsense knowledge, decision making, and socially produced conventions" (2015, p. xii). Here I explore how the absence of knowledge indicating the inherent rights of Indigenous people, produces a discourse through which Canada

operationalizes its "White possessive logics" — a Canada in which White settler citizens are entitled to excavate and extract from the lands and resources of Indigenous peoples.

Geographical and Spatial Distortions

When the province is portrayed through geographical mapping as under the inherent jurisdictional power of the province or federal government, as the curriculum implies, the racist, colonial erosion of Indigenous sovereignty is erased, and thus can be maintained. Moreton-Robinson suggests this type of "material signification" (i.e.: colonially mapped boundaries) disavows "the omnipresence of Indigenous sovereignties" by producing a perception "of ownership by those who have taken possession" (2015, p. xiii). Under colonial mapping, the impacts (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 10) resulting from extractivism and encroachment on Indigenous communities can be spatially, and literally, erased from comprehension. The Yellowhead Institute explains how maps have the potential to control the narrative of colonial extraction:

> While the vast areas of Crown Land depicted on most maps convey empty and unoccupied space…mapping extractive industries offers a much more revealing depiction of the scale of contemporary resource development, land alienation, denial of Aboriginal rights, and the erasure of indigenous law. Mining claims alone darken "Crown Lands" with encumbrances, fencing off and fragmenting Indigenous territory into islands of extraction and development" (2019, p. 26).

When the Saskatchewan curriculum suggests that students map out major provincial industries, it fails to indicate the significant spatial connections between the use of Crown/Indigenous lands for extractive projects and the subsequent impacts resource use has on Indigenous territories and sovereignty. For students, the curriculum offers a spatial imagination of the land as belonging to

the province, for the province's use, and omits the racist processes through which the province and nation have come to define and rationalize the acquisition of and control over crown lands. The knowledge produced leaves no space to for students to contend with the implications of possessive extractivism as it dispossesses Indigenous peoples of their inherent right to sovereignty and produces vast inequalities in access to wealth. There is little room left to understand how Indigenous inequity comes to be produced, leaving students vulnerable to embracing ready-made narratives that explain poverty and its related effects as a consequence of Indigenous peoples racial inferiority.

E(race)ing Indigenous Sovereignty

Moreton-Robinson contends that the drive for possession necessitates racism, stating: "The dehumanizing impulses of colonization are successfully acted upon because racisms…are predicated on the logic of possession" (2015, p. xiii). Canada's appropriation and possession of Indigenous territories are no exception. The Yellowhead Institute Land Back report explains that crown lands are an "artefact of the 'doctrine of discovery' and enable the machinery of government authorization to alienate lands [from Indigenous nations] to third parties" (2019, p. 9). The principle of crown lands is rooted in the racist belief that as a 'primitive' form of humanity, Indigenous peoples had no discernible laws to distinguish themselves as sovereign to the land, therefore the British crown, representing civility and law, was justified in assuming jurisdiction over all lands and territories in what is Canada (Yellowhead Institute, p. 19). The concept of crown lands, or lands held by the Crown/government of Canada forged in this racist, colonial logic, continue to give the provinces the ability to undermine Indigenous title. "Even those [Indigenous] nations that have proven title may also still be subject to provincial regulation of land and resources in their land territories due to underlying Crown title claim" (Yellowhead,

2019, p. 25). This means racist, colonial regulatory structures remain integral to systematically eroding Indigenous title in order to maintain state economies. Presenting lands as simply belonging to Saskatchewan forgets the deeply racialized power relations at play in determining access to and control of land.

It is worth mentioning here that Indigenous title continues to persist despite common discourses that misconstrue treaty agreements between the crown and Indigenous nations (Krasowski, 2019). Although public and curricular discourse often portray Treaty agreements as a land exchange through which Indigenous people were compensated with innumerable benefits for ceding title to the crown, this is a misunderstanding that has been reaffirmed through Canadian settler law (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 17). The treaties are *not* surrender of title agreements (Cardinal, 1969; Krasowski, 2019; Manuel & Derrickson, 2015; Yellowhead, 2019). It must be considered how Canada has misinterpreted treaty territory to mean "*alienated* lands under the jurisdiction of the provinces" (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 17) rather than relational, legally binding agreements. Although the numbered treaties have been used to rationalize provincial possession of lands and resources, they do not extinguish Indigenous title.

In the fourth-grade social studies curriculum, students are required to "Analyze the implications of the Treaty relationship in Saskatchewan" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 21), however this learning is contained as its own entity, and explorations of the implications of treaties remain enclosed within this topic of study. Talk of the treaty implications go silent within the content explored through the "resources and wealth" section of curriculum. If the teacher teaches treaties and the economy as separate units of study, as they appear in curriculum, treaties remain a fragmented learning that lack the power to impact the way students conceive of land use, wealth procurement, economy, and their treaty responsibilities.

Additionally, in the treaty discourse, treaties are framed as though they fall under provincial jurisdiction, with learning intentions that suggest "locating treaty areas in Saskatchewan" and studying the "benefits of Treaties to all Saskatchewan people" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 21). By constructing treaties as within provincial bounds, the curriculum forgets that the agreements largely predate provincial jurisdiction (except Treaty 10) and extend well beyond provincial boundaries. Thus, treaty citizenship is regulated within the bounds of the province, limiting the ways in which students might imagine themselves and their responsibilities as treaty citizens. This reinforces the White settler province as having status quo jurisdiction and control, normalizing treaty responsibilities devalued, and agreements neglected.

Another problematic aspect with treaty discourse is the implication of Indigenous communities as treaty spaces. The curriculum suggests that students learn to locate reserves within treaty territories, however it leaves out necessitating the identification of the settler communities and lands implicated by treaties in this same space. This geographic distinction may have the effect of attributing treaty implications as natural to Indigenous communities, whereas White spaces are left unmarked. This difference can distort the way treaty relations and implications are understood which can result in the reinforcing of anti-Indigenous discourses regarding the "unfair" distribution of benefits (ie: housing, education) Indigenous (First Nations) people receive from treaties.

Silencing the Impacts of Colonial Extractivism

In a similar vein, while students are encouraged to learn about the impact of natural resource development on their own community, the province and the country, no mention of Indigenous communities or nations are explicitly made, despite the significant impacts settler expansionism has had on Indigenous homelands. Manuel explains how the loss of land "has been

the precise cause of our [Indigenous] impoverishment" with Indigenous people possessing only two percent of the land, while the White settler state possesses the remaining 98 percent: "with this distribution of land you don't have to have a doctorate in economics to understand who will be poor and who will be rich. And our poverty is crushing…We are living the effects of this dispossession everyday of our lives, and we have been living this misery in Canada for almost 150 years" (Manuel & Derrickson, 2015, p. 18-19). A member of Fox Lake Cree Nation spoke out against the significant impact of resource extraction on the community during a Manitoba Clean Energy Commission meeting, stating:

> The revival of our culture, our language and tradition is so important to our healing, and these were things that the Hydro developments took away from us.
>
> I know it may seem hard to understand and make the connection of how Hydro took this away, but if you sit with us and *listen with your hearts*, the stories of our people's homes being bulldozed to make way for Hydro, the sexual assault on our women carried out by the workers, the violence and the crime left 18 years undocumented, you will understand. (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 28)

These truths demonstrate the troubling detrimental and disproportionate economic, social, spiritual, and political impacts of capitalist, White supremacist, resource driven encroachment on Indigenous communities. When these realities are ignored and remain disconnected from the stories of settler wealth accumulation, White settler economies appear, for those who benefit, as the commonsense result of hard-work, productivity, and development while Indigenous peoples are marked by racial difference. This discursive process which maintains the Indigenous as "Other," conceals and obscures how a settler economy is constructed and maintained through enormous historic and ongoing efforts to maintain colonial dispossession and the trampling of

Indigenous rights and title. Settler explanations for this disparity draw on and reinforce racist discourses in which Indigenous impoverishment is painted as a self-made affliction reflective of supposed racial inferiority.

Muting Indigenous Rights

Perhaps, given the efforts to construct and maintain the lands appearance as a settler entity, it is unsurprising that the inherency of Indigenous title and land rights are forgone in the curricular documents. To include the sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples in curriculum would draw attention to the ways in which the government, while recognizing United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, is "not prepared to recognize even the UN's notion of state-sanctioned FPIC [Free Prior and Informed Consent]" (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 19). To include "the legally required [duty of] federal and provincial governments…to engage with First Nations when their established or asserted constitutional treaty rights may be impacted by government actions" (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 19) within discourse could produce citizens who hold their governments accountable for taking such action. In settler colonial theory, this is dangerous. To recognize the inherent sovereignty of Indigenous rights goes against the entire premise of the project which is to procure resources and capital for the state. Having to ask for consent from the Indigenous people who have been racially inferiorized, dehumanized and marked for erasure and exteriority since the outset of the project contradicts the entire structuring of a settler state. Accountability to the rights of sovereign Indigenous nations threatens the foundations of the nation. Muting the powerful concepts of Indigenous sovereignty, title, rights, and treaty agreements from curricular discourse serves to obscure how "land alienation is a major economic driver of the Canadian economy" (Yellowhead Institute, 2019, p. 10) and thus reinforces the security of the settler state.

The silence regarding land, title and jurisdiction supports the production of settler citizens as the natural, inevitable replacements of Indigenous peoples (Tuck & Gaztambide-Fernández, 2013). Settler entitlement, territorialism and possession of land are justified through the racist, meritocratic beliefs that Indigenous people simply have not worked as hard as settlers (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 296). These racist explanations have rationalized the expulsion of Indigenous peoples through the settler colonial process, and justifies the vast disparity achieved between Settlers and Indigenous peoples. This relieves settler beneficiaries of the responsibility to address their disproportionate benefits as citizens who derive economic stability from Indigenous lands and resources. Curricular discourse erasing Indigenous, rights, title and the legal responsibilities of government further produces settlers "[who] don't understand that Indigenous title and sovereignty is law (and) Canada is violating its own laws" (Johnson & Wyton, 2020). It is difficult to hold the state accountable to the racist injustice it commits when its beneficiaries refuse to identify a problem nor their own complicity.

Discourses Maintaining Indigenous Otherness and White Normalization

Of settler colonialism, Mohawk scholar and activist Audra Simpson observes that "the desire for land produces "the problem" of Indigenous life that is already living on that land (2014, p. 19). As a means to negate Indigenous claims to land, Indigenous people are continually remade as the problematic Other, marked by characteristics of racial difference and inferiority rendering them outside the norms of settler society (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). Schick and St. Denis explain that "on the Canadian prairies… the largest population produced as 'Other' are First Nations people. In this Canadian prairie context Aboriginal people form the greatest critical mass challenge to normative practices of a dominant White culture" (2005, p. 297). This challenge means systems must continually reproduce configurations of race inequality in ways

that make inequality the inevitable consequence of being inferior (V. St. Denis, personal communication, 2022).

'Othering' is a discursive process in which the systematic inscription of whole group identities with signifiers of difference and inferiority produces normative categories of exteriority and interiority (Graham & Slee, 2008). As difference is constructed and ascribed in the production of Otherness, a relational norm or center space is simultaneously co-constituted through the deference of signifiers onto those made Other (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 286). Given the absence of signification this space of normativity can be described as a "*ghostly* centre. This is an apparition that eludes critical examination for it has no essence, presence or definitive claim to Being" (Graham & Slee, 2008, p. 284). In the Canadian context, Indigenous people have been produced through the signifiers of racist, colonial discourse as the pathological Other, while White settlers have been simultaneously cast through this process of marginalization, as the invisible, unnamed, privileged norm (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, p. 299). Schick and St. Denis (2005) observe that "the abject other is a necessary part of every discourse by which a nation forms its narrative" (p. 301).

Graham and Slee (2008) demonstrate how to exhume processes of inclusion/exclusion, particularly as they are concealed within the liberatory discourses of educational inclusion. Graham and Slee's work (2008) interrogates how "naming of the Other in order to facilitate or demonstrate their 'inclusion' functions to naturalise normalised ways of being" (p. 286). Mirrored in this research context, I follow this form of analysis to determine how representations of Indigenous identity in curricular discourse continue to signify or maintain Indigenous difference, and in doing so facilitate the reproduction of White Settler norms that regulate power relations within our social structure.

Indigenous Peoples as Foreign; White Settlers as Local

One of the broad curricular goals spanning the Saskatchewan Social Studies curriculum relates to the interactions and interdependence between *differing* societies. Through the learning outcomes suggested in the curriculum, students are to: "examine the local, indigenous, and global interactions and interdependence of individuals, societies, cultures, and nations" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). In social studies four, this means investigating the *interdependence* existing between Indigenous and "local" societies. My analysis of the goal demonstrates how Indigenous people continue to be constructed as exterior, or foreign through the discourses of interdependence.

What is initially notable about this goal is the way in which Indigenous place/spatial representation is geographically differentiated from *local* "individuals, societies, cultures, and nations" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). If Indigenous peoples, after inhabiting these territories for thousands of years, are not considered *local* "peoples, societies, cultures, and nations," who are? The presentation of Indigenous society as *different* from local society distorts that Indigenous people are the original, sovereign nations which constitute true locality in North America. This type of representation sanctions the forgetting of historic and ongoing colonial processes of forced dispossession and genocide through which White settler towns, cities and a national society have come to be taken for granted as the *local* landscape. Through this discursive representation, space is marked with "social meaning as a site of collective history and place where identities are embedded and made understandable" (Schick, 2014, p. 91). By imagining themselves as local through the erasures of colonial history, "White settler populations produce subjective selves through managing and being managed in the colonial project that produces urban and rural communities as white racialized space" (Schick, 2014, p. 91). This

marking of space reflects the settler colonial drive to transcend an appearance of ongoing colonialism, "that is, Indigenous peoples are eliminated and the presence of this new people — the settler society becomes so deeply established that it is naturalized, normalized, unquestioned and unchallenged" (Battell Lowman & Barker, 2015, p. 26). Relations of power, and their inequalities, are deeply attached to the representations of space and locality. Through this particular curricular goal, White settler society is naturalized as the normative space to which Indigenous society is rendered foreign (V. St. Denis, personal communication, 2022).

Indigenous Peoples as Exterior Contributors; White Settlers as Welcoming

The goal of learning about the interactions of differing societies requires students to understand Indigenous and *local* forms of interdependence by "analyz[ing] how First Nations and Métis people have shaped and continue to shape Saskatchewan" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). While perhaps this outcome intends to counter racist stereotypes by offering overdue recognition of Indigenous peoples' value to the province, the way in which Indigenous peoples continue to be framed as non-local contributors to the normative settler society continues to reinforce the norms of a White settler society in which Indigenous outsiders are invited to contribute. Starblanket and Hunt observe this colonial pattern:

> Even as Indigenous populations have grown in numbers and in social and political presence, settlers seeking to achieve 'the good life' in the prairies have continued to trample over our rights as Indigenous peoples and as human beings… At other times, Indigenous people have been encouraged to join the 'prairie good life' by way of invitation or forcible incorporation into settler society, and to become the type of citizens to whom Canada promised prosperity, security, and an adequate standard of living… Despite growing calls for the inclusion of Indigenous people and our perspective within

> dominant institutions, these forms of recognition only serve to graft Indigenous peoples onto the story of a prosperous Canadian existence, to buy into a conception of the 'good life' with overarching terms and power-relations that are not of our own choosing, and that require us to relinquish the relations with Creation that inform who we are as Indigenous peoples. (2020, p. 32-33)

Therefore, in suggesting students "create an inventory of the contributions of First Nations and Métis people to government, business, and professional life in Saskatchewan," Indigenous peoples are "graft[ed] onto the story of a prosperous Canadian existence" silencing the operation of colonial, racialized "power-relations" (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 32-33). These exclusions not only reify Indigenous people's exterior positionality but forget the nature of "interactions of interdependence" operating between Indigenous peoples and the settler colonial state. There is no mention of the appropriation of Indigenous lands, nor the infringement of Indigenous rights through which Saskatchewan's economic viability is derived. Nor is there mention of the role systemic racism has played in the operation of policies and practices that have long denied Indigenous peoples access to "prosperity, security, and an adequate standard of living" on the prairies (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 33).

While it is important to recognize the participation and contributions of Indigenous peoples within the province and Canada, framing Indigenous peoples as willing contributors to the settler economy in isolation from the broader racial stratification of the colonial context works to stabilize the inequitable, racist colonial structures which produce White settler economic norms. This positions settler society as open and graciously providing opportunities for Indigenous 'Others' to participate in "the prairie good life" (Starblanket & Hunt, p. 32).

However, a closer look at the ongoing structures of settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2006), suggests much is missing from this perception of reality.

First, framing Indigenous peoples as active economic contributors, while true, forgoes the ways in which settler society actively operates to exclude Indigenous peoples from full participation in its economic systems. Indigenous success is framed as taken-for-granted, rather than a path lined with barriers imposed by over 150 years of systemic racism (Bergen, 2021; Daschuk, 2013; p. 186; McLean, 2018). This is problematic because it reinforces myths of meritocracy— that the economy is open to all, and those who 'want' to contribute can. Students do not learn the way in which racialized systems are designed to keep Indigenous people out, therefore if Indigenous people are not 'successful contributors' these problems are attributed to as an individual rather than systemic problem.

Secondly, by centering the active contributions of the Indigenous other, this goal fails to recognize the inverse "interdependent" relationship between settler society and Indigenous peoples in which the economic viability of Saskatchewan and its settler population depends on the continued occupation of Indigenous lands, resources, and systems of dispossession. In other words, Indigenous peoples contributions work to affirm the structures of settler society, while ignoring the way settler society takes from Indigenous peoples.

A study of interdependence implies reciprocity and mutuality, a relationship which offers a two-way exchange. However, the study of interdependence in the grade four social studies curriculum has a one-way focus which fixes its gaze on what Indigenous people offer to the province. By applying the principle of interiority and exteriority in the production of difference, we can understand how this outward focus on those Othered, defined in this curriculum as the 'non-local' Indigenous, evades an examination of how the normative center, the White settler

province, is constituted by processes of Othering. Even though the curriculum is well intentioned in its attempt to include, by focusing externally on what Indigenous Others contribute to the norm, rather than what settler society takes from, or imposes on the Other, the racializing processes rendering Indigenous exteriority remain unchallenged. For students, the province is normalized as a place offering equality of opportunity while evading mention of the systemic barriers it continues to impose through the making of the Other. The role of the white settler is signified by its embrace and elevation of Indigenous contributors to settler society in the same moment they are relieved of the need to contend with their own complicity in systemic dispossession and racism. This form of recognition further reinforces state and settler innocence, potentially making it more difficult for students to comprehend the colonially imposed racist barriers and that prevent Indigenous peoples from making the same contributions as their peers. Notions of meritocracy, moral failing and essentialized deficiency are left as rationales for students to take up.

Discourses of Recognition that Regulate Indigenous Exteriority and White Interiority

The construction of Indigenous difference has worked to position Indigenous peoples as chattel of the settler state, subject to redefinition and reorganization as the stability of the nation requires (Mackey, 2016; Simpson, 2014). Indigenous racial difference, as entrenched through the imposed definitions of the Indian Act, originally recognized personhood for anyone deemed *not* "Indian." On the basis of this dehumanizing organizing principle, "Indigenous peoples and governments were constructed as kind of a naturalized property of the nation-state– 'owned and moveable objects and controllable absolutely'" (Lindberg, 2000, p. 113, as cited in Mackey, 2016, p. 60). This meant Indigenous nationhood and personhood became, and remains, regulated

by the decisions and policies of the Canadian state (Mackey, 2016, p. 60). Mackey explains that through its White supremacist foundations

> The settler project has meant that settlers feel empowered to define the terms of inclusion in the nation-state, as if the settler state always already has legitimate and singular sovereignty, and can therefore define the terms of inclusion and exclusion of all populations, especially Indigenous peoples. It has historically been the White settler majority's unquestioned right— and expectation— to define and manage the nation. (2016, p. 113)

In the curriculum there are several examples in which Indigenous peoples continue to be appropriated and thus managed under the benevolent jurisdiction of the province of Saskatchewan, silencing the racist processes that have marginalized the distinct nationhoods, citizenships and histories of Indigenous peoples. Within the curriculum, the well-intentioned practice of Indigenous inclusion appears to embody the White settler expectation to regulate Indigenous positionality within the state.

Managing Indigenous Exteriority through White Recognition

An example demonstrating the regulation and enclosure of Indigenous identity occurs with the recommendation for students to "create biographic profiles of a selection of Saskatchewan First Nations and Métis leaders in the time period prior to Saskatchewan joining Confederation" which includes well-known leaders like "Poundmaker, Big Bear, Riel, Dumont, [and] Almighty Voice" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 19). These individuals represent powerful examples of Indigenous leaders who fought to protect the sovereignty of their people and nations despite the brutal colonial violence imposed by the Canadian federal government. It is a rewriting of history and these leaders' political positions to construct them as "Saskatchewan

First Nations and Métis leaders" because they actively stood against having their sovereign rights and nationhood eroded during the encroachment of colonial settlement. These leaders, as members of distinct nations, are not colonial possessions to be claimed and re-storied by the province. As Mackey (2016) contends, the racial inferiorization of Indigeneity has produced Indigenous peoples, such as the leaders above, as objects of the state— maneuverable for regulation and incorporation under colonial/national jurisdiction, rather than independent leaders with their own nations that continue to exist as separate sovereign entities outside of state boundaries.

In this discursive statement, using pre-Confederation Saskatchewan as a jurisdictional reference point continues to produce the province as a fixed and inevitable space existing across time and space. Positioning these leaders and their defiance of Canada's colonial encroachment in the time "before" Saskatchewan severs their resistance as a product of past national contexts. The resistance Indigenous leadership posed to colonialism is framed as historical, something that ended at the inevitable crossroad of western expansion, rather than an ongoing, persistent resistance against ongoing colonialism in which their descendants continue to battle in the here and now. Simpson (2014) makes sense of the allowance made to study these historical figures of colonial resistance stating:

> recognition is the gentler form, or perhaps, the least corporeally violent way of managing Indians and their difference … This inclusion, or juridical form of recognition, is only performed, however, if the problem of cultural difference does not pose an appalling challenge to the norms of the settler society. (Simpson, 2014. p. 20)

The co-opting of these resistance leaders in the spatial and temporal discourse of Canadian and provincial inevitability neutralizes their stories of resistance as non-threatening historical acts, and thus safe enough to be worthy of state and settler recognition.

In the reverence of iconic, historic Indigenous leadership, White settlers are positioned as the well-intentioned observers of Canada's historic transgressions while remaining innocent to the way in which their province, communities and selves remain agents of colonial dispossession. It is nearly unimaginable that Idle No More or the Wet'suwet'en land defenders, who wage the same anti-colonial battles as Louis Riel and Big Bear, would be spoken about in Canadian schools with the same regard. Indigenous peoples who continue to fight for their sovereignty and rights are instead racialized as ungrateful radicals who refuse to appreciate the benefits Canada has provided them (Schick & St. Denis, 2005, 303). "Indigenous experiences are either drastically downplayed or dismissed as identity politics, as the ramblings of a minority or 'special interest group' that pose a threat to the national interest" (Starblanket & Hunt, 2020, p. 31). This selective regulation of Indigenous peoples' inclusion re-marks Whiteness as a stable, rational, and non-threatening normative space that upholds the national order while claiming its benevolence through demonstrations of respect for those Indigenous peoples consider 'safe.' Students learn to distinguish past and present Indigenous peoples with levels of safety and threat. By studying and celebrating heroic, but historic resistance leaders, students learn that these Indigenous figures made noble contributions to Canadian history, and in this historicity are non-threatening individuals. However, without similar heroic representations of present Indigenous leadership in the ongoing struggle for lands, sovereignty and humanity, students are left to take up popular discourses and imagery that produce ongoing Indigenous movements, such as the

Wet'suwet'en land defenders as dangerous threats to national peace and state stability, unsupportable by an innocent and peaceful settler population.

Managing Indigenous Exteriority through Recognition of Cultural Diversity

The national discourses celebrating Canadian multiculturalism operate in much the same way as what Mackey (2016) describes as "One Nation" discourses (p. 104) in that they function to manage and regulate Indigenous identity within Canada's imagined identity. Canadians are socialized to recognize the nation's 'multicultural heritage' as a point of pride; it appears common sense that the celebration of diversity reflects the tolerance, safety and equality embodying Canadian citizens and society. However, when we start asking questions like: *who is considered 'diverse'? In what social and political context did multiculturalism emerge? What power-relations does multiculturalism keep in place or challenge? Who benefits?* the regulatory nature of multiculturalism becomes much more apparent.

Thobani (2007) explains that Canada's multicultural policy emerged in the 1960s during of a "crisis of the state…sparked by the increasing demands of francophones in Quebec; the continuing struggles of Aboriginal peoples for self-determination; the class and gender based political movements of the period; and the increasing demands of people of colour for full citizenship" (p. 150). Underlying this crisis was the challenge to the White supremacy which characterized the structures, identity and values of the nation and its national subjects (Thobani, p. 150). The strategic implementation of a multicultural policy sought to depoliticize the demands for justice called for by racially marginalized groups in an effort to protect the sense of Canadian national unity deeply entrenched in Whiteness (Mackey, p. 67). Under the mask of tolerance and acceptance, symbolic forms of multicultural recognition continue to obscure the deeply racialized structures that maintain hierarchy power-relations within the state.

The effects of multicultural policy and discourse are distinct. St. Denis (2011b) finds that for Indigenous people, “multiculturalism is a form of colonialism and works to distract from the recognition and redress of Indigenous rights” (p. 308). Because multiculturalism produces Indigenous peoples and people/immigrants of colour in the same category of racial difference, the “specific and unique location of Aboriginal peoples as Indigenous to this land” is silenced (St. Denis, 2011, p. 311). Thus, the cultural recognition occurring through multiculturalism functions to discipline and regulate Indigenous peoples competing claims to land, sovereignty and title (Mackey, 2016, p. 112).

Through the multicultural discourse of curriculum, Indigenous peoples continue to be constrained within the same container of cultural marginality ascribed to settlers and Other immigrants. Students are expected to “describe the origins of cultural diversity in Saskatchewan communities” which includes a suggestion to “identify the traditional locations of the various First Nations tribes and language groupings in Saskatchewan prior to European contact” as an example of Saskatchewan diversity (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 10). Following this look at the province’s diverse origins which are founded on Indigenous people, students go on to link European settlement and ongoing immigration as adding to the mix of provincial diversity. The inclusion of Indigenous peoples as belonging to the body of settler and immigrant diversity, although appearing progressive in its inclusion of White settler groups within the typically racist parameters of diversity, illustrates the “settler ‘multicultural’ logic [which] attempts to contain and define Indigenous peoples as domestic” while appearing tolerant and innocent of racism (Mackey, 2016, p. 112). Any threat of Indigenous sovereignty is then negated by constructing Indigenous belonging as within the jurisdiction and diversity of the state; colonial control and racial marginalization continues.

The curriculum represents Indigenous peoples ongoing connections with land as cultural rather than politically rooted in an inherent sovereignty. While it is imperative that students learn from and respect Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies regarding human relationships with the land, it is important that they come to recognize, as Konkle points out, that "Native people's connection to land is not just cultural (as it usually and sentimentally understood), but it is a political connection about governments, boundaries, authority over people and territory" (as cited in Cook, 2018, p. 7). This cultural discourse is presented in the curriculum by encouraging students to "explore how the traditional world views and teachings of First Nations' Elders regarding land influence the lifestyles of First Nations people today" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 21), yet there is no mention of ongoing political sovereignty in relation to land. Starblanket and Hunt point out that the discursive erasure of Indigenous people's political relationship to land dates back to immigration handbooks of the 1870s in which "Indigenous peoples are positioned as being distracted by cultural practices that only require peripheral relationships with the landscape and that promise not to interfere with the ability of settlers to enjoy their new homeland" (2020, p. 40). Cook (2018) observes that in the absence of colonial awareness, "culture becomes the sole site of Indigenous identity and agency, foreclosing a legitimate politics of Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination" (p. 7). The effect can be that "White settlers are essentially directed to not take seriously Indigenous peoples' rights or our ongoing relationships with the geographies that were being [and continue to be] offered to potential settlers" (Starblanket & Hunt, p. 40). While learning of the cultural and spiritual significance of Indigenous peoples relationships to land is an important aspect of intercultural understanding, the omission of knowledge that recognizes Indigenous nationhood as equivalent in political legitimacy to that of the settler state bounds students to already-made discursive

assertions that Indigenous rights and sovereignties are unreasonable or invalid demands made by a culturally primitive peoples.

Managing Indigenous Exteriority through Historical Containment

The historicization of Indigenous territorial sovereignty is strategy through which the threat of Indigeneity to White settler norms is managed. The curriculum demonstrates its progressive recognition of Indigenous territories by presenting nations and language groupings as "traditional" and set in the space and time "prior to European contact" (Ministry of Education, p. 18) the space and sovereignty of these nations is imagined as long ago, rather than actively occupying the same time and space as White settler homes, yards, farms, cabins, towns, and cities. Coulthard (2014) suggests that Canada's embrace of Indigenous recognition and reconciliation has necessitated this distinct severing of past from present.

Public discourses of reconciliation and the need for historical redress have influenced the pedagogy and curricular directions of Canadian public education (Miles, 2021, p. 250). Coulthard (2014) argues that state approaches to reconciliation "[attempt] to apply transitional justice mechanisms to nontransitional circumstances" (p. 108). This means reconciliation is set up to operate as an "individual and collective process of overcoming the subsequent *legacy* of past abuse, not the abusive colonial structure itself" (p. 109). In Canada, "state sanctioned processes of colonialism must ideologically manufacture such a transition [between past and present] by allocating the abuses of settler colonialism to the dustbins of history, and/or disentangle the processes of settler colonialism from questions of settler-colonialism" (Coulthard, p. 108). Miles (2021) further observes that in reconciliatory approaches to curriculum historical injustices tend to be framed as events detached from the nation building process itself, contained outside and isolated from national identity (p. 260).

The patterns described by Coulthard (2014), and Miles (2021) are evident in the way Indigenous dispossession is represented in the social studies curriculum. Importantly, students are expected to be able to "explain the relationship of First Nations and Métis peoples with the land," (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 10) however dispossession, while not totally erased, is framed as historic and detached from ongoing settler-colonial, nation-building practices. In studying Indigenous relationships to land, students are encouraged to "assess the impact of *historic* land loss on First Nations and Métis people" and "research the Métis struggle for land, and the displacement of Métis people in the late 19th century" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 21, emphasis added). These examples, while inclusive of historical injustice, do continue the pattern of framing such ongoing events as "the past" and further devoid of a colonial perpetrator and as distinct from the national narrative (Miles, 2021, p. 260). To such representations of knowledge, we might encourage challenge White settler innocence by asking: *when did First Nations and Métis people stop being displaced? Who and what is responsible for causing the land loss and struggle Indigenous people face? Who benefits from this land loss?*

Framing the dispossession of Indigenous peoples as a 19th century event creates a distinct severing between the past and present. Coulthard suggests this is a common discursive practice in which "state sanctioned processes of colonialism must ideologically manufacture such a transition [between past and present] by allocating the abuses of settler colonialism to the dustbins of history, and/or disentangle to processes of settler colonialism from questions of settler-colonialism" (2014, p. 108). This way, Canadians can congratulate themselves for settling past wrongs while avoiding contention with the ongoing processes of colonialism (Coulthard, p. 108).

Miles (2021) would attribute the curricular framing of Indigenous dispossession as a "struggle for land" or "land loss" as contributing to the further isolation of these events from the nation-building/colonial project. Portraying these events as happenstance, free of colonial and national responsibility, has the "effect of encouraging a nation building narrative that focuses on nationalism and citizenship on the one hand while also ignoring the erasure, removal, and forcible assimilation of Indigenous peoples as part of this nation building process" (Miles, 2021, p. 259). Miles explains that "This separation of realities allows non-Indigenous Canadians to teach and learn that Indigenous sovereignty, governance, and ways of knowing are also outside comprehension and acknowledgement" (2021, p. 260). Subsequently, the remaking of White settlers as innocent to ongoing colonialism while presenting Indigenous peoples as having experienced long-ago wronging has the potential to reinforce racist notions of Indigenous peoples as unwilling to accept the generous efforts of apology and reconciliation extended by good-hearted, justice seeking, orange-clad Canadians because they are too angry, resentful or "unwilling to get over the past" (Coulthard, 2014, p. 109). Maintaining Indigenous exteriority can then be framed as a result of Indigenous dissatisfaction and a refusal to move on.

Preserving Whiteness: Colorblindness and Neutral Discourse

Preserving Whiteness through Colorblindness

While the policies of the Saskatchewan curriculum are well-meaning in their attempts to include and represent Indigenous history, content, and knowledge as a means to foster improved social-relations, this analysis demonstrates that these approaches commonly invoke techniques which result in the preservation and reproduction of the White-status quo rather than challenging racist inequality. When systems of education engage in diversity-related or multicultural efforts, they often emphasize a reliance on strategies of niceness, neutrality, and equality, all of which

prevent the disruption of racial hierarchies necessary to challenge ongoing racism and colonialism, thus these techniques protect and solidify structures that normalize White supremacy (Castagno, 2014). Colorblindness, the notion that race should not be recognized, or that race is no longer socially relevant, is one such way White commitments to equality (and thus racism) are expressed (Castagno, 2014; Lipsitz, 2019). Tendencies toward colorblindness can be attributed to the longstanding misunderstanding that the problem of racism is the recognition of race rather than the systems and structures rationalized by the meanings ascribed to race (Lipsitz, 2019, p. 25). When the ongoing salience of race is overlooked, the systems of racial domination that structure denials to access, opportunity, and life chances here are obscured.

I would argue that much of the curricular analysis to this point demonstrates an overarching commitment to colorblindness because critical knowledge regarding race, racism, and colonialism within the provincial/national narrative are looked over, avoided, or neutralized and thus recommit to maintaining these structures, and ultimately reinvest in the preservation of White settler superiority. Lipsitz (2019) explains that:

> the political and cultural legitimacy of colorblindness rests on a series of deliberate and debilitating lies about history. Colorblindness purports to be a recent invention…yet in fact it is merely a present-day manifestation of a long-standing political project emanating from Indigenous dispossession, colonial conquest, slavery, segregation, and immigrant exclusion. (p. 25)

Colonialism was enacted on the very notion of "*not seeing*" the humanity of Indigenous peoples, therefore colorblindness can further be understood as an evasion of race/colonial history that maintains a legacy of structural disadvantage (Lipsitz 2019, p. 25, emphasis in original).

The curricular treatment of government systems within the curriculum provides an example of how the well-intended attempt to provide "colorblind" equivalent representation can inadvertently reinforce racist/colonial driven inequality. A broad curricular goal of the social studies curriculum requires students to "investigate the processes and structures of power and authority, and the implications for individuals, communities, and nations (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 22). This goal is divided into three specific, mandatory outcomes which give equal attention to understanding each of the provincial, First Nations and Métis governance systems (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 22). Importantly, these outcomes provide equal weight, emphasis, and representation to each group's form of government allowing students to have a strong understanding of the internal operations of each. However, as Crenshaw astutely observes, "treating different things the same can generate as much inequality as treating the same things differently" (Crenshaw, as cited in Lipsitz, 2019, p. 43). In other words, presenting these government systems as though they are equal in their difference, forgoes, and thus maintains, their interconnectedness within a wider network of hierarchical power relations embedded in race and colonialism.

The relationship between provincial and Indigenous governance is one that is regulated through a racist colonial relationship. While each government is represented equally in the curricular outcomes, there is no explanation of the hierarchical jurisdictional relationship between the three systems, nor is there mention of how colonial dominance has legitimated the widespread jurisdiction of the provincial government over crown lands and the body of citizens while impeding the jurisdiction of Indigenous sovereignty and title.

The study of provincial government emphasizes having students understand the role of provincial government in establishing a law-based society in which citizens have particular rights

and responsibilities, whereas the study of First Nations and Métis governance suggests students "compile an inventory of issues of current focus for [Indigenous] governments in Saskatchewan" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 22-23). In signifying provincial governance as "law-based" whereas Indigenous governance is characterized as "issue" based, the "issues" of Indigenous governments are framed in isolation from the root of the problem— colonial control and systemic racism. This production of knowledge has every potential to reinforce a racist discourse of Indigenous governance as rife with inefficiencies and complaints, as never satisfied, as asking for too much and as too unrealistic in their defense of sovereignty and title. A well-intentioned, but colorblind study of the Others' form of government leaves little room for students to understand the varying impact of colonial governance and its control over Indigenous sovereignty. They learn to see race and racism as having little relevance in a society that supposedly treats everyone equally. Lipsitz (2019) determines that "The persistence of colorblind rhetoric binds us to colorbound conditions. Symmetrical treatment under decidedly unequal circumstances perpetuates injustice" (p. 44).

Preserving Whiteness through Neutrality: Worldview and Perspective

Investigations of worldview and diverse perspectives play a large role in Saskatchewan's approach to social studies pedagogy. The preamble of the social studies curriculum, used to orient teachers to the province's philosophical approach to the subject, defines worldviews as "fundamental belief systems from which people draw the core of their personal beliefs and behaviours" and states its problematic position that "compatible worldviews are necessary for the orderly functioning of a society" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 14-15). This is an interesting statement given scholarly research that outlines the incommensurability of Indigenous and White, patriarchal ontologies related to land and sovereignty (Moreton-Robinson, 2021).

Moreton-Robinson (2021) explains how White European and Indigenous ontologies emerged through different histories and philosophic understandings:

> Patriarchal white sovereignty is not born of the earth; its origins were extra-terrestrial and historical then dynastic and imperial. These ontological origins predispose patriarchal white sovereignty to being human centred and heavenly bound … A sovereignty that is narcissistic, self-interested, possessive and self-serving. This is incommensurate with how Indigenous sovereignties originated, how we, and our non-human relatives, came to be and to which lands we belong as peoples of the earth. Our sovereignties are in and of the earth. (2021, p. 267)

If a primary goal of Social Studies curriculum is to reconcile relations between Indigenous and White settler-colonial peoples then students must be given opportunities to negotiate and comprehend how worldview (ontology) produces and maintains a hierarchy of racial dominance in relation to their own colonial identities and orientations to place. However, the suggestion that society can only function effectively when structured around a singular worldview constrains possibilities for how curriculum might take up these understandings of worldview in ways that challenge the fixity of Indigenous and settler inequality.

In social studies curricula, worldview is regarded an expansive concept, underpinning an analytical approach to representing, comparing, and understanding societies, however in fourth grade the concept is applied in a lopsided fashion, essentializing Indigenous peoples as primarily culturally and historically oriented in relation to worldviews that deviate from social norms. The curriculum requires that students "investigate the traditional worldviews of First Nations peoples prior to European contact regarding land as an animate object and sustaining life force … [and] explore how the traditional worldviews and teachings of First Nations' Elders regarding land

influence the lifestyle of First Nations people today" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 20). While I agree that knowledge of Indigenous worldview provides necessary knowledge which can facilitate a deeper understanding of Indigenous-settler relations, the discursive effect is that Indigenous peoples possess worldviews that signify social deviance, while White, patriarchal, settler orientations to land, rooted in the extractive and possessive "logic of capital and familial ties to private property and nation states" (Moreton-Robinson, 2021, p. 259) go unnamed and unchallenged and thus remain positioned as the normative, stable social and economic condition; the role of colonialism and racism are effectively neutralized.

Distinguishing and comparing worldviews often invokes comparisons of perspective and values on particular historical events, which Gold (2016) explains as problematic:

> If we only talk about 'multiple perspectives' and locate the various stories of the past on a 'continuum of perspective'—without assigning any normative judgments to them—we forestall attempts at determining historical responsibility and causation. We remove the moral judgment implicit in the scholarly study of history.

An example of placing differing views on a "continuum of perspective" occurs with the curricular recommendation that students "compare the traditional views of land and culture of the Aboriginal peoples of Saskatchewan with those of the railway developers" (Ministry of Education, 2010, p. 21). I agree that it is important for students to explore how differing relationships to land and place are reflected in narratives of history, however there is the risk that "talking about perspectives without talking about power can imply an equivalency of viewpoints that brings with it a very real danger of erasing historical injustice" (Gold, 2016). I contend that representing colonialism through the perspectives of relationships to land, neutralizes the violent marginalization of Indigenous peoples in two specific ways.

First, the racism inherent to the process of dispossession necessary for settlement is neutralized by framing Indigenous peoples and "the railway developers" as simply having different perspectives with respect to the use of land. Indigenous and European peoples did see the land differently, however the justification to commit genocide in the clearing of the plains for the railroad and subsequent settlement were rooted in a system of White-supremacist power-relations rooted in a racial hierarchy- such colonists didn't just see themselves as different but built exclusive systems around their superiority. By emphasizing worldviews rather than oppressive systems, the curriculum evades naming "the railway developers" dependence on White supremacy to rationalize territorial belonging, (Moreton-Robinson, 2015) capitalist development, and the violent, genocidal destruction of Indigenous peoples on the plains to make way for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway and White settlement (Daschuk, 2013, p. 123). Students learn to place culpability on individuals, constructed as the benevolent victims of historical context, rather than locating the broader operation of settler colonial motives and logics.

Moreover, as mentioned previously, the emphasis on perspectives positions Indigenous peoples as having only cultural attachments (as signified through curricular discourse) to land thus erasing the sovereignty anchoring Indigenous people to place. This approach minimizes that Indigenous leaders were keenly aware that a White supremacist system would erode Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty, as Poundmaker's observation demonstrates: "next summer, or latest next fall, the railway will be close to us, the Whites will fill our country and they will dictate to us as they please" (Daschuk, 2013, p. 123). Instead of portraying the political nature of Indigenous peoples relationship to land, this sort of "perspectives" discourse tends to privilege Indigenous cultural beliefs in which land cannot be owned or controlled. While this is an

inherent part of Indigenous worldview, I do think solely focusing on culture has a productive effect in the way it limits the way colonialism can be imagined. The racism and injustice exacted in the name of settlement risks becoming rationalized when we speak only of worldview or perspective. The "railway developers" are innocent to colonial genocide because acting on the basis of worldview, even if problematic, can be excused as product of a bygone era and cultural beliefs; such historical actors are made innocent in the same moment a system of colonial violence, territorialism and capitalist land development are made inevitable. On the other hand, Indigenous people are naturalized then, as the inevitable victims of a cultural value system incompatible with European expansion. The racist discourse that Indigenous people's marginalization is the natural consequence of an (unpropertied) relationship to the land is reinforced. Colonial violence entrenched in a race hierarchy is reduced to a matter of perspective and cultural difference (LaRocque, 1991). In the classroom, this means providing equality to all perspectives can lead students to a skewed understanding of the operation of power. If everyone's historical perspectives and worldviews are presented as equally valid, despite what they produce, then there is no reasonable way to contend with the profound group inequalities such positions (perspectives and worldviews) materialize. This is a strategy of neutrality which prevents the naming of racism and colonialism as morally wrong, and stalls students from engaging in the necessary work of deconstructing the operation of power producing social meaning.

Secondly, the use of "railway developers" individualizes colonial wrongdoing as belonging to a specific subset of colonial actors. This helps to obscure and fragment the colonial project as the bad acts of historical individuals, rather than an all-encompassing social, political, and economic system driven by capitalist orientations toward lands and resources (Wolfe, 2006).

Here, the responsibility for any historical injustice is pitted on “railway developers” rather than the colonial policies and structures which positioned these people to function/perform part of the mass elimination of Indigenous peoples which characterize settler colonialism (Wolfe, 2006). By implicating a set of individuals, the structural and systemic entirety of the colonial project is distorted. Because “railway workers” represent the closest the curriculum comes to naming culpability for colonialism, settlers learn to locate responsibility for historic wrongdoing to a particular group of historical perpetrators, who are already excused as products of their time. Colonialism and White supremacy are again historicized and individualized, disfiguring their present manifestations, leaving White settlers once again innocent to the ongoing project of colonialism.

Conclusion

In this analysis, I have illuminated the ongoing discursive formations that continue to naturalize inequitable power relations in Canada and in doing so have demonstrated how Indigenous exteriority is re-accomplished, even as Indigenous peoples are included within the body of curricular knowledge. By highlighting the ways Indigenous peoples and nations continue to be fixed in exteriority by the circulation of particular national and provincial curricular discourses, I hope to have named the “illusive interiority” (Graham & Slee, 2008) of White settler innocence that continues to be produced within the framework of “inclusion.”

The discursive statements found within the outcomes and indicators effectively coalesce to reaffirm the dominant, linear, Eurocentric narrative of the Canadian prairies in which determined settlers arrive, battle the harsh climate and elements, work in community to forge ‘the greater good” —equated as the valiant development of the prairies— and in this struggle, engaged in benevolent treaty making and formed the foundation of strong agrarian and resource

based, capital driven economy, credited with maintaining the prosperity of the province today. Within this discourse White settlers are made natural to the landscape through reference to climatic endurance, and the communal drive to forge "something" from the land which, by excluding talk of colonial and racist policies of erasure and displacement, is imagined both then and now, as title-less, open and free for settler-taking. Through discourses of meritorious agrarian-style labour, White settler peoples are further racially signified as naturally deserving of title— a notion rooted in the belief of the racial inferiority of Indigenous societies operating outside of private property and agriculture-based regimes.

The curricular discourses and spatial representations of the province which produce knowledge of Saskatchewan's economy fail to recognize and represent the existing sovereignties, titles, and the internationally protected rights of Indigenous nations as they pertain to land use and the provincial and federal government's duty of to consult in matters relating to sovereignty and resource extraction. Severing these integral concepts from the knowledge of economy obscures the ongoing spatial and political presence of Indigenous nations and normalizes settler colonial dispositions toward extractivism and capitalism that undermine and delegitimize inherent Indigenous rights and actively inflict harm on the lands and peoples of Indigenous nations. The failure to disrupt the racial hierarchy and White supremacy imposed by the Doctrine of Discovery and *terra nullius* and thus continues to fix White settler and Indigenous subjectivities within the imagined desires and fantasies of the settler colonial nation. Here, a resource driven settler invasion is distorted as shrewd opportunism and the violent replacement and elimination of Indigenous peoples and sovereignties are rendered a natural consequence of racial and cultural primitivism.

While the curriculum invites the recognition of Indigenous peoples as economic, historic and political contributors to the province, perhaps to combat the common racist narratives of Indigenous futility, this attempt at (re)storying a White settler province as welcoming ultimately positions Indigenous peoples as contributors and beneficiaries to settler colonial economic, social and governance systems that simultaneously maintain Indigenous oppression. There is no unraveling of inequitable power relations in this type of discourse.

Curricular representations of Indigeneity as culturally and historically overdetermined reflect a deep settler possessiveness in which Indigenous identity has long been regulated, defined, and manipulated in ways that ensure the invasive, racially inequitable structuring of the settler colonial state is rendered common sense. This is observed in the way Indigenous resistance leaders are storied through curricular narratives as valiant and worthy of celebration but are also defined by their historicity. By manufacturing an "ending" to Indigenous resistance that occurs around the time of colonial settlement the curriculum produces a sense of national inevitability that obscures and rationalizes Indigenous displacement. Including only examples of historical resistance or historical dispossession accomplishes an identity for White settlers that is progressive and accepting of "past" Indigenous struggle, while producing ignorance regarding the ways in which this resistance and displacement remains ongoing and implicates settlers and the state. Discourses of culture, while an important aspect of Indigenous representation, operate similarly in their ability to position Indigenous peoples as just another body of diversity in the makeup of the province, erasing their distinct political relationships to place. While these discourses appear generous in their inclusion and remediation of historic injustice, they operate as a colonial possessive, regulating and manipulating the acceptability of Indigeneity in ways

that relieve settlers from contending with the ongoing structures of colonialism and racialization that naturalize their belonging and render their innocence.

Lastly, attempts to remain race neutral and colorblind throughout the production of curricular knowledge subverts the discourse necessary to challenge the reinforcement of asymmetrical power relations in ongoing colonialism. Instead of naming the colonial systems, racist policies and settler contributions that have produced race inequality between Indigenous and settler people, these relationships are implied and indeed represented as having reached equality in society. Further, the curricular portrayal diverse perspectives and worldviews as equally valid negates consideration of the racialized power imbalances structuring Canadian society. In this case, the drive for inclusion reinforces the tendency of White education systems to avoid uncomfortable topics that are generally labeled not nice, too complex, too political, too divisive or inappropriate for children. By refusing to name the uncomfortable truths of colonialism and racism, the status quo of White settler innocence and impunity is maintained.

The partial truths offered through the curricular discourse continue to leave the racialized power relations at the heart of settler colonialism untouched. Any recognition of territorial sovereignty, land rights, colonialism and racism that might challenge White settler supremacy are cast out to "the dustbins of history" and are exchanged for celebrations of Indigenous cultural diversity and traditions that render White settlers as innocent. White settlers remain fixed as the unmarked, normalized center, signified as hard-working citizens, naturally oriented toward wealth and belonging, and driven by the moral superiority of land development; they are lawful and welcoming, empathetic, and open to all. This is a subjectivity produced in ignorance to the way belonging and racial supremacy have been established through violent racist policies and practices of dispossession, genocide, erasure. The effects of leaving ongoing genocidal (even

those that appear banal, regulatory) colonial policies and practices uninterrogated means that their impacts (homelessness, poverty, MMIW, school ‘success’ rates, incarceration rates, etc.) can be written off as problems of inherent to Indigenous racial deficiency, rather than the result of systemic racism and colonial policies that continue to blaze the settler colonial path toward Indigenous regulation and erasure.

Chapter Four:

Implications

The Limits of Inclusion

School systems and educators must contend with the notion that the inclusion of Indigenous culture, perspectives and knowledge through curricular discourse are not enough to manufacture social equity. Rooted in a history of anthropological and multicultural characterizations of racial difference (see St. Denis, 2011a), the culturally inclusive approach is not equipped to interrupt the production of Indigenous difference born through deeply entrenched and systemic racial hierarchies founded in White supremacy. Therefore, attempts to include can reproduce what Graham and Slee (2008) describe as the "illusory interiority," which this analysis demonstrates as an unmarked, often unrecognized, and thus innocent core of White settler dominance. Schick (2009) describes this inclusive approach to curriculum as one of the "well-intentioned pedagogies that forestall change" (p. 111). While centering Indigenous knowledge and culture must continue as a meaningful part of decolonizing education, this alone will not transform the systems of power that regulate and racialize access and opportunity in our schools and society.

Kevin Kumashiro's theories of anti-oppressive education (2000) classify an inclusive orientation toward curricular representation as "Education about the Other" (p.32). Education about the Other involves the practice of integrating Otherness throughout the curriculum, not just in sporadic lessons, but as an ongoing form of representation in which "the historical, economic, social and political practice of other people" are taught as part of the curriculum (Schick, 2009, p. 122). Kumashiro (2000) notes that the strength of this approach to justice-driven education is that it can work against stereotypes and biases that come from incomplete knowledge of the

Other because of its “attempts to normalize differences and Otherness” (p. 32). There is the potential for education about the Other, as it appears in cultural, historical, and political discourses to foster greater awareness, appreciation, and empathy for those who have been marked and marginalized as different.

However, Kumashiro (2000) and Schick (2009) point out that an inclusive curriculum has limits in terms of disrupting ongoing power relations. They suggest that aiming to cultivate empathy for the Other is not an adequate tool for anti-oppressive education because “oppression does not reside solely in how individuals think about, feel towards and treat one another” — it is a systemic problem (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 35). A reliance on improving interpersonal relations by teaching students to see themselves in/as the Other “does not force privileged students to separate the normal from the self, i.e … to acknowledge and work against their own privileges [nor does it] illuminate, critique, or transform the processes by which the Other is differentiated from and subordinated to the norm” (Kumashiro, 2000, p. 35, 45). Schick (2009) describes how education about the Other

> provides partial access to notions of ‘the other’ that serve to ‘fix’ both dominant and subordinate selves into discourses of unequal relations that have been prepared historically, socially and economically … it prepares and fixes subjectivities available to dominant students so that they can be readily inserted into and allow themselves to find their places within newly created and already-old stories… (2009, p. 123)

In other words, without attention to the salience of race, racism and colonialism in producing difference and social inequality, and inclusive orientation towards curriculum can reposition students both dominant and Other within already circulated discourses normalizing White settler

innocence and belonging as a marker of national subjectivity. Therefore, school systems must move beyond a reliance on well-intentioned policies of inclusion to produce social change.

Curriculum Development

Curriculum developers must consider that the way in which Canadian national discourse is storied within the fourth-grade social studies curriculum effectively produces White settlers as innocent and ignorant to colonial and racialized asymmetries. By stifling opportunities to reimagine and re-narrate Canada (or what we now know as Canada) in ways that expose and challenge the normalized structures of settler colonial invasion, dispossession, racialization and genocide, these processes will continue to shape opportunity and life chances for both Indigenous peoples and White settlers.

Poststructural theory offers questions that curriculum writers (and all educators) might contend with in order to excavate the effects of power relations operating within our society and reflected in curriculum: And in the spirit of Anderson (2006), how might such questions illuminate the pathways through which we might re-conceptualize national discourse that produces a *re-imagining* of Canada that interrupts productions of White settlers as innocent to the operation of racially motivated settler colonialism. Through this type of discursive investigation, curriculum developers, and all educators, may begin to see and story "colonialism as colonialism" (Lawrence, 2002, p. 26) in ways that disrupt structural investments in settler belonging and anti-Indigenous racism.

Ongoing injustice will not be remediated by inserting historic and cultural representations of Indigenous people into a body of curricular knowledge that continues to reproduce the old "grand narratives" of colonial settlement and national and provincial inevitability. Rather, the essentialist signifiers of historical and cultural identifications will serve as another point from

which Whiteness is again offered as the normative condition of belonging on the prairies. Curriculum writers should consider the following discursive shifts to future curricular projects, revisions and renewals in order to begin interrupting the ongoing operation of White settler innocence currently maintained through curriculum:

1) Repositioning the land, in knowledge of both past and present, as a political and spatial marker of ongoing Indigenous nationhood and sovereignty rather than a cultural or historical affiliation tied to Indigenous identity.
2) Reframing Indigenous peoples as the 'local' peoples, societies and nations on whom/which settler economies and societies are dependent.
3) Including colonial motivations and the racist ideas that justified settler colonial seizure of lands and forced dislocations of Indigenous nations. Move away from framing these events as isolated from the broader systems of settler colonialism and their role in Canada.
4) Prioritizing an understanding of treaty as a function of settler colonial displacement and discussing the implications of this for settler identities and their possession of Indigenous lands and resources. Illustrate the boundaries of treaties outside of provincial borders and emphasize that treaties are not surrender of title agreements. Be specific and intentional in naming the benefits settlers take away from treaty negotiations.
5) Reconsidering how thematic goals and knowledge are arranged and compartmentalized and isolated from one another in ways that reinforce problematic discourses. Consider what it might mean to move content regarding treaty implications for settlers alongside content regarding the currently benign agricultural

and resource based economic material rather than teaching them separately. How might this produce a richer understanding of how colonization has shaped benefits in a lopsided fashion?

6) Discontinuing to present knowledge in a way that preserves colonial and race neutrality and colorblindness. Producing knowledge of inequity relies on naming colonial and racist systems rather than avoiding them.

The study of discourse allows us to "[unmap] a settler society" (Razack, 2002) by amending curricular representations of colonization, racism and Indigeneity, and historical re-imagining. Miles (2021) suggests that the implementation of the anti-colonial strategies as listed above "requires more than simply acknowledging or stating that Indigenous sovereignty exists but teaching the history of treaties and Indigenous-settler relations as being at the foundation of the Canadian nation state" (p. 264). From here, students can learn that that their positionality and "rights are not an exclusive power of the settler state but in fact central to the sovereignty of Indigenous nations [which] helps enforce the idea that Indigenous nations are in fact sovereign and on equal footing" (Miles, 2021, p. 263).

Teachers of Social Studies Four

Teachers of this curriculum must consider the racialized power relations that they currently operate within, and they must be aware of the histories and ongoing practices and discourses that shape these relations. The knowledge espoused in this curriculum document is not established on neutral ground, but rather exists within settler colonial asymmetries already marked by Indigenous exteriority and White settler innocence. It is imperative that educators contend with the ways teaching and knowledge circulation within the classroom are embedded in this context of inequity and therefore operates to either reinforce or interrupt these conditions.

While Indigenous inclusion and Truth and Reconciliation are celebrated within Canada and the education system as common-sense practices that signify racial progress, the analysis presented in this thesis demonstrates that Indigenous Otherness continues to be regulated and foreclosed without the overt language of racism and through such well-intentioned approaches to inclusivity.

The work of challenging oppressive colonial structures necessitates that social studies teachers move beyond the comfortable positions of race neutrality and well-intentioned curricular practices of Indigenous content and knowledge inclusion. A critical reading of national identity formation and the discourses which support this are essential. As an alternative, applying an anti-racist, anti-colonial approach to teaching social studies can "produce a counter-narrative [that when] read back into the normative telling of Canadian history … has the potential to counter erasures of memory and existence of [Indigenous] peoples. (Schick, 2014, p. 101). Stanley (2000) suggests that anti-racist histories can be composed of smaller, local narratives that

> range from focusing on a restricted geographic area over time and tracing how racism and European cultural constructions colonized it, to focusing on particular institutions and the roles of racism in shaping them, to placing local patterns within the broader ones of European colonialism … Anti-racist histories can be written about those excluded by racisms … [or] those who benefited from them. (p. 105)

The practice of illuminating the salience of race and colonialism in the production of national identity offers a significant disruption "to the to the comfort and hegemony of white supremacy and white subjectivity" (Schick, 2014, p. 101).

While we can use history to make sense of material questions of the present, we have to contend with the possibility of this approach to misconstrue colonialism as a past event.

Alongside their students, teachers need to encourage an excavation of positionalities in ongoing colonialism and the power relations it necessitates. Interrupting the maintenance of White innocence involves illuminating the ongoing settler colonial structures and policies that work to eliminate Indigenous personhood and sovereignty using a racist rationale. The use of critical questions can maintain the expectations to teach curricular outcomes while also encouraging the critical thought necessary to deconstruct and unsettle the knowledge responsible for producing identities in ignorance. Teachers might begin to ask their fourth-grade students to think about the following questions in relation to curricular material:

1) Who is missing from this story of Saskatchewan/Canada? Why do you think it was left out?
2) What might the result of leaving this story out be? Who does this advantage? Disadvantage?
3) In reference to knowledge that over emphasizes historical aspects of Indigeneity and sovereignty, we might ask: How do we see this not just in the past, but now in our everyday life? Did this "history" ever end? And what are the outcomes of this for settler people? Indigenous people?
4) In reference to economy and land use, we might ask: Who has control of the land? Who has control of the recourses and their use? Is this a fair deal? How was control obtained? Who does this control advantage and disadvantage? And what outcomes does it produce?

Teachers can continue to expand on these questions by having students reflect on their own positionalities within the analysis they produce. Drawing from poststructural theory, Kumashiro reasons that an anti-oppressive approach to education necessitates illuminating the processes

through which the norm and normalized identities are produced (2000, p. 35). While there is often a focus on Indigenous peoples as marginalized, educators must not only make the norm relative to this marginalization visible but engage in a "pedagogy of positionality" (Maher & Tetreault, 1994, as cited in Kumashiro, 2000, p. 97) through which students come to understand their social position in relation to the race hierarchy and how this produces particular social meaning affixed to their identity (their subjectivity).

Like curriculum developers, teachers should consider how curricular outcomes can be paired in different ways, outside the thematic containers they are initially bound within. By re-ordering outcomes and creating new juxtapositions of discourse, teachers can potentially produce discursive spaces from which to re-imagine state power relations and one's positionality within them. Drawing from the outcomes of this curriculum, teachers might investigate how pairing the implications of treaty agreements alongside discourses of colonial settlement might produce effects that challenge the naturalness of White settler belonging and inevitability. Or, teachers might consider juxtaposing discourses of historic land loss with discourses that naturalize extractive industry to unsettle the ways Saskatchewan's settler economy is founded on Indigenous dispossession. Having students reconsider their own subjectivities in relation to these investigations provincial and national power relations is imperative to redefining what it means to be a white settler in Canada, particularly as it pertains to reimagining Indigenous nations as politically sovereign just as they are taught to regard Canada.

Teacher Education

To accomplish education as a practice of anti-colonialism and anti-racism, teachers need access to adequate pre-service and ongoing professional learning opportunities through which they can learn to identify their own positionality within such power structures, but they also need

a strong foundation through which to understand how colonial, national histories have shaped curriculum as a racial text. To adequately understand the function of the role of educators and curriculum in the maintenance of colonialism and white innocence to the settler project, I argue that White settler teachers require ongoing, supportive training in anti-racist histories, including Indigenous focused studies and anti-racist, anti-colonial pedagogy. This knowledge is necessary to for teachers to be able to reconceive of Canada's settler colonial dependence on racism and to also to then relearn their own subjectivity within this framework to teach effectively from this understanding of power relations and positionality.

Further, teachers of fourth grade social studies learners also need to be provided with education on how to teach what could be considered "difficult knowledge" for younger learners. While age may be presented as a rationale for maintaining a nice, neutral approach to teaching about Saskatchewan's establishment, the present discourses are inherently harmful to the humanity of Indigenous students while protecting the innocence of White students and this must be addressed. To address this concern, teachers would benefit from greater pre-service and professional education regarding the best practices for inviting young children to process systemic knowledge regarding oppressive, racist colonial systems in ways that align with their mental and emotional development. Establishing a more critical awareness of "nation building" and the power relations, from the outset of social education will lead to a greater awareness of positionality and more opportunity to effect change.

Lastly, teachers need administrative support in making pedagogical shifts that are uncomfortable but necessary. If educational goals and documents speak genuinely of supporting the endeavor of Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, there needs to be adequate support to move beyond pow wows, orange T-shirt days, bannock lunches and guest speakers

into more critical, effective, transformative anti-colonial, anti-racist learning. Teachers need administrators and educational leaders to be engaged in learning about how White supremacy and settler colonialism operate in Canada in ways that implicate the entirety of the education system and have profound impacts on the identities and life experiences of students and educators. To move forward, we need to leaders, at all levels, who are willing to get comfortable with being uncomfortable.

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