

**(NEO)LIBERAL SCRIPTS: SETTLER COLONIALISM AND THE BRITISH  
COLUMBIA SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

**By**

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## Abstract

This thesis explores the challenges to decolonizing education in British Columbia (BC), one of the thirteen provinces and territories in Canada. It is an analysis of the K-12 curriculum documents in BC. The analysis is based on critical literature on settler colonialism, Indigenous critical theory, and critical pedagogy. Recent revisions to the curriculum documents have responded to increasing calls for integration of content about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and Indigenous perspectives into education in BC. However, critical silences, problematic representations and placement of content, and subordination of Indigenous ways of knowing and being to settler-colonial epistemology and ontology hinder meaningful integration of Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. In particular, the naturalization of settler-colonial sovereignty and territoriality in the curriculum reinstates settler interests and “commonsense.” This tendency is particularly problematic in the context of the contemporary neoliberalization of education in settler societies. This thesis proposes that decolonizing education in BC will require a shift in the ways settlers and Indigenous peoples relate in and with place.

## **Acknowledgements**

In the final year of my undergraduate degree I undertook an honours research project focused on the function of research and knowledge creation and the role of the researcher in Community Based Participatory Research in Canada. My previous studies had led me to understand that different people have different approaches to reality, and indeed different realities. Yet my honours thesis work, which highlighted the tensions of research and academic knowledge creation in and with Indigenous communities, would ultimately inform my understanding of what it means to ‘think differently’ and ‘be different’.

The study that follows takes as its starting point the perspective that the kind of reality presupposed by the dominant cultural paradigm in Canada is not the only important perspective. Settler sovereignty in Indigenous lands naturalizes certain political, social, and economic relationships. Yet the presence, the ways of ‘being’ and ‘knowing,’ and the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples give the lie to the - admittedly powerful - fiction of settler jurisdiction. This study starts from the position that relationships between people(s), and people(s) relationships with the world around them, should be based in dignity, and respect. Tracing approaches and perspectives represented in education provides a picture of the kinds of relationships present and reiterated in Canada, and how the rights and responsibilities of settler and Indigenous peoples are understood.

This thesis is a moment, a snapshot of the thinking, research, and conversations about ideas that will continue. The transformation of these ideas into this artifact would not have been possible without the contributions of a number of people. I am grateful to

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## List of Acronyms

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Explanation</b>
<i>AI</i>	Achievement Indicator
<i>BC</i>	British Columbia
<i>BCME</i>	British Columbia Ministry of Education
<i>IRP</i>	Integrated Resource Package
<i>PLO</i>	Prescribed Learning Outcome
<i>SCC</i>	Supreme Court of Canada
<i>TEKW</i>	Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Wisdom
<i>TRC</i>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

## Glossary of Terms

**Aboriginal:** This term is used by the Government of British Columbia as the umbrella term for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. The term appears in this thesis in reference to certain court proceedings that refer to the rights of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as, in the language of the Canadian constitution and courts, ‘Aboriginal rights’. The term appears in this thesis in quotations from the curriculum documents and when discussing specific Ministry of Education publications or job titles like the ‘Aboriginal Education Coordinator’. ‘Aboriginal Studies’ is the title used by the Ministry in reference to the courses dedicated to the study of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in BC.

**Epistemology:** The term epistemology refers to the apprehension of knowledge, or ways of knowing. An epistemology refers to the way the general features and relations of a given reality are knowable.

**Indian Act:** The Act by which the Dominion of Canada established its official relationship with Indigenous people in the 1876, whereby the Dominion assumed responsibility for determining and parceling out the ‘legally’ recognized Indigenous identity of Indian Status. The Indian Act can be consulted at: <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/>

**Indian Act Bands:** The Canadian state does not recognize Indigenous peoples in Canada as nations. Indian bands were designated according to lists provided at the time of the signing of treaties, and represent small subsets of previous existing nations.

**Indian Status:** The formal, legal and highly restrictive recognition by the Canadian state of Indigenous people as being Indigenous.

**Indigenous:** The term Indigenous refers to the original inhabitants of a land, or lands, and their descendants. In the context of this thesis, the term refers to those societies that have encountered European colonial expansion in North America, Australia, and New Zealand, and continue to navigate the imposed colonial structures of contemporary settler states. In Canada this term includes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

**Indigenous Knowledge:** The learnings of generations of Indigenous peoples through living in their human and natural ecologies and developing and sustaining relationships with their environments.

**Indigenous Perspectives:** This term pertains to how the curriculum deals with Indigenous ways of knowing and ways of being. Indigenous perspectives, when integrated, can offer ways of knowing and learning alternative to those derived from the Euro-Canadian tradition of education, as well as ways of relating in and with place alternative to those of settler traditions.

**First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content:** This term pertains to what information about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues is included in the curriculum and how it is presented. Content about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues integrated into the curriculum can provide students with the opportunity to learn about the cultures and experiences of Indigenous peoples and the history and present of relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers.

**Governmentality:** Governmentality refers to forms of discipline that individuals practice that guide self-regulation to social norms. The social purpose of governmentality is to make individuals conform to whatever the dominant society considers normal or desirable. Governmentality is brought about by a range of practices, meant to constitute and define the ways that people see themselves and interact with one another, and society in general.

**Liberal Multiculturalism:** In liberal states, the projects and policies instituted to recognize, mediate, accommodate and limit the competing claims to rights and recognition of diverse cultural groups.

**Neoliberalism:** Neoliberalism is a theory of political economic practice that proposes that human wellbeing can be best advanced by reforming relations between people and places according to the vocabulary of the market. Neoliberal strategies include political policies that privilege the strengthening of private property, privatization of public services and resources, increasing competition, and managerialism. They also emphasize

a particular form of governmentality concerned with producing and governing people as rational and self-interested individuals, inclining them towards market engagement and economic ‘rationality’.

**Ontology:** In the context of this thesis, the term ontology refers to the basic and fundamental elements of reality. An ontology says what there is, what exists, what reality is really made of, and it dictates what the most general features and relations of these things are.

**Priorness:** The claim to territorial jurisdiction based on prior occupancy of land or territory. This concept is problematized by Elizabeth Povinelli in *Economies of Abandonment* and “The Governance of the Prior,” further discussed in this thesis.

**Settler:** The term settler refers to non-Indigenous peoples who inhabit, and generally control, the lands of Indigenous peoples.

**Sovereignty:** The term sovereignty refers to a group of people’s independent authority and right to govern themselves and their lands according to their traditions.

**Unceded:** In this thesis, this term refers to land that has not been surrendered, granted, or transferred by treaty.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

There is a growing awareness in Canada of the need for decolonizing education. The legacies of colonialism have left First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in this country severely underrepresented in educational curricula and texts (Godlewska et al. 2010; Godlewska et al. forthcoming), and social inequalities persist in life expectancy, health, incarceration rates, and education indicators. There is also a growing awareness in Canada that the well-being and prosperity of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people is essential to the health of the country (Department of Justice, 2014; Health Canada, 2014; Kanu, 2011;). Yet First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people continue to be marginalized in and through many public institutions in Canada (Drummond & Watts, 2011). As a settler and beneficiary of past and present Indigenous dispossession in Canada, I am beholden to a critical approach to Indigenous-settler relations. Education, which arguably defines and normalizes knowledge, is worthy of particular attention (Battiste, 1998), especially as it has functioned as a tool of colonialism (Bonvillain, 2001; Freire, 1970/2000, 1995, 2004; Haig-Brown, 1988; Jung, 2009; Kelm, 1996; Lobo & Talbot, 2001; Miller, 1996, 2000; Milloy, 1999; Regan, 2010). The connection between settler-colonial and Indigenous relations and the Euro-Canadian focus in education has informed a substantial literature that calls for the decolonization of education and focuses largely on arguments for addressing social inequalities by increasing inclusion and representation in education and social institutions more generally (Abdi, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Battiste & Henderson, 2009; Wane, 2009). The work of Battiste in particular emphasizes the effects of cognitive imperialism on Indigenous peoples and the need for incorporating Indigenous

perspectives in Canadian social institutions, particularly educational institutions. The issue of inclusion is complicated by competing visions of what Indigenous perspectives might include. Critiques of the cognitive imperialism of Euro-Canadian pedagogy and curricula call into question the legitimacy of contemporary Canadian educational institutions. Decolonization of education must also mean that we interrogate within institutions “the existing cultural interpretative monopoly of European knowledges, assumptions, and methodologies” (Battiste 2013, 103).

Issues of self-governance, land title, and cultural continuity, vital to the well-being of First Nations people (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998), are becoming increasingly prominent in BC. Most of the land in BC is unceded and, as recent Supreme Court of Canada rulings have guaranteed greater First Nation control over their traditional territories, Aboriginal title and treaty negotiations are finally being recognized as central issues for all people in the province. Section 35 of the Constitution Act recognizes and affirms Aboriginal rights and treaty rights, both existing and those that may be acquired (Constitution Act, 1982). According to the BC Treaty Commission there are 65 First Nations in BC participating in, or having completed, the BC treaty negotiations process. These represent 104 of the 203 *Indian Act* Bands in BC. Unlike much of the rest of Canada, where after Confederation the Dominion of Canada continued the British Crown’s policy of making treaties before opening up the west for settlement, only 14 land purchase agreements were made on Vancouver Island (BC Treaty Commission; Harris, 2002). No treaties were made on the mainland of BC until the Nisga’a negotiated the first Modern Treaty in the Province, which came into effect in May 2000 (Nisga’a Lisims Government). To date, there are 8 completed Modern Treaties in BC (BC Treaty

Commission: Why Treaties?). On June 26, 2014, the Supreme Court of Canada (SCC) declared the Tsilhqot'in Nation's title to approximately 1900 km<sup>2</sup>, and confirmed that Aboriginal title gives the Tsilhqot'in the right to control the land (Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia, 2014)<sup>1</sup>. The Province of BC has recognized that it must develop relationships with First Nations based on "mutual respect, recognition, and reconciliation" (Recognition and Reconciliation Protocol, 2009).

Educating British Columbians about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples is central to developing mutual respect, recognition, and reconciliation (Regan, 2010; TRC, 2012; TRC 1015a). The BC Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of educating mainstream BC society about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' perspectives and knowledge. In 2006, the Aboriginal Education Enhancements Branch of the British Columbia (BC) Ministry of Education generated a report, *Shared Learnings*, on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the British Columbia K-10 curriculum (revised 2010), recognizing the need to provide all students in BC with knowledge of, and opportunities to share experiences with, First Nations in BC. Their aim is to promote understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' perspectives and knowledge among all students. However, a closer look at the BC K-12 curricular and supporting policy documents, which is the focus of this thesis, reveals the challenges to meaningful and substantial integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives and knowledge into the BC school curriculum.

This study is divided into two parts. Part I provides a review of critical literature on settler colonialism, Indigenous critical theory, and critical pedagogy, which provide

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<sup>1</sup> This represents a small portion of the Tsilhqot'in's actual claim for traditional territory.

the theoretical framework for understanding the realities and challenges of settler colonialism in Canada, and in education particularly. Chapter 1 examines the roots of settler colonialism, and the discourses that inform understandings of human relationships in and with place and between settlers and Indigenous peoples. This chapter discusses the kinds of thinking, based on mastery and exploitation of others and of nature that inform settler-colonial practices, and, ultimately education in settler societies. Chapter 2 highlights settler-colonial strategies for eliminating Indigeneity and contemporary practices of Indigenous dispossession in settler societies. This chapter highlights strategies of assimilation of Indigenous peoples through education, the management and denial of Indigenous sovereignty, the exploitation of Indigenous lands, and the neoliberalization of Indigenous peoples and their lands. Chapter 3 examines the connections between the contemporary neoliberalization of education and settler colonialism. This chapter illustrates how settler sovereignty and traditions of place are naturalized in settler societies through education and focuses on how neoliberal discourses and governmentalities further settler interests and obscure and subvert Indigenous knowledge and education.

Part 2 presents a study of how Indigenous content and perspectives are integrated into education in BC. This section includes analyses of the BC curricular documents and highlights the largely problematic representations, silences, and omissions of Indigenous content and perspectives, as well as the challenges that settler-colonial discourses and ‘commonsense’ pose to decolonizing education in BC. Chapter 5 is an analysis of the quantity of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content covered in the curricular documents and the number of students who take each course. Though a purported goal of the BC

Ministry of Education is to provide all students in BC with opportunities to learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, this chapter demonstrates that very few courses contain coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives and that few students are taking courses that include substantial content. Chapter 6 involves a critical analysis of BC Ministry of Education policy on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum, and discusses the quality, breadth, and depth of the content included in the curriculum. Chapter 7 draws on Critical Indigenous Theory, Settler Colonialism Theory and Critical Pedagogy to discuss the challenges to meaningful and substantial decolonization of education in BC based on the content of the curriculum documents.

## **CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Roots of Settler Colonialism**

Studying settler colonialism is fundamental to understanding the possibilities and challenges to the decolonization of Canadian education and society. Settler colonialism refers to the settlement of Indigenous lands. As such, settler colonialism is distinct from extractive colonialism, though they often coexist. Colonialism is always structural and affective in the sense that it structures daily life but is also deeply linked to what people think is right and natural in life. Settler-colonial structures inform the system of thought that categorizes social life in settler societies and then presents the results to settlers as the true account of their world (Weeks 1982). These structures, and the generally unexamined emotional assumptions that accompany them, are constantly reinforced in the systems set up by settlers to structure their society: law; education; commerce; land, space, and property management; and in their daily practices. Settler-colonialism theory has begun to analyze these structures and affects of colonialism and my research draws on that literature.

### **Differentiating Settler and Extractive Colonialism**

Extractive and settler colonialism both work to dispossess Indigenous peoples, but in different ways. Extractive colonialism establishes relations of domination by harnessing Indigenous labour, and when that is exhausted, slave labour, to extract wealth from Indigenous land, to be transported back to the metropole (Abadie, 2011; Dougherty, 2011; Holden, 2011; Veracini, 2011; Wolfe, 2006,). In the long run, settler colonialism

does not require the labour of the Indigenous population; instead, the settler comes to Indigenous lands to stay and displace Indigenous populations. In time, the Indigenous people become excess to the needs of the settlers. Extractive colonialism is based on and reinforces the distinction between colony and metropole, while settler colonialism erases it (Fanon, 1963, Frank 1979; Freire, 1970/2000; Memmi, 1965/1991; Veracini, 2011). Settler colonialism involves the dispossession of Indigenous lands and their repossession by settlers and their agents such as Indian agents, missionaries, government administrators, and developers (Mawani, 2009; Pasternak, 2015). Unlike enslaved or indentured people, whether Indigenous or brought from elsewhere, Indigenous people in settler-colonial contexts are an impediment to settler access to land, so increasing their population is counterproductive (Wolfe, 2006). Whereas extractive colonialism maintains strong political, economic, and identity channels with the metropole, settler society ultimately seeks to establish some form of autochthony for itself, to legitimate, justify, and mythologize its belonging in the new place and express independence from the mother country. Because settlers come from somewhere else, they bring their histories, cosmologies, ontologies, and epistemologies and reimagine Indigenous places through these (King 2003; Wolfe 2013a; Wolfe 2006). The settler also imagines Indigenous lands as always already open and welcoming to waves of immigration and settlement, and thus can consider him/herself as fulfilling a 'nation of immigrants'. In establishing this new place as their pre-ordained home, settlers reject the historic violence of their original homes and in proclaiming themselves post-colonial, absolve themselves of the colonial violence that allows them to be in Indigenous lands.

Contrary to the assertions of the current Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Wherry, 2009), Canada does have a history and a present of colonialism. Canada's modeling of extractive colonialism to the rest of the world through the headquartering of 75% of global mining companies demonstrates this country's ability to ape the colonialism that built the European Metropole and its ongoing commitment to colonialism, not just in Canada but also within the international context (Abadie, 2011; Dougherty, 2011; Holden, 2011; Hall, 2013). Assertions that Canada has no involvement in colonialism misrepresent Canada's role in the global economy and demonstrate the self-serving nature of the ignorance of colonialism that prevails in the 'New World' and in liberal, settler-colonial societies like Canada. Rex Murphy's (2013) repudiation of Canada's history and continuing settler colonialism notwithstanding, the historical and continued colonial relations between settlers and Indigenous peoples in Canada have allowed the Canadian settler state, liberalism, neoliberalism, and capitalism to flourish. These relations, predicated on the dispossession of Indigenous lands and their repossession by the settler state, are part of a process that continues today in the form of, for example, comprehensive land-claim settlements, disputes over land rights, pipeline construction, mine development, damming of rivers, clear cutting of old-growth forests, and toxic contamination from mining and industrial development. Just as the technologies of neoliberalization are about the re-management of populations (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013; Vimalassery, 2013), they are part of a long process of the attempted re-management of Indigenous populations by settler-colonial states. Significantly, neoliberal governance has translated Indigenous relationships to land into a set of rights according

to Western notions of property, better enabling settler-colonial states to control Indigenous peoples, their land and resources and limiting their sovereignty claims.

## **Understanding Settler Colonialism**

### **Structures of Settler Colonialism**

As Patrick Wolfe asserts, the frontier violence of early contact is not a thing of the past but is fundamental to the colonial structures that continue to shape daily life in settler societies (Wolfe, 2006). Wolfe's point is that rather than understanding settlement as means to a postcolonial end, it is important to highlight how settlement and settler colonialism are ends in themselves. European notions of space, place, and subjectivity inform settler-colonial structures like law, education, and commerce and land, space, and property management. These structures are represented in legal, economic, and cultural force applied to Indigenous land and societies. Analyzing settler-colonial structures in law, education, commerce, and land management better enables us to understand how aspects of settler colonialism have continued from past moments of contact, colonization, and settlement into the present formation of the liberal-multicultural Canadian state, and, in particular, current neoliberal projects in Canada. In Canada these structures have been most significantly influenced by and through engagement with discourses derived from English philosophy, common law, conquest, and economics. Settler colonialism informs the formal and informal policies of liberal-multiculturalism that position Indigenous people as 'one culture among many' in need of proper 'representation' and 'recognition,' but typically deny Indigenous sovereignty. Where Indigenous land rights are recognized, they are typically structured in the language and interests of settler-colonial notions of sovereignty and nationalism, according to the drawing of boundaries of national-

territorial states that demarcate the proper space and activities of a nation (Fraser 2009). In particular, Settler colonialism informs extractive-resource capitalism and contemporary neoliberal projects that seek to continue to redefine, or as Elden (2007) puts it, territorialize, Indigenous land in terms that benefit settler interests.

### **Settler Territorialities**

Settler colonialism produces and relies upon the establishment of a grounded duality where Indigenous and settler meet: land. At its heart, the duality of Indigenous-settler is a territorial one. Whatever post-colonial scholars may argue, the primary motivation for displacement of Indigenous peoples was never about ideas of race, religion, ethnicity, or even position on the great chain of being (Lovejoy, 1936/1964), though colonialism made use of all of these, but access to territory. “Territoriality is settler colonialism’s specific, irreducible element” (Wolfe, 2006, 388; Harris, 2004). So long as Indigenous people remain in place, settler society remains settler-colonial. This is a problem for settler societies as they exist in the fiction of complete jurisdiction and the continued existence of Indigenous polities makes a lie of this structural assertion (Macoun & Strakosch, 2013 ). Arguably the most problematic aspect of the Indigenous/settler duality is the way that Indigenous people, by their material, epistemological, and ontological presence, exceed the structures of the settler state. The central problem of settler colonialism is the presence of Indigenous people on the land that the settler seeks to access and control. That is to say that the central problem of settler colonialism, and arguably the central problem of contemporary Canada, is one of competing sovereignties, though there is within this another problem of what sovereignty

ought to mean based on competing and possibly incommensurate epistemological and ontological perspectives regarding land and our place in it.

### **Settler Sovereignty and Territory**

Settler attitudes to land lie at the heart of settler sovereignty and territory. Settler-colonial states, like their progenitors in Europe, depend upon a particular notion of sovereignty to justify and guarantee their continuance. Foucault (1997) reduces pre-18<sup>th</sup> century European conceptions of sovereignty to the rights of the sovereign and the obligation of everyone else to obey. These rights and obligations were presumed by colonizers to extend to the context of colonization and settlement of the New World, and later were assumed by the Dominion of Canada. As such, Canada's sovereignty as a settler-colonial state was its right to control its population, land, and resources, according to how it defined these (Williams, 2014). The deep-rooted colonial structures introduced above are derived from conceptions of territory and sovereignty that colonial powers and settlers refined from what they brought with them. While there may be no satisfactory discussion in contemporary Canadian society, politics, or law of the legality of extinguishing another nation's rights without war, consent or negotiation (McCrossan, 2015), there was much discussion in Europe and the colonies of the right of colonial and settler-colonial powers to dispossess Indigenous people in the moments of contact, colonialism, and European settlement.

Elizabeth Povinelli's critiques of the discourses of liberalism and the traditions of English thought provide important insight into how settlers imagined, and imagine still, their right to Indigenous land. Povinelli's concept of the *governance of the prior* explains settler-colonial thinking about territory and sovereignty (2011a; 2011b). *Governance of*

*the prior* is the way English common law and philosophy established priorness as the guarantor of sovereignty (Povinelli, 2011a). Povinelli traces the *governance of the prior* to extinguishability, through seizure and conquest, in English common and property law. The rights of a people or nation were understood in terms of personal liberty, and property, which were all subject to purchase, force, or refusal of acknowledgement (Povinelli, 2011b). This was especially important for nations engaging in conquest or warfare that wished to establish and justify their rights of sovereignty in conquered territories. Rights were guaranteed until and unless they were extinguished through force, purchase, or non-recognition. In this formulation, the priority, or rights, of prior persons or people were articulated in the terms of, and against the sovereignty of, the sovereign power that wished to extinguish these rights.

Colonial powers exerted their sovereignty in North America in different ways. In some places in North America British colonial power recognized and acknowledged the priority of Indigenous sovereignty and then extinguished it through practices of elimination (warfare, displacement to reservations, Indigenous child removal, residential schools, attacks on Indigenous cultures, see below) (Povinelli, 2011a). Other places were subjected to procedures supported by arguments derived from natural law asserting that lands improperly used by the Indigenous populations, according to European notions of proper use, could be claimed as empty and thus subject to colonial sovereignties without extinguishment (Povinelli, 2011a; Reid, 2010; Wolfe, 2006). Assumptions about the proper use of land, which would later be referred to as *terra nullius*, were based on European notions of property and were essentially a settler-colonial method of ignoring Indigenous presence and sovereignty in the land (Seawright, 2014). In the legal

discourses that accompanied British colonialism, it was assumed that British laws were universal and applied wherever British subjects were. This is particularly evident in the influential 1765-1769 treatise on English law by William Blackstone (Blackstone, 2004). Blackstone held that any uninhabited land discovered and settled by English subjects would itself become subject to English laws. In lands that were conquered or ceded to English sovereignty, the laws of those lands would abide until changed by the English sovereign. Blackstone's treatise well illustrates British settler-colonial attitudes towards territory and sovereignty in Indigenous lands. The articulation of the 'discovery of uninhabited countries,' the privileging of English law and subjectivity, the extinguishment of rights through conquest, and civilizationist rhetoric are all significant components of settler attitudes to land. While the rights, or the priority, of the prior were sometimes presumed, extinguishment of these rights was the strategy used to maintain the authority of British sovereignty in British settler colonies.

Settler-colonial attitudes to land emerged in relation to the *Doctrine of Discovery*, the purpose of which was to mediate competing claims among European powers to sovereignty rights in newly discovered lands (Reid, 2010). The *Doctrine of Discovery* originated in several rulings initiated by the Roman Catholic Church in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that "provided the legal foundation for European colonialism" (Reid, 2010, p. 33). In effect, the Doctrine, drawing on the presumed universality of the authority of the Roman Catholic Church, established the legal authority for European powers to claim sovereignty over 'discovered' lands. The effect of the *Doctrine of Discovery* was to dissolve Indigenous sovereignty in their lands as, even where and when Indigenous

sovereignty was recognized, the *Doctrine* presumed and guaranteed the sovereignty of the European nation by whom it had been discovered (Reid, 2010; Wolfe, 2006).

These moments of contact, colonization, and settlement were occurring during the period of the emergence of the modern European territorial state, which came to be understood and structured in territorial terms. Colonial powers' territorial actions derived from a conception of territory as the land common to a people or nation, subject to that nation's or people's sovereignty, laws, and customs (Agnew 1994). This conception of land as territory is thoroughly political and understands land in territorial ways: ownable, mappable, calculable, controllable and subject to borders (Anderson, 1996; Elden, 2010; Latour, 1987). While only certain societies operate in territorial ways (Soja, 1971), settler-colonial powers assumed that the European model was universal and explained the world more generally (Elden, 2010), an assumption that continues in contemporary settler societies.

### **Natural Law**

The very possibility of conceptualizing land as territory depends on ontological and epistemological orientations derived from the Western traditions of thought. Western philosophy in the 16<sup>th</sup> through 18<sup>th</sup> centuries took the universalization of natural law as a matter of course, and based its study on the methods that natural philosophers used to study the natural world, using methods of science to study 'human nature'. At the time of colonization, Western philosophy dealt with three systems of law: civil, the laws of nations, and natural law. Civil law governed relations between citizen-subjects. The laws of nations governed commerce and political relations among nations, and provided the context for colonial expansion. Natural law provided the ethical foundation for all law, in

that law was conceived as derived from the nature of the world and of ‘man,’ guaranteed and given by God, and thus universally applicable to all peoples (Murphy, 2011). Natural law was not a formal system of law, but rather a mentality that informed the formal legal system as well as Europeans’ thinking about their relations to each other and the wider world (Fitzmaurice, 2007). Natural law arguments that emphasizing ownership of property based on use, especially defined as the exploitation of nature, were employed by colonial and settler powers to counter possible Indigenous claims to sovereignty over their lands (Fitzmaurice, 2007; 2014).

Natural law provided a framework for the study of political theory; rights and duties were conceptualized in terms of sovereigns and subjects, and this framework was bound up with the concept of the state of nature. The ‘Great Chain of Being’ was a nascent theory of social development by stages, with implications for the emergence of private property (Locke, 1690/1980). The stages-of-being view assumed that human society proceeds through four stages: subsistence, pastoralism, agriculturalism, and commercialism. These developments in natural law were part of the empirical turn in the ‘science of man,’ evident in the work of thinkers like Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke, and were linked to the use of history to provide empirical data about how people and societies behave. The European ‘discovery’ of the New World and the development of knowledge of other peoples across the globe profoundly influenced the European study of human nature and the development of Western understandings of land and liberty (Fitzmaurice, 2014; 2007). The attitude of legal theorists like Blackstone derived from the perspective put forward by John Locke in his *Second Treatise of Government*, that all humans are equal in the state of nature and

equally governed by natural law. Contrary to Hobbes who saw the state of nature as war, Lockean natural theory assumes that the state of nature is one of freedom, equality, and peace in part due to the existence of private property. Locke argued that just as the laws of nature guaranteed rights against personal harm, they also guaranteed rights of private property, where liberty is connected to property relations (Salter, 2001). Lockean theory holds that laws, both those of nature and of society, protect liberty in and as property relations. Attitudes towards the use and exploitation of labour present in natural law ideas of land and property were central to European expansion and colonization (Fitzmaurice, 2007). The universalization of private property rights in European discourse was naturalized in private property relations, in the ways of relating in and with land according to European notions of property and ownership (Vimilassery, 2013). By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, rhetoric regarding ‘backwards societies’ improper use of land had been cemented in Western thinking, with the British philosopher John Stuart Mill stating in his influential 1859 treatise *On Liberty*: “Despotism is a legitimate form of government in dealing with barbarians, provided that it aims at improving things and it uses means that actually do bring improvement” (Mill, 2008, p. 7). Settler-colonial conceptions of liberty are thus inseparable from these notions of ownership and private property.

## **Settler-Colonial Philosophy**

### **Place, Space, and Subjectivism**

At the heart of Indigenous and settler relations are attitudes towards land which themselves are based on understandings of space and relations in and with place. The thinking that informed settler-colonial powers’ attitudes towards land and property was largely oriented towards mastery, particularly the exploitation of nature and mastery of

space and place. Settlers' view of the Indigenous land they dispossess and repossess is informed by a mechanistic and materialistic view of the world, according to which space is understood as matter in three-dimensional and volumetric form. This view carries with it the assertion that place is the same as 'simple location', something's position in space (Casey, 1996; 1998). Influential 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century European thought, particularly the work of John Locke, Isaac Newton, and Leibniz, was dominated by conceptions of space and place that emphasized measurability and the distance between locations, where the emphasis on the relation of distance between things ultimately relegated place to a system of purely relational positions (Casey, 1998), within a general and global network of relations in constant flow (Malpas, 2012). The dissolution of place, as a network of relations, into space, where space was conceived of as entirely relative, meant the "loss of the concrete particularity of place *as well as* the abstract absoluteness of infinite space – and the dissolution of both in the emptiness of sites" (Casey, 1998, p. 289).

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Western philosophers had come to see place as merely the relative coordinates of a point within relational space, the result of which was the concealment of the concrete particularity of specific places. This tendency of thinking, rather than paying attention to the particularities of context in places, led to the imposition of normalizing and homogenizing processes of the domination of places. This conceptualization of space supported the logics of sovereignty that were rearticulated through those of property and ownership in the division and parceling of land into discrete, fenced-in spaces. Normalizing and homogenizing processes were also imposed onto citizen-subjects through built architecture and disciplinary regimes (Casey, 1998). To better control populations, European and Indigenous, disciplinary spaces in European

and Euro-American societies in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries like prisons, hospitals, factories, and schools were organized as a series of cells or sites making up a building, which itself was connected as one site among the many to form the particular institutional structure (Foucault, 1970; 1977/1995). This organization allowed for greater control of each site: a cell within a ward within a prison within a penal system, all organized according to penal and juridical discourse for the control and discipline of citizen-subjects. The result of the collapse of place into site was a particular form of domination of human subjects, where place was fixed, the individual fixed in his/her place, constantly located and subject to discipline (Casey, 1998). The dominance of relational space and site is a significant aspect of the control of populations by states (Foucault, 2010; Crampton, 2007). In most of the sciences and social sciences, local differences and place itself became subordinated to a purely measurable and relational space (Casey, 1996; 1998).

The collapse of place into space and space into measurable sites coincided with the tendency of Western philosophy to subjectivism and the founding of reality in human perception, thinking, and experience. Subjectivism in Western philosophy is an understanding of the world in terms of subjects and objects, and takes things as always appearing in the world as objects in relation to a subject. The attempt in Western thinking to determine the foundation of the world and what knowledge is available about the world, for example in terms of encounters with consciousness or sensory data, requires a particular kind of subjectivism. In taking the mind or the material world as the foundation for knowledge of the world, Western philosophers privileged the separation of subject from object. The influential work of Rene Descartes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century shifted this

subjectivism from an attempt to determine the foundation of reality and knowledge of reality to an understanding of the world in which the subject, as the thinking mind, knows the world as a series of objects extended in a space external to the subject (Malpas, 2012a). As such the subjectivism of Western philosophy, beginning to some extent in the thinking of Descartes in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, came to consist in an epistemology rooted in the human as subject, and an ontology rooted in the world as object (Malpas, 2012a). By the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, and related to the separation of subject from object and mind from the world, much prevalent European thinking had begun to see nature as separate from humans rather than bound up with human nature (Malpas, 2012a; Williams quoted in Raibmonn 2005, p. 127). This corresponded to a Eurocentric view of history and nature where history was understood as belonging to Europe and Indigenous people were considered to belong to nature (Raibmonn, 2005).

### **Objects, Resources, Commodities, and Settler Colonialism**

Contemporary Settler colonialism draws on the dissolution of place into mere site, taking things, people, and places as generic, not unique, and subject to global capital. The foundationalism and reductionism of Western philosophy are modes of thinking that seek to reduce things and the world to their basic elements that can be held and grasped, in the sense of making them ‘stand still’ to be more easily understood, but also in the sense that they can be taken up and used. This way of thinking reduces the complexity of the world, and the things in it, to make them separable and ready to be exploited, turned into ‘resources,’ removed and removable from their context or place (Malpas, 2012a). This tendency to treat things in the world as resources is evident in the Natural Law traditions that, for example, take every tree as a potential chair (Fitzmaurice, 2007). If everything in

the world is conceived as a resource, as a potential-use-unit, the question of when it is appropriate to turn the tree into a chair is easily obscured or ignored. The reduction of place to mere site among sites in a purely relational space is connected to this utilitarianism: rather than things belonging together where they are in making up a place that has unique qualities, places are abstracted to the mere sites from which things can be extracted, where one thing is distinguished from another by its exploitability. This way of thinking is to an extent objective, or objectifying, as it makes objects of things and imagines these objects to be homogenous, reducing their qualities to a set based on their utility and exploitability as resources. This way of thinking is, however, ultimately subjective because it is not a ‘view from nowhere’ but is rather based on a separation of subject from object which itself requires the human subject to perceive/perform this separation. This subjectivism informed the privileging of the relations of private property in the work of Locke as well as the European attitudes to nature and land that lie at the heart of the project of settler colonialism.

The contemporary mode of organizing and understanding the world in liberal and settler states is a kind of technological modernity that sees itself as the transformation of the historical, as radically separated from its own past, and privileges a rectilinear, measurable, and non place-specific conception of history (Fraser, 2009; Kymlicka, 2001; Malpas, 2012a; 2013b; Povinelli, 2011a; 2011b,). The subjectivism at the heart of Western thinking is implicated in what Heidegger identified as the development of nihilism in the history of Western thought, which also arguably dominates contemporary politics and culture in liberal and settler societies (Malpas, 2012a). The development of nihilism coincided with the rise of a technological way of ordering the world according to

the dominance of humans. This way of thinking has resulted in an ahistorical and 'placeless' way of organizing the world, and is centered on human subjectivity, a rationality that is humanist without any of the moral character of humanism. The result of the separation of subject from object is a dualism of the human and the world which presumes humans as the masters and possessors of nature, closely tied to the claims that knowledge is power and that knowledge of nature gives humans power over nature (King 2003; Leiss, 1994; Williams, 1975). The concepts prevalent in technological modernity generally result in the concealment and disguising of place through actions of domination that privilege the global, general, and homogenous, but on particular terms. Plugging in to conceptual commitments of technological modernity - in taking itself as no longer belonging to history, as in control of its destiny, as non-contingent and acontextual - settler colonialism reifies and globalizes its notions of space and time through spatial practice. The prevailing spatial practices of settler colonialism are neoliberal, corporate, and bureaucratic, parts of a globalizing system of bureaucratic government, corporatized economics, and neoliberalism that works to dominate and dissolve the places in and through which it appears (Malpas, 2012a). As long as the spatiality and territoriality of capitalism remains the assumed objective and neutral discursive centre in settler-colonial society, its enactment in space precludes alternative spatial formations. In the time of technological modernity, and subsequently in settler-colonial societies, the only questions deemed worth asking are technical or rational in character: how best do we maximize the utility of this or that resource, and how best do we transform this or that place as the site of resources?

## **Neoliberalism and the Reconfiguration of Place**

Settler colonialism is manifested in Canada through projects of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is not a dominant structural condition like settler colonialism but rather a theory of political economic practice that emphasizes a particular form of governmentality, or set of practices and strategies that individuals in their freedom use in controlling or governing themselves and others (Castree, 2006; Besley & Peters 2007; Ong, 2007). Neoliberal theory proposes that human wellbeing can be best advanced by “liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade” (Brewer, 2013, p. 230). Neoliberal strategies include political policies that privilege the strengthening of private property, privatization of public services and resources, increasing competition and managerialism (Elson, 2003; Isin, 1998). Neoliberal Governmentality is concerned with the production and governance of ‘free subjects,’ how to “administer people for self-mastery,” as a “mode of ‘governing through freedom’ that requires people to be free and self-managing in different spheres of everyday life” (Ong, 2007, p. 4). Simply put, neoliberal strategies are concerned with producing and governing people as rational and self-interested individuals, inclining them towards market engagement and economic ‘rationality’. Neoliberal strategies presume an understanding of people as ‘free-radical individuals,’ possessing an unbound subjectivity set free from structures and histories and networks, yet reliant on the violence of abstracting a lived experiential place rich in history and structured by networks of relationships into an abstract conception of disembodied space, of rupturing networks, relationality, and community (Malpas, 1999; 2012a).

The discourses of neoliberalism tend towards increasing abstraction from place. This can be seen in how these discourses privilege the expansion of entrepreneurialism and enterprise into other modes of social conduct, in the reformation of relations between self, other, and objective world according to the singular vocabulary of the market. This can also be seen in how these discourses privilege the ‘global’ over the ‘local,’ where the concept of the ‘global’ is itself a powerful abstraction. Of course, this does not mean the dissolution of the local, of place, but rather the reformation of relations (power relations) between people and with the natural world. The application of neoliberal strategies in a global context has resulted in particularly salient examples of the restructuring of people’s relationships in and towards place around the world. The actions of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in restructuring places around the ‘developing’ world according to particular discourses of marketization, monoculture, and Free Trade have led to significant social and environmental degradation to the significant benefit of the ‘developed’ world and enterprising and neoliberalized elites in ‘developing’ nations. In taking on relationships of debt and obligation, impoverished groups in ‘developing countries’ have limited their access to the ‘democratic choice’ and freedoms promised by neoliberal governance by becoming overwhelmingly obligated in their debts to ‘developed’ nations (Thomas & Clark, 2013). Neoliberal restructuring and reinforcing of colonial structures in places around the world has significant implications for gender relations in these places. Indebtedness, structural adjustment policies, and neoliberal development strategies have intensified women’s roles of production and reproduction (Nagar et al. 2002). Aihwa Ong demonstrates how in Asian nations the neoliberal rhetoric of pro-talent, self-managing and educated citizenship selectively

targets certain populations and places: In India there are about one million technology workers scattered amongst a vast and largely agrarian nation; in China educated and enterprising citizens are attracted to special zones in coastal cities. Neoliberal Governance has created small enclaves of ‘development’ in these nations as exceptions to the prevailing political, social, and economic systems. In China, the vast majority of people are not targeted by neoliberal governance, instead serving as a source of cheap labour power for ‘self-enterprising’ elites, giving the lie to the notion of ‘self-enterprise’ prized by neoliberalism (Ong, 2007; 2012).

## **Dispossession Past and Present**

### **Dispossession, Assimilation, Elimination**

Indigenous presence poses a threat to settler sovereignty. Settler colonialism takes Indigenous presence as difference, because the Indigenous presence that poses such a threat to settler sovereignty is Indigenous connection, ties and claims to land, which are deemed unfit, at odds with, and impeding settler capitalism and liberal citizenship. Wolfe has argued regarding Indigenous people that “where they are *is* who they are, and not only by their own reckoning,” (2006, p. 388) and Thomas King has suggested that land rights are the most important aspect of Indigenous sovereignty in supporting linguistic and cultural identity (King, 2013). Indigenous difference is not merely a matter of culture or ethnicity rather it is about Indigenous sovereignty over their lands. This sovereignty challenges Eurocentric, anthropocentric, phallogocentric, globalist-capitalist development, and also the very ground upon which Canadian sovereignty rests.

The territorialization of Indigenous lands by settlers is enacted by more and less overt practices of elimination, drawing on and reinforcing settler-colonial structures (Morgenson, 2011; Veracini, 2011; Wolfe, 2006; 2013). Settler strategies of elimination begin in frontier violence and killing and move to the use of a series of removals that are territorial and material as well as discursive and affective. The initial practices of elimination are based on frontier killing and physical and sexual violence, military intimidation, and paramilitary policing (Altenbernd & Trimble Young, 2014; Harris, 2002; Smith, A. 2005a; Wolfe 2013a; 2013b). There was significantly more frontier violence and killing in the United States than in Canada as evidenced for example in the 1830s forced removals and dislocation west of the Mississippi of Plains Indians from

their lands to make way for the development of the slave-plantation economy (Wolfe, 2006). However, the fur trade in Canada saw its share of violence and killing, particularly in British Columbia where coastal trading ships were heavily armed and greed and cross-cultural misunderstandings frequently lead to killings (Clayton, 2000; Gibson, 1992; Harris, 2004). In the interior of British Columbia, “perceived assaults on the personnel or property of the traders would be met with quick, spectacular displays of violence” (Harris, 2004, p. 169). In BC, with the establishment of settler colonies and increasing settlement, state (ie: British military) power was enacted at first through the shelling and destruction of several coastal Indigenous villages, and subsequently in displays of intimidation where British warships would anchor just off an Indigenous village and “ostentatiously prepare the guns” (Harris, 2004, p. 169). European settlement of Indigenous lands increasingly encroached on the borders of Indigenous peoples’ lands, and increasing settlement required the removal of Indigenous people. Dispossession and displacement in North America was accompanied by the re-emplacement of Indigenous peoples into circumscribed and policed spaces of reserves or reservations. Indian Reservations and First Nations reserves acted, and continue to act, as “spatial strateg[ies] of dispossession and of population management” (Harris, 2004, p. 174). These circumscribed areas or spaces are managed and controlled, represented on maps with their corresponding names and acreages, both of which function as settler-colonial technologies (Harris, 2002; 2004).

The physical, territorial elimination of Indigenous peoples is accompanied by affective and discursive eliminations. The territorial practices of elimination originate in the settler demand for Indigenous land that requires Indigenous disappearance. Settler-

colonial violence is practiced to dispossess, displace, and physically remove Indigenous peoples from their land. By late 19<sup>th</sup> century, settler takeover of Indigenous land had forced the relocation or dispersal of many indigenous groups, drastic decreases in population, and reduction of most indigenous peoples to a state of dependence. The dispossession and displacement of Indigenous peoples profoundly affected Indigenous affective and gender relations and the division of labour (Jacobs, 2009; Mawani, 2009; Smith, A. 2005a; 2010). Dependence on government rations and increasing linkage into the money economy meant that social roles associated with food gathering changed radically, altering the very foundations of social interaction and interactions with land and territory. In some environments land was the power base from which women's autonomy emerged. Where women's culture and status were tied to common tribal ownership of land and women functioned as farmers, colonization and the moving of land to individual and male hands frequently saw diminution of women's authority (Jacobs, 2009; Mawani, 2009; Smith, A. 2005a).

Indigenous intimacies and value systems were threatened by displacement and dispossession, and also by Christian missionary work spreading European, patriarchal gender norms (Jacobs, 2009; McKegney, 2014; Smith, A. 2005a). From the early Christianization of Europe, women were identified as the bastion of paganism, Indigenous cultures, language, and practices, to be subjugated and controlled (Adas, 1989). The Christian mission was continued in the Americas accompanied by a civilizing mission for which the assimilation of Indigenous people into the Christian ecumene and through assimilation into settler society was the means and the end. For example, missionaries and Indian agents in BC were intent on keeping Indigenous people in their

communities and restricting their movement in order to aid in the moralizing and civilizing mission, bringing them closer to ‘progress’ (Raibmon, 2005, p. 27). In particular, missionaries and Indian agents were keen to restrict Indigenous women’s mobility for fear of their moral and spiritual degradation through prostitution in settler settlements (Mawani, 2009).

Settler-colonial discourse imagines Indigenous peoples and cultures as dying or disappearing. Settler states sought to accelerate this ‘cultural death’ through child removal programs, residential schooling, regulations of ‘status,’ and other assimilation policies, a sentiment best exemplified in the edict, “Kill the Indian in him and save the man” (Pratt quoted in Wolfe, 2006, p. 397). By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, settlers in North America were engaging in kidnapping and virtual enslavement of Indigenous children in the frontier regions; missionaries and government officials made sporadic efforts to remove Indigenous children to institutions (Jacobs, 2009). The Canadian and American States both sought to accelerate what they saw as inevitable ‘cultural death’ through child removal programs and educational policies predicated on assimilation. Duncan Campbell Scott, deputy director of the Department of Indian Affairs in Canada, argued in 1920 that his effort to place Indigenous people in a ‘state of tutelage’ sought its own end in a time when “there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question” (Scott, 1996). Indigenous children were removed from their families and communities by force and coercion. Child removal and education were intended to break the connection between Indigenous children and their families, communities, cultures, and ways of life in order to sever their connection, ties, and claims to the land (Jacobs, 2009; Regan, 2010). Boarding and residential day schools subjected

Indigenous children to a set of initiation rituals and daily routines that altered their sensory conception of season and place and replaced these with European notions of abstract time and space (Jacobs, 2009). This process of disciplining Indigenous children's bodies is also related to the disciplining of European poor populations to produce bodies suitable to labour, subjected to the twin ideals of economized time and space: measured time and mobility. One can work anywhere at any time. This disciplinary practice occurred in the process of the urbanization of peasantry in Europe and elsewhere. "The spatial energy of capitalism works to deterritorialize people, to detach them from prior bonds between people and place [and] reterritorialize them in relation to the requirements of capital" (Harris, 2004, p.172). In the context of settler colonialism, these disciplinary practices were intended to transfer their land to modern, white-settler colonial control and to 'modernize' Indigenous bodies to produce 'useful' subjects. Education of Indigenous children promised to make them useful, to make their land more amenable to capitalism, and their bodies and lives more amenable to the labour of capitalism. Through education, Indigenous people were moved from their land into schools and the workforce.

Indigenous presence has been further targeted through practices of identity regulation that include, in the United States for example, miscegenation and dilution of Indigenous presence through blood quantum where Indigeneity declines through interbreeding (Lawrence, 2004; Smith, L. 1999; Wolfe, 2006). The Dominion of Canada established its official relationship with Indigenous people in the 1876 Indian Act, which was responsible for determining and parceling out the legally recognized Indigenous identity of Indian Status (Morgensen, 2011). The Act privileged a patriarchal descent and between 1876 and 1985 the effects of the Act had rescinded the status of over twenty-five

thousand women, through which, one to two million descendants of these women have been denied legally recognized Indigenous identity (Morgensen, 2011).

### **Othering and Authenticity**

Indigenous cultures and identities are further regulated in settler societies through processes of Othering and the imposition of standards of ‘authenticity’ onto Indigenous peoples. The separations of subject from object, mind from body, and humans from the world, central to liberal and settler thinking, are at the heart of a differential framing of Indigenous and settler peoples that Elizabeth Povinelli calls the *tense of the other*. The *tense of the other*, which Povinelli asserts is at the heart of the discourses that inform liberal and settler societies, refers to two principles underwriting the settler/Indigenous territorial duality: the *autological subject* and *genealogical society* (2011a; 2011b). According to Povinelli the *autological subject* is invested by liberal and settler-colonial discourse with the kind of subjectivity associated with autonomy and self-determinism, and thus with liberal discourses of freedom. Whereas, *genealogical society* is positioned by these same discourses in relation to the constraints of custom, social determination, and inheritance which bind the subject in the conservatism of tradition and culture. According to these differential positionings of subjectivity “the modern is said to consist of voices freed from the constraints of kinship, the pre-modern to consist of those constrained by kinship” (Povinelli, 2011a p. 24). In particular, settler-colonial discourse positions tradition and culture as belonging to the past, and assumes that liberation from these represents freedom in ‘modern’ societies.

Neither the *autological subject* or *genealogical society*, nor Indigenous or settler for that matter, can be understood without reference to each other. Freedom for the

*autological subject*, articulated most significantly as liberalism, is always freedom from the bounds of kinship, context, and place itself, and as a result these are considered to be the traditionalisms, constraints and limitations of ‘culture’. As such, the *tense of the other* involves ahistoricization and dislocation: the loss of a sense of history, context, and place. Contemporary liberal and settler societies understand themselves not as part of a stage of history, as belonging to a particular place in the world, or as culturally contingent, but rather as the global norm and the end of history. This ‘end’ is assumed to be both the final product of a historical ‘progression’ and the termination of history as a process. The *autological subject*, at the heart of settler subjectivity, assumes ubiquitous spatial presence, becomes the normal in settler societies, and denies its historicity by denying its past.

### **Authenticity as Mythic Past and the Historicization of Indigenous Peoples**

The *tense of the other* offers a way of understanding the discursive and practical division of Indigenous and settler in settler colonialism, especially in regards to the Othering of culture in general, and Indigenous cultures in particular. Both settler and Indigenous are mutually implicated in the determination of social belonging in settler societies: the autological-settler subject representing freedom, modernity, and the future; and genealogical-Indigenous society representing the constraints of kinship, culture, and the past (Povinelli, 2011b; 2011b). In presuming its ubiquity and universality, liberal-democratic and settler-colonial discourse sets itself up as the field in which multiculturalism, and culture itself, takes place. The ontological assumptions of settler colonialism operate as the centre from which to view, and survey, other culture(s) in settler societies. At the same time that settler colonialism disavows its historical and

spatial contingencies, its place in the world and in history, it applies standards of ‘authenticity’ to Indigenous peoples and cultures, where ‘authentic’ Indigeneity is associated with attributes of the *genealogical society*: tradition and the past. These standards of authenticity, inflected by the *tense of the other*, represent Indigenous cultures as belonging to the past and simultaneously denies Indigenous peoples’ agency as producers of their own history, treating them instead as objects of settler history (Povinelli, 2011a).

The construction of Indigenous ‘authenticity’ in settler societies was established, for example, in exhibitions and performances of Indigenous life. Raibmon (2005) illustrates the nostalgic construction of romanticized ‘authentic’ Indigeneity that was promoted through tourist activities, ‘Indian’ performances, and the Indian arts and crafts industry. In delimiting the authenticity of Indigenous cultures and identities, the settler-colonial discourse of authenticity repudiated any development or adaptation within those cultures. Static representations of culture in ethnographic texts, museum displays, or stylized performances, for example, held and hold Indigenous people to “impossible standards of ahistorical cultural purity” or death (Raibmon, 2005, p. 9). The construction of Indigenous ‘authenticity’ established a fictional baseline for Indigenous cultures against which all changes were defined as cultural loss. The idealization of living Indigenous people by settler imaginations led to a kind of cultural death. Settlers who romanticized the “noble savage” and lamented his disappearance “also deplored the deviations from that ideal caused by the impact of civilization” (Dippie, 2006, p. 113). Indigenous peoples could not, in settler imaginations, adopt the trappings of modernity while retaining and maintaining their traditional, cultural, and familial relations and

responsibilities. As a result, Indigenous peoples' ability to combine the supposedly "mutually exclusive values and practices" of European technology with their own ways of living was, and to a large extent still is, viewed negatively (Dippie 2006, p. 115; Raibmonn 2005). "Authenticity is a discursive construct situated within specific places, eras, and contexts rather than an 'objective' term transcending time and space," yet employed in settler-colonial discourse the authenticity construct worked to position Indigenous people in a non-adaptive and historical time (Shephard, 2008, p. 128). Settler colonialism is predicated on the idea that 'Indians' belong in the past, the corollary being that only whites can be modern and have a future.

## **Indigenous Encounters with Settler Colonialism**

### **Indigenous Peoples and Settler Sovereignty, Territory, and Nationalism**

Sovereignty, associated in most contemporary state and social discourse with governance, political hierarchy, and legitimate uses of power, is a European concept, and one that Europeans and their descendants have tried to reserve for themselves (Alfred, 2005). In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the concepts of self-determination and sovereignty were wielded in a way that suggested that peoples can determine themselves independently of others, a position that contributed to a 20<sup>th</sup> century of war and suffering (Brown, 2007). This national concept of self-determination finds an echo in the liberal multicultural subject capable of 'determining' him/herself independently of others. In the liberal-multicultural discourse around managing cultural difference 'culture' is subordinated to liberal-democratic norms and institutions, generally understood as acultural. The liberal-democratic norms and institutions guarantee individual freedoms for the *autological subjects* of liberal and settler societies. With the presumed universality of the *autological*

*subject* and the dissolution of *genealogical* society, Indigenous struggles are one more claim for representation among many. Liberal multicultural regimes use strategies of management and global capitalist expansion to deal with Indigeneity without bringing about change to structures of racial hierarchy and economic inequality (Hale, 2006; Postero and Zamasc, 2004 in de la Cadena & Starn; Smith, A. 2012a). In settler-colonial states, the processes of recognition and redress position Indigenous people into reaffirmed colonial structures, where “practices of economic, symbolic, and linguistic domination sit unchallenged” (Woolford, 2013, p. 78). Settler-colonial states defend and guarantee the universal right to free expression of dissent and difference while at the same time consolidating their sovereign power to restrict the actions of difference and dissent performed by bodies that might threaten their sovereignty, economy, territory and borders (Cornellier, 2013, p. 60).

Indigenous peoples have sometimes struggled with settler states for recognition, territory, and self-determination according to settler-defined notions of sovereignty. In efforts to secure decolonization and self-determination, many Indigenous peoples in Canada have engaged with Canadian government representatives in order to pursue a kind of sovereignty as distinct nations within nations. The most significant changes for Indigenous people in Canada have come through Indigenous interactions with Canadian courts, which have shown increasing respect for Indigenous rights and interests (Woons, 2014, p. 200). For example, Dene activists in the 1970s and 80s fought to negotiate a version of self-determination deeply informed by obligation to the land, a place-based ethics that saw a connection between cultural self-determination and economic and political autonomy (Williams, 2014). However, the Canadian state saw, and sees,

Indigenous cultural rights, which it will recognize, as distinct from economic and political autonomy, which it will not, and this distinction by the state remains a strategy for securing and maintaining settler interests in capital and resource development in Indigenous lands (Williams, 2014). Settler states, like Canada, deploy a kind of ‘lawfare’ in the positioning of Indigenous peoples amongst other groups as subjects of a universalized legal regime developed and managed by settler-colonial epistemologies and interests (Crosby & Monaghan, 2012). Recourse to settler-colonial sovereignty has asserted Canadian Crown authority over Indigenous lands while framing Indigenous people as subjects of settler law (Borrows, 1999; Ford, 2010). In the *Delgamuukw vs. British Columbia* case, the Supreme Court of Canada recognized Indigenous title as the collective rights of Indigenous peoples in their ancestral territories. However, the ruling in this case also declared that the federal and provincial governments could infringe upon these rights if infringement involved a “compelling and substantial legislative objective consistent with the special fiduciary relationship between the Crown and the [A]boriginal peoples” (Coulthard, 2007, p. 451). The 2014 *Tsilhqot’in Nation v. British Columbia* case guarantees Indigenous rights and control over a portion of their traditional territories (Pasternak, 2015), but the actual effects of this ruling are not yet clear, as in Canada, Indigenous territorial displacement and dispossession have followed decisions of the Supreme Court through the continued privileging of the present territorial and economic interests of non-Indigenous people (McCrossan, 2015).

Furthermore, the Canadian government’s conditions for the recognition of Indian status, and the rights associated with status, have often pitted settler-colonial-state recognized Indigenous peoples against those unrecognized by the state in struggles of

entitlements and rights claims (Tsing, 2007; Lawrence, 2012). The imposition of a responsibility to prove status on Indigenous people is an inherently colonial reality: and the arbitrariness of the gendered selection process resulting from more than a century of the effects of the Indian Act has nothing to do with any sort of ingrained Indigeneity (Brown, 2007). Articulations of Indigenous sovereignty based in legal approaches and brought about in settler courts have contributed to the rise of classes of Indigenous citizens whose rights and identities are defined solely in relation to the settler state, and increasingly in terms of neoliberal governance (Coulthard, 2007). For example, Clifford (2007, p. 211) discusses the emergence in Alaska of larger-scale 'tribal' and 'Native Alaskan' social formations through encounters with the settler state, and argues that these social formations are linked with liberal multiculturalism and governmentality. These organizations were created in response to the pressures of the hegemonic structures of the settler state: Native Alaskans reorganized themselves and their tribal associations in order to navigate and negotiate the impositions of managed multiculturalism of the settler state (Clifford, 2007). In the negotiations of the first modern treaty in BC between the Nisga'a and the Crown Aboriginal rights were forcibly defined in ways that did not challenge the Crown's sovereignty. Treaties like this one necessarily limit Indigenous sovereignty by ultimately subjecting Indigenous peoples to Canadian institutions and laws, and presuming the naturalness and continuation of the Canadian state's sovereignty in Indigenous land (Blackburn, 2007; Mccrossan, 2015). These limits to Indigenous sovereignty position the Indigenous as 'cultural' difference, guaranteed freedom of cultural expression only as long as this expression is not materially or structurally different from the structures of settler society (Turner, 2000).

Ironically, given the gendered impact of the Indian Act, Indigenous claims to sovereignty in Canada have brought criticisms from commentators who argue that sovereignty and expressions of cultural separatism may hide ‘illiberal’ treatment of women and religious non-conformists (Brown, 2007, p. 176). Some Indigenous moves for sovereignty and cultural recognition have used “culture, tradition, gender roles, and sexuality as border guards aimed at controlling and maintaining fixed, homogenized, stable identities” (Altamirano-Jiminez, 2013, p. 7). As such, Indigenous sovereignty has in some cases been defined through male control over women: in some cases nationalism appeals through patriarchy, especially evidenced in how judicial procedures for determining lineage established by settler-colonial structures like the Indian Act in Canada structure male control into Indigenous sovereignty (Tsing, 2007). However, critiques of Indigenous movements for sovereignty generally fail to recognize how many of these ‘illiberal practices’ have travelled from settler-colonial states to Indigenous peoples. Indigenous women have been disproportionately affected by the imposition of Western legal language of property in Indigenous understandings of land (Altamirano-Jiminez, 2013; Jacobs, 2009). Settler colonialism is implicated in gender violence and the imposition of this violence in the patriarchal gender and family relations has been imprinted on Indigenous people through processes of colonization and elimination, especially in the residential and boarding schools (McKegney, 2014; Regan, 2010; Smith, A. 2005a). The recent findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee provide a particularly chilling illustration of the effects settler colonialism has had on Indigenous gender and family relations in Canada (TRC, 2015a, 2015b).

## Indigenous Sovereignty

In many cases, Indigenous claims to sovereignty have relied on articulations of Indigeneity-as-prioriness. Indigenous sovereignty movements, as a result, meet with resistance from settler imaginations and fears, most intensely expressed as fear that Indigenous articulations of difference will lead to expulsion of all non-Indigenous peoples (Saranillio, 2013; Sharma & Wright, 2008/2009). There are significant difficulties in identifying the (truly) first occupants of specific territories due to historical migrations and Diasporas of Indigenous peoples (Brown, 2007; Clifford, 2007). Indeed, “diasporic ruptures and connectors – lost homelands, partial returns, relational identities, and world-spanning networks – are fundamental components of Indigenous experience today” (Clifford, 2007: p. 216). Prioriness is a problematic way of articulating Indigeneity because the demand and burden of proof of descent mean Indigenous peoples are required to demonstrate particular versions and visions of Indigeneity based on continuations of ‘traditional culture’, which have led to the trap of historicization, static representations and arbitrary rules of inclusion/exclusion (Povinelli, 2011a, p. 22). Defining kinship and the family according to “abstracted rules of descent rather than immanent practices of affiliation,” positions prioriness within the *tense of the other* (Povinelli, 2011a, p. 25). Descent rules establish who is included and excluded within formally, and legally, recognized regulations of identity, and these “abstracted rules of descent are oriented to the past perfect,” the *genealogical society* oriented to the past (Povinelli, 2011a, p. 25). The *governance of the prior* that undergirds settler norms of sovereignty requires Indigenous prioriness to be readable through an unbroken line of ‘authentic’ ‘tradition’. The strictures of Canadian state-imposed status rules, whose

attendant 'hegemonic logic' denies non-status Indigenous peoples' connections to place, make certain federally unrecognized Indigenous individuals and groups 'invisible' (Lawrence, 2012, p. 278-230). Yet, as Lawrence (2012) demonstrates in the case of non-status Algonquins in Ontario, accounts of their "past and present" are "rooted where [these] stories took place" (279). Furthermore, the current and active maintenance of their ancestral territories and collective ways of life demonstrate federally unrecognized Indigenous peoples' connections to their places and challenge Indian status as the arbiter of Indigenous identity (Lawrence, 2012). They also demonstrate how kinship and family relations, "immanent practices of affiliation" understood as "systems of social relations and their imaginary resources," are "oriented to the present emergent," the here and now (Povinelli, 2011a, p. 25). Furthermore, Settler sovereignty requires the assertion of 'alienable ownership' over 'divisible land', two presuppositions of the liberal discourses of territoriality. Tying Indigenous rights to rights of priorness has meant that if Indigenous people choose to exercise their rights to land in certain 'modern' ways, they must surrender their land to settler-colonial sovereignty. In Canada, this has meant that when and where Indigenous people use their land in 'modern' ways, for example engaging in resource development projects, this land and these projects are brought under the jurisdiction and discipline of crown sovereignty (Mccrossan, 2015, p. 33). This is evident in how the transition to fee simple on reserves, as in the case of the Musqueam Indian Band vs. Glass, essentially undermines Aboriginal title and submits these lands to Canadian sovereignty, as fee-simple property rights are governed by Canadian property law (Pasternak, 2015, p. 190).

## **Indigenous Cultures and Identities**

Indigenous responses to settler liberalism and neoliberalism are complicated and nuanced. Indigenous critical theory has challenged the constrictions of liberal notions of identity and sovereignty to present different visions of Indigenous identities, cultures, and sovereignty (Alfred, 1999, 2005; Coulthard, 2007, 2014; Smith, A. 2005b, 2010, 2012a; Smith, L. 2007; Turner, 2000, 2006). Indigenous critical scholars highlight the importance to decolonization of understanding Indigeneity differently to avoid essentialist, ahistorical discourses that establish 'authentic' versions of Indigeneity, but that also address the colonial and assimilationist effects of contemporary political and economic strategies. They present understandings of Indigeneity as ontological and epistemological rather than based entirely in identity politics. As such, Indigenous Critical Theory emphasizes an understanding of Indigenous presence through Indigenous relationships with land, plants, animals, people, ancestors, and the Creator in specific places rather than attempts at recognition or representation through a traditional liberal conception of culturalism, nationalism, and sovereignty that dissolve Indigenous people into the generalized space of settler society.

Indigenous scholars, activists and allies have challenged the constrictions of liberal notions of identity, sovereignty and neoliberal governmentalities and have articulated a kind of Indigeneity best understood as a practice and a set of relationships rather than as a fixed state of being (De la Cadena and Starn, 2007; Smith, A. 2005b, 2012a). Indigenous, and all cultures, are simultaneously dynamic and stable, tied to a group of people and their place(s). Indigenous cultures are grounded in particular places and the history of these places, and shift and flow with changes in contexts, situations,

people, and purposes (Brayboy, 2006; du Plessis & Raza, 2004). Indigenous epistemologies emphasize notions of place and relationship with land, and Indigenous knowledges are described as grounded in tradition as well as ongoing and creative practices, centered on deep knowledge of the specific environmental features and interconnectedness of places (Battiste, 1998; 2013; Saranillio, 2013; Wolfe, 2013b). Indigenous cultures, like all cultures, are inherited from tradition and also practiced and produced in newly emerging contexts (Brayboy, 2006). Indigenous cultures have an enduring structure including a “common language, practices of deliberation, relations of economic and social exchange, and common institutions,” which all endure to some extent (Williams, 2014, p. 14). Power in Indigeneity is seen in the ability to survive and adapt to changing contexts, and the relationship between culture, power, and knowledge is such that culture provides the base for and access to knowledge, which leads to this power to adapt and survive (Brayboy, 2006).

### **Indigenous Relationality: In and With Place**

Taiaiake Alfred (1999) argues that authentically Indigenous politics “honour the autonomy of individual conscience, non-coercive authority, and the deep interconnection between human beings and other elements of creation” (60). The relationality of Indigenous knowledge emphasizes the interconnection between the human, nonhuman, and place, where Indigenous economies are considered sustainable in that they interact in culturally appropriate ways in place (Hershey, 2012). Indigenous knowledge emphasizes an awareness of how and in what ways change can be accomplished, and highlights the importance of the ability and willingness to change, adapt, and adjust as an individual and community (Brayboy, 2006). Indigenous practices and ways of thinking about and

relating to the natural world are situated in place-specific knowledge that includes embodied capacities to act in the world and perform tasks (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). Indigenous feminist critiques have challenged the colonial and liberal narratives exemplified in the *tense of the other* that sever the self from the collective, people from nature, and family from community. Indigenous women activists have articulated understandings of nation and sovereignty that, instead of governing through domination and coercion, are predicated on interrelatedness and responsibility (Smith, A., 2008). Struggles for self-determination should not prioritize either gender or any nation but rather should combat current sexist practices and the structures of everyday domination (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). Many Indigenous communities are based on strong sense of collective identity, organized in social collectives and through genealogical networks that are connected to specific lands and histories, to specific places (Smith, L. 2007). Contrary to the assumptions underlying the *tense of the other*, kinship and family do not constrain individuals nor are they themselves constrained; they are not things but rather systems of social relations and affective resources. Kinship and family are relations of affiliation and as such belong to the ‘present emergent,’ the here and now of involvement, and should be seen as practices that are attendant to the shifts and flows of changing context, seen as practices of obligation rather than rights of inclusion (Povinelli, 2011a). As such, belonging, whether familial or social, should not be seen as a privilege or an inherent object of identity, but rather as the responsibility to continue to reproduce affective resources to be drawn on and shared by and with all relations. Indigenous demands for cultural recognition challenge the dominating nature of settler-colonial conceptions of culture (Coulthard, 2007).

## **Settler-Colonial Economics**

In contemporary settler societies, the issues of competing Indigenous and settler sovereignties are most prominently articulated in economic terms. The pursuit of unchecked and unsustainable capital accumulation in settler societies continues to be bound up in ongoing assaults on the sovereignty of Indigenous peoples through exploitation of natural resources, real estate speculation, and resulting ecological devastation, all requiring the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their lands (Vimalassery, 2013). The formation of capitalism in settler-colonial states is built on primitive accumulation through the elimination of Indigenous economies, which typically are concerned with sustainability and viability for future generations (Alfred, 2005; Brayboy, 2006; Coulthard, 2007; Saranillio, 2013). Capital and market economies require land and labour to generate financial value. The colonization and settlement of North America, through the appropriation of Indigenous land, supported the development and exponential increase in wealth of the capitalist economies of Imperial nations and emerging colonial powers, fuelling the emerging global economy. The dispossession and repossession of Indigenous lands by settlers was and is informed by a way of thinking that abstracts the particularities of Indigenous places, transforming them from places with the history and presence of Indigenous peoples' relationships in and with these places into 'empty sites' of potential settlement and development by settlers. Characterizing Indigenous lands as "wastelands of non-achievement" settler-colonial powers benefited from "generations of Indigenous work and relationship with a particular place" by conscripting Indigenous land into settler economies (Vimalassery, 2013, p. 300).

Economic development in the initial moments of colonization in Canada was characterized by the establishment of monopoly charters by European sovereigns for corporations like the Hudson's Bay Company. These charters were necessary to secure profit for corporations in colonization, and led to a colonial economy that guaranteed more or less equal rights of economic activity and development for colonial corporations while leaving Indigenous sovereignty out of the equation (Vimalassery, 2013). Colonial violence against Indigenous peoples, and the practices of elimination throughout the history of settler colonialism, continues to find expression in rhetoric that denies Indigenous sovereignty in Canada, and rejects the possibility that Indigenous people might be owed 'rent' for the use of their land for generations. At their most generous, settler governments encourage Indigenous peoples to enter the 'modern' world, privatize and commoditize their land and relations and join the settler society, economy, and interest. Dispossession of Indigenous lands continues in the abstraction of Indigenous places into sites where resources are to be exploited or developed in the interests of settler society and the national and global economies. Settler economy is capitalist economy, in which 'improvement' of Indigenous land in accordance with capital refers to the rapid extraction of the mineral, plant, and animal abundance to produce market commodities, "resulting in the production of actual waste lands, in both exchange and use terms" (Vimalassery, 2013, p. 303). David Harvey's identification of the core of capitalism as "accumulation by dispossession" is reinforced and specified in settler-colonial contexts. Just as accumulation by dispossession "is to be construed [...] as a necessary condition for capitalism's survival," capitalism in settler-colonial contexts retains a colonial dimension (Harvey quoted in Brown, 2014, p. 5).

Processes of settler-colonial territorialization at the behest of capital are evident in particular contemporary practices of land use and resource development, highlighted in land claims and disputes like the Oka Crisis, the James Bay Project, natural gas developments in BC, and the Northern Gateway proposal. Enbridge's Northern Gateway proposal, for example, has met with widespread, though not uniform, Indigenous resistance, leading to the establishment by the Canadian state of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police led anti-terrorism task force in 2012 (Preston, 2013). Called the 'K Division,' this unit was established to protect oil sands developments in Canada, including hundreds of thousands of kilometers of pipeline, oil and gas well, oil sands mines and in-situ extraction facilities across Alberta and British Columbia, from the actions of environmentalist and First Nations activism and resistance (Preston, 2013). The 'K Division' is a particularly cogent example of a settler-colonial strategy to safeguard settler-colonial territorialization in the interest of capital.

### **Turning Indigenous Land Into Property**

The employment of a binary of savagery/civilization was central in the application of *terra nullius* as it allowed settlers to imagine Indigenous lands as empty because only so-called civilized people could own land or claim sovereignty. This tradition of thinking, drawing on European notions of subjectivity and place, fetishizes ownership, domination, and mastery, while at the same time limiting ownership in a racialized and gendered manner (Seawright, 2013). Where Indigenous land is still under the control of Indigenous people, settler-colonial states try to transform it. In the United States native title was divided into alienable freeholds (Wolfe, 2006). In Canada, provisions for the introduction and assertion of private property rights on reserves were

first introduced in the Enfranchisement and Assimilation Acts, passed between 1857 and 1869, and subsequently in the recommendations for the transition of reserve land into fee simple ownership in the 1969 Liberal Government's White Paper, and the recent First Nations Property Ownership Act (Pasternak, 2015). Indigenous sovereignty over land is circumscribed by settler states' territorialisation: privatization of the land is realized through practices of documentation, survey, and sale, while the articulation of some land as public or protected, for example in national, state, or provincial parks also asserts settler control (Rifkin, 2013; Brown, 2014). This process is ongoing in Canada, and very much evident in BC within contemporary treaty negotiations and resource development projects. Initial settler colonialism in Canada was predicated on the twin prime directives of 'progress' and 'civilization,' which may have dissipated, arguably, only to be replaced by that of 'capital'. As long as this remains the objective and assumed neutral discursive centre in settler-colonial discourse, its enactment in space precludes alternative spatial formations.

### **Indigenous Encounters with Neoliberalism**

The elimination of the Indigenous to make way for the settler is echoed in the idea of the unbounded subjectivity of neoliberal governmentality that rearticulates the self as a *terra nullius*, an unoccupied and ahistorical space to be transformed and shaped as one sees fit. Neoliberal technologies and their asserted goals of market rationality and profitability replicate the initial logics of colonialism which deemed Indigenous lands as giant "wasteland[s] of non-achievement" (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1986, p. 3). Settler state expansion and competition in global markets depend on increasing extraction of natural resources and privatization of and speculation on land, demands that continue Indigenous

dispossession. Neoliberal interventions into Indigenous politics, exemplified in Flanagan's "Beyond the Indian Act," are predicated on the creation of the ideal Indigenous Canadian citizen: "self-sufficient, enterprising, and never demand[ing] special rights based on history/geography/culture" (Pasternak, 2015, p. 183). These interventions deny Indigenous relationships with land, set up the Canadian settler state as the proper sovereign authority to distribute property rights, presume unquestioned and unexamined acquiescence to the idea of private property, and construe collective Indigenous rights in the language of capitalism as opposed to any other geopolitical or economic system (e.g. communism) (Pasternak, 2015, p. 184). "Indians were the original communist menace," (Wolfe, 2006, p. 397) and Indigenous presence continues to be seen as a threat to settler-colonial capitalism.

Indigenous peoples' attitudes to neoliberal strategies and governmentalities in Canada vary. Some Indigenous peoples have responded to the neoliberal policies and strategies of settler-colonial states by articulating forms of Indigeneity based on engagements with market forces. This is clear where Indigenous self-government is framed in terms of producing wealth and contributing to the settler-colonial national economy. Some First Nations in BC, like the Osoyoos and West Bank, welcome neoliberal legislation as their location in peri-urban and desirable real estate markets position them to benefit from commercial investment (Pasternak, 2013). Similarly, the Choctaw pursued tribal sovereignty in their land by turning their water resources into a commodity and marketing them in a three-way deal with the neighbouring Chickasaw Tribe and the Oklahoma State government for leasing water rights (Lambert, 2007). A major selling point for the non-Indigenous residents of Oklahoma State was securing fifty

percent of the derived revenues for the Oklahoma State government. The Inuit in Nunavut and Labrador have articulated a notion of Indigeneity that engages with the Canadian state in mineral resource development projects. This articulation of Inuit sovereignty is based on securing land rights in terms of Inuit self-sufficiency and autonomy in relation to the Canadian government (Altamirano-Jiminez, 2013). The Nisga'a in British Columbia have privatized their traditional lands and have engaged with neoliberal markets through resource development, largely softwood lumber, fisheries, and environmental services, and many Nisga'a see the trend of privatization as empowering, allowing them to satisfy individual needs and aspirations (Altamirano-Jiminez, 2013). Engagement with market forces and the articulation of neoliberalized Indigeneity has resulted in improvements in wellbeing for some Indigenous people. Yet, the settler-colonialism that structures dispossession, assimilation, and elimination remain in place.

Initial dispossession of Indigenous land is followed by another kind of settler-colonial and liberal territorialization: the neoliberalization of nature. Capitalism, particularly in its current neoliberal form, is enacted “against Indigenous values of relationality:” exchange value relies on a “relationship of power over life” (Vimallassery 2013, p. 298). Neoliberal governmentality narrows the scope of nature to relationships between the human and non-human world, where the environment becomes commodity. In contemporary settler societies, the ‘marketplace’, influenced by neoliberalism, has become the site “where nature and Indigenous peoples, communities, knowledges, and identities are contested as ...simple commodities of culture and legacies of the past” (Smith, L. 2007, p. 350). Indigenous people, nature, and natural resources are converted to economic potential. Commodity and market oriented articulations of ‘nature’ and

Indigeneity are exemplary of the neoliberal attitude that anything of worth must be marketable. This straitjackets everyone, Indigenous or otherwise, as sense of place is formed by practices, and responsibilities and by identifiable natural and cultural landscapes, in specific places. Indigenous peoples experience multi-scalar dispossession of their lands, and their bodies/selves, as they are constricted/constructed through discourses of rights, sovereignties, and nationalisms that alienate them from their relations and responsibilities to particular places. Indigenous strategies that have sought sovereignty through mainstream economic development have often sacrificed or compromised with ancestral obligations to the land and to others, relationships that are at the heart of Indigeneity (Alfred, 2005; Coulthard, 2007). Furthermore, interpretations of Indigenous land rights and title prevalent in the Canadian courts' rulings and also in independent Indigenous understandings of tenure are not compatible with privatization (Pasternak, 2015). The construction of the environment as resource is the product of Western understandings of human and nonhuman relations. This is significant because in settler states resources are managed according to power and knowledge relations that restrict whose knowledge about nature counts as 'truth,' and thus who has the right to manage nature (Altamirano-Jiminez, 2013). Neoliberal spatial and economic reorganization of Indigenous place is also dependent on the commodification of 'pristine' nature for a global market.

## **Settler Colonialism, Neoliberalism, and Pedagogy**

### **Settler Subjectivity, Ways of Feeling, and Traditions of Place**

Settler control over Indigenous people and land is affective as well as structural, giving rise to ways of feeling that give the structural elements of settler colonialism an everyday and banal quality (Rifkin, 2013). The practices of dispossession, displacement and elimination of Indigenous presence are accompanied by practices of possession and emplacement of settler presence that are affective. Settler subjectivity, place making, and political identification are based on the concepts of unquestioned sovereignty and private ownership which themselves generate feelings of belonging and identification for settler society (Rifkin, 2013). In making a home of Indigenous place, settlers impose new social constructs that undermine preceding Indigenous worldviews (Seawright, 2014). Settler commonsense constructs a post-origin identity removed from the settler's place of origin, which takes the Indigenous place as the new but also always-already-granted home. The sense of stability generated by settler-colonial structures like "property-law, zoning ordinances, rules of inheritance, regulation of commerce, police presence, and the construction and maintenance of infrastructure," normalizes and reinforces the ways these structures "contour place, association, and belonging" (Rifkin, 2013, p. 328). The settler tradition of place, informed by habits and practices shaped by settler-colonial structures, encourages particular relations to place based on Western conceptions of space that emphasize ownership and domination (Seawright, 2014). The seemingly given nature of settlers' place in Indigenous lands orients settlers to understanding their sovereignty and rights of occupancy, that they have the right to be in this place, which is no longer felt as Indigenous place but as settler place. In contemporary settler society, settlers do

not need to be agents of the state to rematerialize the structural effects of settler colonialism. The general acceptance of and belief in the tenets of private property and the almost mythologizing interest in the health of ‘the economy’ articulated by most settlers demonstrates how settler sovereignty in Indigenous land has been naturalized. While Canada is generally presented as a multicultural society, most English speaking and immigrant Canadians do not consider Canada multinational if being multinational means allowing certain groups to have political and territorial rights (Woons, 2014). The continuing fact of settler presence in Canada and the general refusal of most Canadians to recognize their own presence as occupation of Indigenous place demonstrates the effects and affects associated with settler traditions of place (Seawright, 2014). This refusal at the heart of settler traditions of place is grounded in an “epistemology of ignorance” which both draws on and reinforces settler-colonial structures that continue to guarantee settler interests (Schaepli & Godlewska, 2014, p. 229). The question, then, is how are settler traditions of place maintained?

### **Education and Governmentality**

Settler societies’ epistemology, or theory and method of knowledge, is modeled and delivered to succeeding generations in a large part through formal education. Not only has formal education been used in settler societies as a tool of assimilation and elimination of Indigenous peoples, but also it has significantly contributed to the continuation and reification of settler traditions of place. Education provides guidelines and structures for the formation of individuals’ identities, which are always unsettled and unfinished, through the “manufactured, ready-made categories and authorised discourses” present in curricula (Wilkins, 2013, p. 7). Education provides a new form or develops

already existing ways of knowing and being through the authority of the educator and the curriculum (Bernstein, 1999). School curricula, delivered through publications and documents and reinforced with mandatory teacher education and credentials supported by ministry of education regulations and authority, are also technologies of governmentality. Recent studies in critical pedagogy have focused on ‘the school’ as a modern and political technology designed and conducted for governing populations (Pongratz, 2012; Simons, 2002; Wilkins, 2013). Much of this work is concerned with the role of neoliberalism in the current government of education (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012). Governmentality emerged in the development of political and philosophical liberalism as a means of governing individuals in liberal societies. Governmentality is a mode of governing and being governed through the strategic relations engaged by key actors to inform and conduct the behavior of others (Foucault, 1997). It is brought about by a range of practices, or technologies, that constitute and define the ways that people see themselves and interact with one another, and society in general. These technologies normalize social discourses and guide people to act in accordance with these norms (Dean, 2010). Governmentality is implicated in the relation of the self to technologies of domination and technologies of the self, with the self as a kind of meeting point or conduit for the two kinds of technologies.

Technologies of governmentality inform and guide everyday practices and ideas. Governmentality is thus part of a strategy that transforms governance from the coercive and direct actions of sovereign power over bodies and territories into a system that produces and manages the possibilities of the behavior of populations through the unconscious productions and reproductions of norms in individuals (Rose, 1996;

Ettlinger, 2011). Technologies of governmentality target the individual's relationship to him or herself, as well as to others and the world, through a form of discipline that guides self-regulation to social norms, connecting and implicating the individual in larger social-scale projects (Ettlinger, 2011). The technologies of the self, the ways that individuals act on and relate to themselves, are affected by technologies of governmentality, whose social purpose is to make technologies of the self conform to whatever the dominant society considers normal or desirable. Governmentality supplements the legal control of populations and individuals by informing and conditioning the field of possible action of these individuals and as such it is about self-government (Morgensen, 2011). Thus while government in liberal and settler-colonial societies is informed by a discourse of individual freedom, governing individuals requires shaping the ways these individuals enact their freedom (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 56).

### **Pedagogy as Governmentality**

Governmentality helps produce individualized subjects who think and act on themselves and in the world through norms articulated in social institutions like schools. These institutions employ technologies of governmentality, like school curricula and related documents, to guide individuals in understanding and managing their lives (Brady, 2008). Modern pedagogies are technologies of governmentality that direct technologies of the self towards self-regulation and self-examination (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 17). In modern pedagogies governmentalities are employed to produce within the self a way of conducting oneself as an individual in society. Educational institutions are major contributors to the development of the social self. Discipline, examinations, and surveillance in institutions, have been important since their development in the 18<sup>th</sup>

and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Foucault, 1970; 1977/1995). The examination makes each individual a ‘case’ (Besley & Peters, 2007). The disciplinary school, most prevalent in Europe and North America in the 19th and 20th centuries, focused on acts of discipline and normalization (Pongratz, 2012). It was no accident that schools often looked like workhouses or factories, as they used the same disciplinary tactics of surveillance, examination, and normalization to achieve the same end: a compliant and ultimately productive population (Foucault, 1970; 1977/1995). Schools were designed to discipline the individual to become the autonomous subject of the liberal humanist tradition (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012). Liberal humanism presupposes a universal, ‘normal,’ individual subject, that draws its characteristics from idealized European bourgeois masculinity, to represent humanity (Butler, 1988; Hokowhitu, 2012; Pickett, 1996; Weeks, 1982). For much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, pedagogy in liberal and settler states was predicated on a rights-based welfare model of citizenship, geared towards the humanist subject. Liberal humanism, as a form of pedagogy-of-individualism, developed disciplinary discourses that produced ‘truths’ meant to develop the moral character of the individual student and to shape them into civic subjects in a manner appropriate to their class and social status (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 17). Colonial through and through, this pedagogical model lay at the core of assimilationist and genocidal social and education programs instigated by settler states. In Canada, Residential Schools were meant, in part, to reshape and ‘civilize’ Indigenous people according to the moral character of the liberal-humanist individual; in short, they were technologies with cultural genocide as their ultimate goal.

## **Neoliberal Education**

Contemporary pedagogies have shifted from the liberal-humanist understanding of the individual to the market individualism of neoliberalism (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 18). These governmentalities render the subject compliant through the internalization of externally imposed rules and worldviews (Malpas, 2013a). Perceiving the role that governmentalities play in pedagogy and in the development of our selves is always powerful and important because such awareness decenters our assumptions about our place in the world and about normativity. Global capitalism has become both the guiding force and the ultimate destination in contemporary public pedagogy, in and outside the classroom, informing social relations and civic engagement (Giroux, 2000; 2004; 2006; Martin, 2012). Educational institutions in liberal societies urge individuals to take up practices of “self-examination, self-articulation, self interpretation, and self-optimization” (Pongratz, 2012, p. 165). Neoliberal governmentality is shaping and controlling the current pedagogical and curricular discourses in these societies (Peters et al., 2009; Kašćák & Pupala, 2012).

Neoliberal visions of pedagogy present a picture of the future in terms of economic growth and development based on science and technology, for which ‘excellence,’ ‘technological literacy,’ ‘skills training,’ ‘performance,’ and ‘enterprise’ are the key educational metrics (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 170). Although the school in contemporary liberal and settler states no longer resembles the workhouse or the factory, it is still a disciplinary institution. The discipline in contemporary education functions in a different way with pedagogy focused on ‘flexibility,’ ‘motivation,’ ‘goal coordination,’ and ‘self-management’ instead of physical discipline, surveillance, and examination. It

relies less on direct control of individuals' bodies and behaviour and more on influencing and guiding the ways that individuals might orient and direct themselves. The neoliberal metanarrative in pedagogy does not necessarily homogenize and normalize specific content, but operates through reinforcing discourses, expectations and strategies like withholding or awarding praise and advancement, focusing on project learning, situation learning, and complex learning, and "reorganizing educational institutions as market-oriented service centers" (Pongratz, 2012, p. 167). All of this to instil an ethic of lifelong learning for which individuals themselves are responsible, and to privatize and commercialize knowledge which individuals must approach as entrepreneurs and market competitors (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012; Pongratz, 2012). The competition at the heart of neoliberal pedagogy positions individuals in a 'quality ranking' in relation to competitors, demanding continuous improvement of performance (Pongratz, 2012). While educational guidelines (curricular and co-curricular) may vary between and within liberal and settler states, education is always organized to produce entrepreneurial subjects (Simons, 2002). Education and learning are designed to render individuals and society in general governable through pre-programmed self-discipline (Simons & Masschelein, 2008).

### **Entrepreneurialism and Human Capital**

The new model for the neoliberal school is the corporation – or corporations as they are imagined - which has also become the generalized model for new forms of control in contemporary liberal and settler societies, establishing an ethic of competition and 'choices' that are ultimately constrained by market rationality and given expression in the paradox of voluntary self-control (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012, p. 151; Pongratz, 2012). The subject created by neoliberal education possesses a contradictory kind of freedom

and autonomy: she is free yet subject to a “permanent economic tribunal,” through which she understands herself “as a producer-consumer with needs and human capital in a (market) environment where everything has a (economic) value” (Simons, 2002, p. 620). This entrepreneurialism represents an expectation that the individual should become responsible and socially invested by making (the right) choices about lifestyle, body, education, health, and employment (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 161). This entrepreneurial subjectivity collapses the distinction between ‘the social’ and ‘the economic,’ as in the treatment of life as the enterprise of the self, the entrepreneurial subject will expend continuous effort to preserve and reproduce his/her human capital (Gordon, 1991; Simons, 2002). Entrepreneurial subjectivity reconfigures social relations according to their capacity to enable entrepreneurship, in which the individual’s relationships with friends, family, and colleagues are valued for their utility in achieving the individual’s personal happiness, social capacity, as well as the well-being of society (Simons & Masschelein, 2008).

The relationship of one’s permanent investment in oneself forms the ethics of the “individualized and privatized consumer welfare economy” of neoliberalism (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 164). Neoliberal governmentality configures the subject as the economic entrepreneur of his/her own life. Educational and other institutions are reconfigured to produce entrepreneurialism, and are restructured according to neoliberal modes of governance (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012). This can be seen as a form of deregulation and decentralization in which the individual is taught to govern herself according to social norms that are subtly reinforced throughout her life. This decentralization of education – moving from state discipline and centralized intervention to governance through

individualism and entrepreneurialism - takes place at many scales (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012). The governmentality of education presumes a kind of 'active citizenship' that can be learned through practicing participative, moral, and critical competencies (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 403). However, the development of learner-centred pedagogies goes beyond the liberal-humanist vision of active learning, as this model also reorients education towards the development of human capital for the global knowledge economy (Carter, 2009).

Neoliberal governmentality in pedagogy is geared toward securing economic competitive advantage and future prosperity for the nation, and, in settler states, for the settler state and settler society (Besley and Peters, 2007, p. 164). Pedagogy and curricula are redesigned to respond to the needs of the economy of global capitalism: flexibility, skills in management, information handling, communication, problem solving, and decision-making (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012, p. 154). In Canada, this pedagogical reform according to the demands of neoliberal governance is a response to what has been seen as a "critical skills shortage," where graduates are deemed ill-equipped for the workforce (Martin, 2012, p. 264). In neoliberal education, students are responsible for themselves, particularly in terms of their competence, and thus teaching is understood as the management of a student's learning: it is ultimately up the student to succeed or fail (Pongratz, 2012). Competencies are understood as knowledge, capacity, and attitude that can be employed in an economy of efficiency, flexibility, and adaptation (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 401). Students' competence is increasingly determined through the measurement of their capacity for participation in the economy, and they become responsible for their own economic health as well as the health of the economy "via their

performance in school” (Martin, 2012, p. 264). The dominant message that education is about individuals seeking employment and future economic security is linked to a discourse about how students’ actions and choices while they are in school will shape this future security, where prudential and responsible choices are those that insure against future economic and financial risks (Martin, 2012; Besley & Peters, 2007).

Neoliberal education privileges the notion of ‘human capital,’ that individuals will “maximize their utility” and develop an “optimal amount of information” by engaging with a variety of markets, and education is considered to be such a market (Besley & Peters, 2007, p. 153). The very concept of human capital is neoliberal: a calculation of the value or cost of peoples’ skills, knowledge, and experience to an organization or country (Besley & Peters, 2007; Martin, 2012; Simons, 2002). Investment in human capital, through particular kinds of educational practice, is presumed to lead to economic growth, and as such the individual is construed as a means of economic growth. Curricular documents and their delivery have generally become focused on making individuals responsible for combating personal and macroeconomic instability, in keeping with the dismantling and destruction of government-sponsored economic, labour, and social policies in neoliberal governance (Martin, 2012).

### **Neoliberal Governmentality in Settler Traditions of Place**

Neoliberal governmentality, the self-governance of the entrepreneurial subject, is linked to neoliberal governance, the way of organizing liberal and settler society, which positions the market as the measure of all social activities and values. Neoliberal governmentality – self-management, entrepreneurialism, and ‘responsibility’ – orients individuals to become subject to neoliberal governance, subject to marketization.

Anything that cannot be understood or articulated in market terms, and does not give way to marketization, is actively targeted as a threat to the security of the market (Povinelli, 2011b, pp. 21-22). Neoliberal governance requires citizen-subjects who are autonomous individuals, liberated from their place in history, culture, and community. As such, neoliberal governance assumes that connections to history, culture, and community are impediments to the entrepreneurial subject's ability to manage her own life and make rational, personal-profit driven decisions in a social/economic milieu of unencumbered 'fair' and 'equal' competition (Kanu, 2011, pp. 18-19). But people are rooted in places, in networks of relations that are about families, social interaction, and relationships with the physical environment (Malpas, 2012a). The reconfiguration of identity in terms of consumption, productivity, and the utility of neoliberal entrepreneurialism demands a rupture of the individual from the places where history, culture, and community come to be. The neoliberal mode of self-government requires flexibility and adaptability to the demands of the market economy and global capitalism, making place-rich and grounded relations seem retrograde in the context of an idealized economy of flows, movement and increasingly insignificant spatial differentiation. In settler states, this neoliberal gutting of place works well with ongoing colonial aims as it continues the process of displacement through the commoditization of land, resources, and even cultures, whose only meaning and value is to be found in the global marketplace. As such, in settler-colonial societies, neoliberal governmentality is settler governmentality. Neoliberal governmentality and entrepreneurialism require the transformation of Indigenous land into property and commodity which are governed by settler sovereignty and, increasingly, global capital.

The liberal attitude towards land takes it to be a ‘commons’ belonging to all citizen-subjects, understood according to the liberal humanist conception of the subject who secures her access to and interest in ‘common’ land through actions of development and ownership. The liberalization of Indigenous land - the articulation of Indigenous lands as part of the global ‘commons’ guaranteed and belonging to all people and made useful to them through actions of development and ownership - is itself a form of colonization and sits at the heart of settler traditions of place and land. Just as neoliberal governance reconfigures the liberal attitude to land from a ‘commons’ into a commodity, it also commoditizes knowledge. The liberal humanist view of knowledge - that universal thing to which those who qualify as citizen-subjects have equal rights - gives way to the view of knowledge as part of a strategy of global socio-economic competition. This kind of knowledge has no value in itself or in place (or networks of relations), but is defined according to economic expectations, applications, and utility. As such, knowledge is increasingly treated as a manufactured product: if its market utility is not evident it will disappear. In neoliberal education teaching and learning are represented as transactions, with knowledge as the commodity in this exchange (Pongratz, 2012).

The commoditization of knowledge is particularly significant in the role it plays in the ‘knowledge society’. Contemporary liberal and settler societies have been termed ‘knowledge societies,’ of continuous innovation, creativity, flexibility, and change, even by those who argue for the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives (see, for example, Kanu, 2011, p. 13). Since the end of the 1960s in liberal and settler states, discussion of the “knowledge society” and “knowledge economy” have focused on knowledge as “central capital,” “the crucial means of production,” and the “energy of a modern

society” (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 396). Under neoliberal governance, the knowledge society is a knowledge economy, an economy that applies knowledge to work and creates knowledge workers. The development of the knowledge economy and knowledge society focuses on how to learn rather than any particular subject matter, where learning is the perpetual renewal of human capital for economic development and productivity. The universal skill of ‘learning to learn’ is the fundamental requirement for living in a knowledge society (Simons, 2002; Simons & Masschelein, 2008). Learning problems in the knowledge society are seen to stem from the individual’s lack of human capital. With connections to history (including the history of colonial, class, race and gendered oppression), culture, and community forgotten, there is little understanding of the structural barriers facing students who are moralized as lacking the proper responsibility and prudence to make the correct investments in themselves, through their lack of ability to manage their own learning (Simons & Masschelein, 2008). Furthermore, the goal of education in knowledge societies is the development and renewal of human capital for the development and growth of the economy, development that requires particular relationships to land, resources, and places.

The entrepreneurial subject is capitalist in the sense that she approaches knowledge, competency, and relationships as capital to be managed. The entrepreneurial subject is settler-colonial in how she develops a kind of flexibility and dynamism, a deterritorialization and reterritorialization in Indigenous land, to move unencumbered through places and employ human capital or acquire the necessary competencies (Simons & Masschelein, 2008). The entrepreneurial self is characterized by the ability to learn, is subject to neoliberal governance, responsible for developing her own human capital and

‘free’ to move to whatever place in the effort of this development. Education becomes understood primarily as the investment in human capital to improve the quality of the workforce (Becker, 1993). Knowledge as a form of commodity or capital, and the entrepreneurial subject who develops this human capital, becomes subject to marketization. The knowledge economy in settler states, plugged into the system of global capital, is predicated on developing entrepreneurial subjectivity and securing the economic competitive advantage and future prosperity of settler society.

Yatta Kanu (2011) argues that it is important to integrate Indigenous perspectives into school curriculum because we live in a knowledge society, which reinvigorates the importance of Indigenous knowledge to prepare youth for the world of creativity, flexibility, and change (Kanu, 2011, p. 13). However, the kind of adaptability and flexibility required by neoliberal governance and global capitalism is predicated on Indigenous dispossession and the elimination of Indigenous relations in and with place. This is abundantly clear in Canada, where settler governmentality is intertwined with neoliberal governmentality in forms of management geared towards the elimination of Indigeneity. Indigenous culture, language, self-determination, and traditional relationships to land are seen as threats to the security of neoliberal governance and the health and prosperity of the settler state (Crosby & Monahan, 2012, p. 426).

The liberal and neoliberal knowledge paradigms in Canada contradict Indigenous knowledge and education, which are largely comprised of relationships between people and land in place, and belong, in a sense, to kinship groups (Neylan, 2013, p. 848). Traditional Indigenous education is largely experiential, providing the skills, attitudes, and knowledge needed for living in specific places, emphasizing cooperation and

contribution (Neylan, 2013). Neoliberal governance emphasizes individuality, and schools teach students competition, individualism, and global-market oriented entrepreneurialism (Neegan, 2005) whereas Indigenous knowledge is based on the learnings of generations of Indigenous peoples through living in their ecologies and developing and sustaining relationships with their environments (Battiste, 2013). These learnings are passed down to succeeding generations through language and ceremony, and are the foundation for Indigenous cultures, and knowledge, understood as their knowledge of and relationship to place as well as relationships within that place (Battiste, 2013). Arguably, Indigenous relationships to land are relationships in and with particular places. It is the particularity of the knowledge and ways of relating to and in specific places that the settler knowledge economy does not understand and (un)wittingly undermines. If Indigenous knowledge is based in relations to and in land/place, transmitted through language, what does Indigenous language, ceremony, and knowledge mean detached from these relations to and in land/place? Critical Indigenous educator Marie Battiste has argued that the most important act of decolonization is to bring Indigenous knowledge and practices fully into children's lives, that Indigenous knowledges and languages are part of the rights that must be reclaimed (Battiste, 2013). Because Indigenous knowledge and language are based in Indigenous land, on relationships in and with particular places, the inclusion of knowledge and language as Indigenous rights must also include rights to land, and rights of interaction with and in place. These rights are frequently at odds with the settler-colonial control and use of lands especially through extractive-capitalist, currently neoliberal, relations.

### **CHAPTER 3: INTEGRATION OF FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT CONTENT IN THE BC CURRICULUM**

This chapter focuses on the curriculum documents provided by the British Columbia Ministry of Education (BCME) to schools, administrators, and teachers (publicly available on the BCME website). These documents outline the required goals for learning in the province's public schools, providing administrators and teachers with the provincially mandated learning content and learning processes. Though curricular documents do not constitute the entirety of the learning process, and are supplemented by various optional textbooks and other supplementary materials, the curricular documents provide an important picture of the content, perspectives, and outcomes that the BCME considers mandatory for students in BC and provides the framework for all other materials. The Province provides teachers and administrators with curricular documents for each subject and grade level called Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs) that deliver the mandatory curricular content. For this thesis I focus primarily on these IRPs, particularly the overarching Introduction sections, which introduce and provide rationale for each course, and the mandatory curricular content in sections on Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs) and Achievement Indicators (AIs). PLOs are the content standards for each course subject in the BC education system; they are the prescribed curricula: what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of the specified subject and grade. AIs define the level expectations in terms of attitudes demonstrated, skills applied, or knowledge acquired by the student in relation to a corresponding PLO. AIs are not mandatory but are meant as guidance in determining how well students achieve the PLOs. AIs make suggestions and provide examples of how PLOs are to be delivered and

assessed. As a more developed curricular document AIs can help establish how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is conceived of in the curriculum. PLOs and AIs are organized in each grade by topic in sections called Organizers. Table 1 shows the prescribed program requirements students must fulfill for grades K-9 and Table 2 shows the minimum required 10-12 credits for graduation. In Grades 10-12 students take courses for credit towards graduation and courses are typically worth 4 credits. To graduate from the BC school system a student must earn a minimum of 80 credits in grades 10-12: at least 52 credits in required subject areas and at least 28 elective credits. At least 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level and must include a Language Arts 12 course.

**Table 1:** Prescribed Program Requirements for Required Subjects K-9

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Subjects</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Instructional Time**</b>	<b>Suggested Instructional Time (hrs)</b>
K-4	English Language Arts*	Minimum 35%	N/A
	Social Studies		K: 45 to 50; 1-4: 90 to 100
	Science	Minimum 30%	K: 37.5 to 45; 1-4: 75 to 90
	Mathematics		K: 95; 1-4: 185
	Fine Arts/Arts Education		90
	Health and Career Education	N/A	45-50
	Daily Physical Activity/Physical Education		90
5-7	English Language Arts*	Minimum 35%	90 to 100
	Social Studies		90 to 100
	Second Language		
	Science	Minimum 30%	75 to 90
	Mathematics		185
	Fine Arts/Arts Education	10%	90
	Health and Career Education	5%	45-50
	Daily Physical Activity/Physical Education	10%	90
8-9	English Language Arts*	10%	90 to 100
	Social Studies	10%	90 to 100
	Science	10%	80 to 95
	Mathematics	20%	180 to 200
	Fine Arts/Arts Education	10%	90 to 110
	Applied Skills	10%	90 to 110
	Health and Career Education	5%	45 to 50
	Daily Physical Activity/Physical Education	10%	90-110
	Second Language	5%	45-50

\*in the case of a student enrolled in a francophone educational program, French Language Arts

\*\* When all the suggested instructional time is combined, teachers still have about 10% of their instructional time that can be used flexibly or for district or school goal areas

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

**Table 2:** Graduation Requirements 10-12

<b>Required Subjects</b>	<b>Minimum Required Subject Credits*</b>	<b>Course Options</b>
A Language Arts 10 course	4	English Language Arts 10, English 10 First Peoples
A Language Arts 11 course	4	English Language Arts 11, English 11 First Peoples, Communications 11
A Language Arts 12 course	4	English Language Arts 12, English 12 First Peoples, Communications 12, English Literature 12
A Social Studies 10 course	4	Social Studies 10
A Social Studies 11 course	4	Social Studies 11, Civic Studies 11, B.C. First Nations 12
A Science 10 course	4	Science 10
A Science 11 or 12 course	4	Biology 11/12, Chemistry 11/12, Physics 11/12, Earth Science 11, Geology 12, Science and Technology 11, Sustainable Resources 11/12
A Mathematics 10 course	4	Apprenticeship and Workplace Math 10, Foundations of Math and Pre-Calculus 10,
A Mathematics 11 or 12 course	4	Apprenticeship and Workplace Math 11/12, Foundations of Math 11/12, Pre-Calculus 11/12, Calculus 12
A Fine Arts and/or Applied Skills 10, 11, or 12 course	4	Dance, Drama, Music or Visual Arts 10, Fine Arts 11, Art Foundations 11/12, Studio Arts 11/12, Choral Music 11/12, Instrumental Music 11/12, Theatre Performance 11/12, Theatre Production 11/12, Drama, Film, & Television 11/12, Media Arts 11/12, Music Composition and Technology 11/12 Information Technology 10/11/12, Food and Nutrition 10/ 11/12, Applied Skills 11, Technology Education 11/12, Tourism 11/12, Economics 12, Family Studies 10/11/12, Business Education 10/11/12
Physical Education 10	4	
Planning 10	4	
Graduation Transitions	4	
Minimum Required Subject Credits	52	
	**	
Minimum Elective Credits (Chosen from the Course options)	28	
<b>Total Minimum Credits for graduation</b>	<b>80</b>	

\*Each 4 Credit course consists of about 90-110 instructional hours

\*\* At least 16 credits must be at the Grade 12 level and must include a Language Arts 12 course

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

As the record and guideline for what we teach our children, curricular documents are definitional of what matters in a society, but they are not simple or transparent documents, particularly in the context of settler colonialism (Battiste, 2013; Kanu 2011, Wilkins, 2013). Curricula include the subject matter, or content, to be learned as well as the instructional practices used to deliver subject matter and the strategies that ensure content is learned in the desired manner (Kanu, 2011). Succeeding in school requires mastering curricula and exhibiting ‘good’ school behaviour, and the educational goals set out by governments frequently describe the kind of person the education system should be forming based on what is considered to be the ideal citizen (Besley & Peters 2007; Kanu, 2011). The content and design of curricula are determined by the epistemological and ontological commitments of social, cultural, and political contexts. Through education, societies express their perspectives and values, process their culture, and integrate their culture into general society. The knowledge, values, and desires of certain interest- and power-groups tend to dominate the content of school curricula and restrict what counts in society as worthwhile knowledge, and this knowledge becomes normalized (Battiste, 1998; Kanu, 2011; Godlewska et al., 2010; Wilkins, 2013). In the context of settler colonialism, the enduring control of Indigenous lands and peoples in the interests of settler society and global capital, school curricula generally perform the work of colonialism.

There is an important distinction to be made between the integration of content about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues and the integration of Indigenous perspectives. The former pertains to what information about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues is included and how it is presented, while the latter pertains to

how the curriculum deals with Indigenous ways of knowing and ways of being. Content about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues integrated into the curriculum can provide students with the opportunity to learn about the cultures and experiences of Indigenous peoples and the history and present of relationships between Indigenous peoples and settlers. Indigenous perspectives, when integrated, can offer ways of knowing and learning alternative to those derived from the Euro-Canadian tradition of education, as well as ways of relating in and with place alternative to those of the settler traditions of place.

## Creating a Proportional Measure

The first part of my analysis of the BC curricular involves reading the IRP documents line-by-line for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. The purpose of this is twofold: to establish a measure for the proportion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in relation to all other content, and to establish a complete picture of what First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is present. Following the work of Godlewska et al. (2010), I develop a proportional measure, or percentage, for courses in the subject domains Social Studies, English Language Arts, Sciences, Math<sup>2</sup>, Fine Arts/Arts Education, and Applied Skills for the grades Kindergarten to 12. These six domains are the core subjects for the BC curriculum and contain the required and elective courses. The BC curricular documents use the term Aboriginal to refer to First Nations, Inuit and Métis. As such, I read line by line the PLOs and AIs, and conduct a strict count of mentions of Indigenous content, including any mention of the terms ‘Aboriginal,’ ‘First Nation(s),’ ‘Métis,’ ‘Native,’ and ‘Indigenous,’ as well as specific ‘Aboriginal’ people, places, technologies, and perspectives. In the curricular documents for each subject and grade level the PLOs are attributed to a ‘curriculum organizer’ and follow the phrase “students are expected to...” I count as a mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content each item in the PLO list that contains First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, as described above. So, for example, in *Social Studies 4: Aboriginal Cultures, Exploration, and Contact*,

Describe Aboriginal peoples’ relationship with the land and natural resources  
(BCME, 2006f, p. 87)

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<sup>2</sup> A line-by-line reading of the Math IRPs for K-12 revealed no mentions in PLOs or AIs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content.

appears as one of three PLOs for the curriculum organizer *Human and Physical Environment*, and would be valued as 1. Each course IRP contains a number of organizers, each of which has a number of attributed PLOs. I derive the proportion and percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in each course by dividing each PLO that mentions First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content from the total number PLOs for the course. The process for the AIs is slightly different, as there are both direct and parenthetical mentions. The parenthetical content in the AI lists are suggestions and examples corresponding to the direct mentions, and as such I give them half weight while according non-parenthetical mentions a value of 1. So for example,

Compare how the activities of Aboriginal peoples differ according to regional differences in physical environment and resources (e.g., regions within BC, regions in Canada; cultures dependent on locally available living resources such as salmon, caribou, bison, seal, cedar) (BCME, 2006f, p. 87)

would count as a direct mention and be valued as 1. Whereas,

retell a story from an interview (e.g., residential school student, new Canadian, war veteran, elder) (BCME, 2006f, p. 91)

would count as a parenthetical, suggested, mention and be valued as 0.5. In this case, as it is not stated whether the ‘elder’ mentioned refers specifically to a First Nations, Métis, or Inuit elder, it is not included in the count. I derive the proportion and percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in each AI list by dividing the sum of the half and full point mentions by the total number of AIs for the course. Generating proportions and percentages of the mandatory content (PLOs) and the suggested ways of determining the success of these outcomes (AIs) provides a general idea of the degree to which the BCME prioritizes incorporating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the curriculum.

## Coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content by Subject

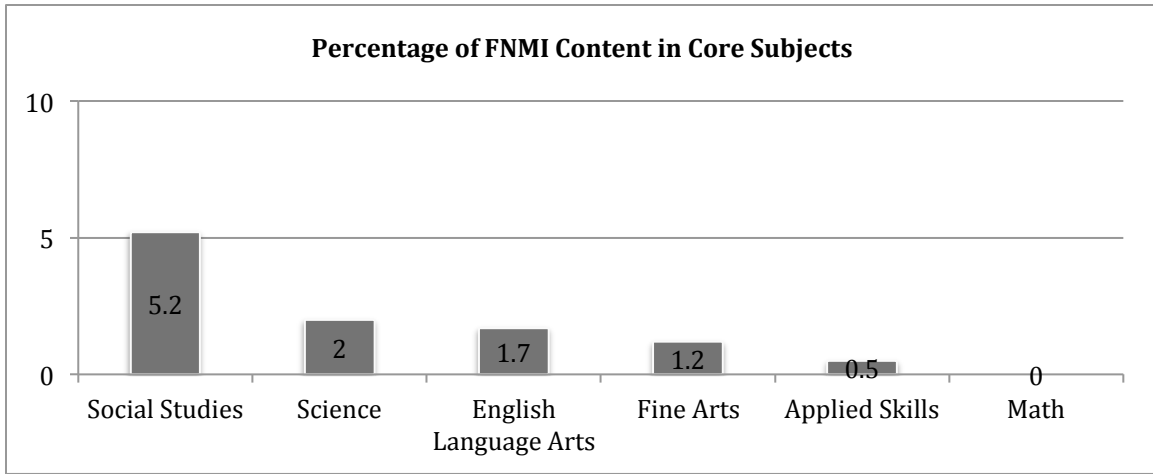


Figure 1: Percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content in Core Subjects

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

### Social Studies

Instruction in one Social Studies course is mandatory in each grade from K-11 in British Columbia. There is a prescribed social studies course from Grades K-10 and in grade eleven the social studies requirement can be met by one of the three elective courses *Social Studies 11*, *Civic Studies 11*, or *BC First Nations Studies 12*<sup>3</sup>. Tables 3 and 4 list all the Social Studies courses in British Columbia, showing the proportion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in each. Of the six core subjects, Social Studies, at 5.2%, has the highest level of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in Prescribed Learning Outcomes (Figure 1).

<sup>3</sup> As *BC First Nations* is a *Studies* dedicated Aboriginal Studies course, I do not generate a proportion or percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content for this course.

**Table 3: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content in Required Social Studies Courses**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Possible (%)</b>
K	Self, Family, School	0	1.5
1	Self, Family, School	0	1
2	Self, Family, School	0	1.2
3	Communities - Past and Present	0	3.1
4	Aboriginal Cultures, Exploration, and Contact	42	45
5	Canada - From Colony to Country	11	14
6	Canada and the World	0	3.7
7	Ancient Civilizations	0	4.9
8	World Civilizations 500-1600	5.3	2.4
9	Europe and North America 1500-1815	21	40
10	Canada from 1815-1914	5.9	15.3
Average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in required social studies courses		7.8	12

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

**Table 4: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content in Elective Social Studies Courses**

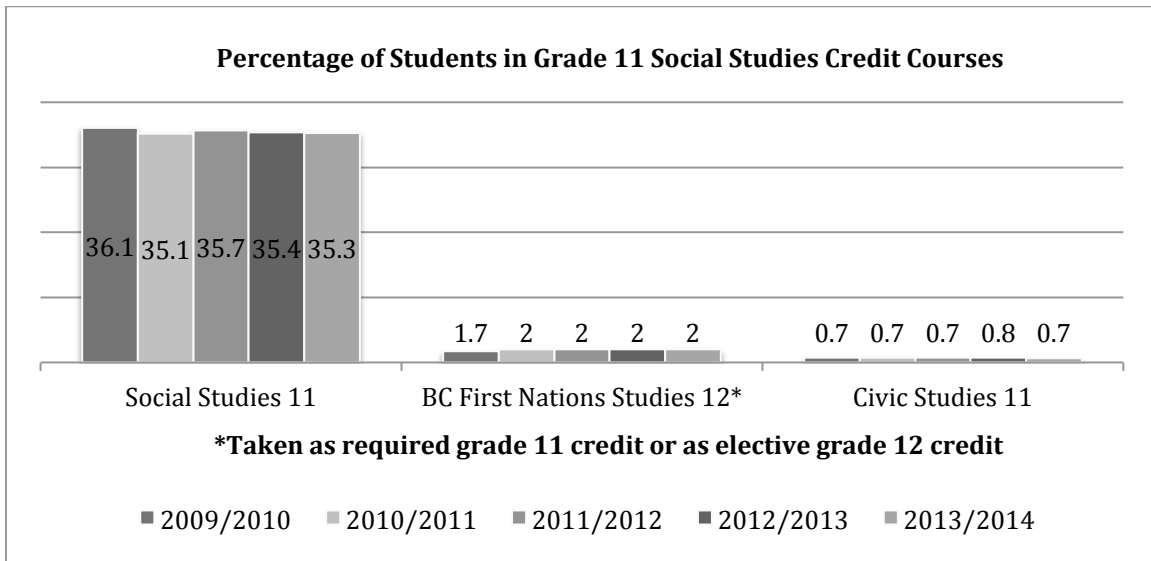
<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Possible (%)</b>
11	Social Studies	4.8	5.6
11	Civic Studies	4.3	3.3
12	Geography	0	0
12	History	0	0
12	Comparative Civilizations	0	0
12	Law	0	0.7
12	Social Justice	0	4.6
Average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in elective social studies courses			
Average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in all Social Studies courses		1.3	2
		5.2	8

\* Excluding BC First Nations Studies, offered as choice for fulfilling the mandatory Grade 11 Social Studies requirement or the Grade 12 elective requirement

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

In the grade eleven curriculum, required courses contain significantly more mandatory First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content than the elective courses. Most of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in Social Studies is concentrated in the grade 4 course *Aboriginal Cultures, Exploration, and Contact*, the grade 5 course *Canada - From Colony to Country*, and the grade 9 course *Europe and North America 1500-1815* with 42, 11, and 21 percent respectively. Grades 8 and 10 have between 5 and 6 percent; grades K to 3, 6, and 7 contain no mandatory First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Social studies elective courses, taken in grades 11 and 12, include no mandatory First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, save for the *BC First Nations Studies 12* course.

With respect to the Achievement Indicators, on average, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is present in 12 percent of the Achievement Indicators for courses in the Social Studies curriculum. As with the PLOs, the AIs for the required courses from K to 10 contain much more First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content than the AIs for the elective social studies courses for grades 11 and 12. The most significant coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is in the grade 4, 5, and 9 courses with 45, 14, and 40 percent respectively, while 15.3 percent of the grade 10 AIs contains First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Every course from grade K to 10 contains at least some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content coverage: 1-3 percent for grades K to 3, and 2-5 percent for grades 6 to 8. *Law 12* and *Social Justice 12* are the only courses in the upper level electives, apart from *BC First Nations Studies 12*, that contain any First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in their AIs.



**Figure 2:** Percentage of Students in Grade 11 Social Studies Credit Courses

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Ministry of Education 2014: Provincial Required Examinations

In general, students in BC are required to learn some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in most of the mandatory social studies courses, and the social studies courses from K to 10 are mandatory which means in theory at least that all students in BC will be exposed to the same content for these years. Each student is required, in either grade 11 or 12, to complete one of: *Social Studies 11*, of which 4.8 percent of the PLOs contain First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, *Civic Studies 11*, of which 4.3 percent contains First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, or *BC First Nations Studies 12* which is entirely focused on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Figure 2 shows the three Social Studies courses that count towards the Social Studies credit mandatory for graduation, and the percentage of students who took each course for the years 2009-2014<sup>4</sup>. The percentage of all students in both grades 11 and 12 who took each course is represented,

<sup>4</sup> Note that percentages may not add up to 100 percent. Some students do not successfully transition to the subsequent grade and may up in the year's headcount without completing the required credits for that year. Also, students may take courses in different years during secondary school.

as data were not available on how many grade 11 students versus grade 12 students took each course. So, for example, as there were 58,189 grade 11 students and 66,890 grade 12 students in 2013-2014, there were a total of 125,079 students. Of these, 44,169 students took Social Studies 11 in 2013-2014 to fulfill the mandatory grade 11 Social Studies credit, representing 35 percent of the total number of grade 11 and 12 students. For the school years of 2009-2014, 35 to 36 percent of grade 11 and 12 students took *Social Studies 11* to fulfill the mandatory social studies credit requirements, while around 0.7 percent took *Civic Studies 11*. *BC First Nations Studies 12* counts towards the mandatory Social Studies credit and may also be taken in fulfillment of the elective Social Studies credit. Data were not available on the number of students who took *BC First Nations Studies 12* for mandatory versus elective Social Studies credit. In total, 2,435 students took *BC First Nations Studies 12* in 2013-2014, representing 2 percent of the total number of grade 11 and 12 students for that year. During the school years 2009-2014, on average 2 percent of grade 11 and 12 students took *BC First Nations Studies 12*. When *BC First Nations Studies 12* was first offered provincially in 1994-1995, 84 students enrolled, and in 2005-2006, 2,659 students were enrolled, representing a significant increase (Mason, 2008, p. 150). Figure 3 shows the enrolment data for *BC First Nations Studies 12* from 2009 to 2014: the increase has halted and a steady average of 2,511.8 – 1.9 percent – of grade 11 and 12 students have taken the course in these years.

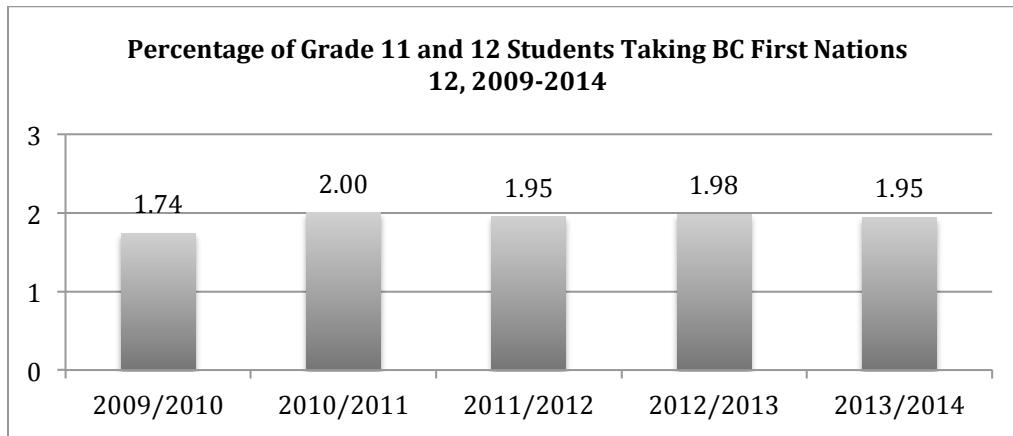


Figure 3: BC First Nations 12 Grade 11-12 Student Enrolment Percentages

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Ministry of Education 2014: Provincial Required Examinations

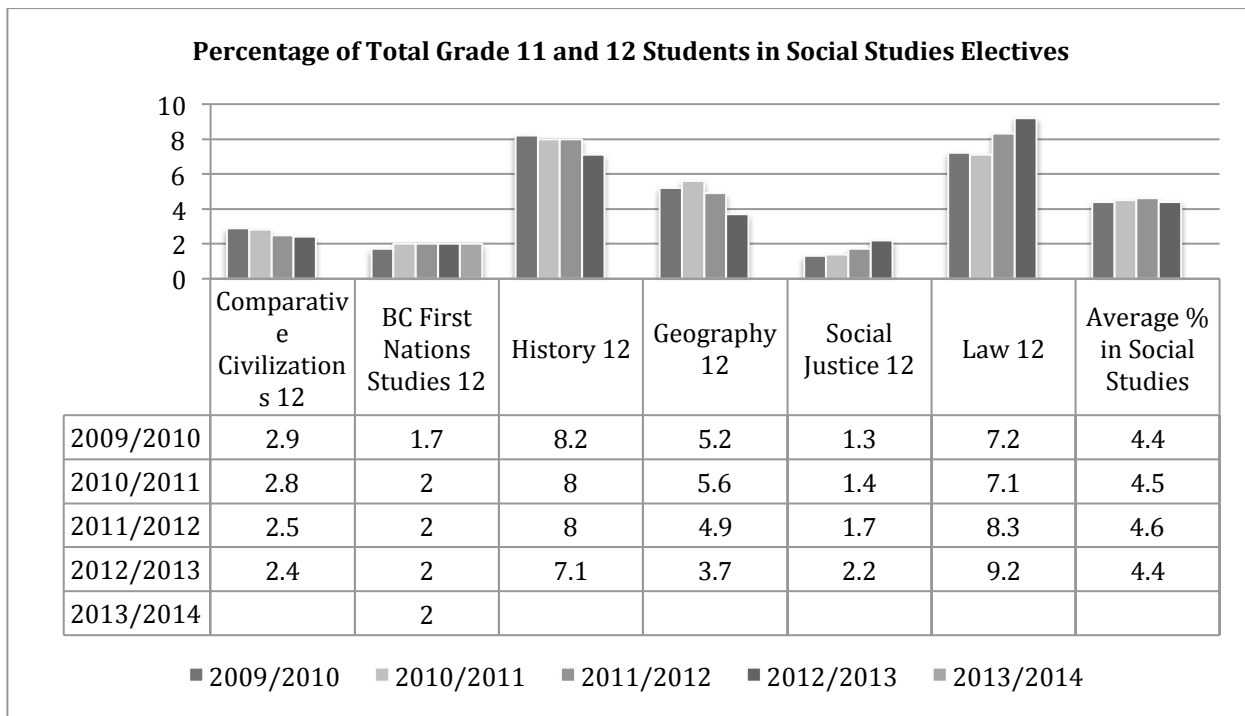


Figure 4: Upper Level Social Studies Electives Enrolment Percentages

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Schools: Course Enrollment and Completion by School Available at: <http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset?sector=Education&page=4> and BC Ministry of Education 2014: Provincial Required Examinations

Figure 4 shows the Social Studies courses students may take for their electives credits. From 2009 to 2012 the percentage of students taking *BC First Nations Studies 12* to fulfill their electives credit is second lowest only to *Social Justice 12* which itself has

seen a steady increase in enrolment from 2,107 students in 2009-2010 to 3,368 students in 2012-2013, surpassing the number of students enrolled in *BC First Nations Studies 12*. *Law 12* is the only other course that has undergone an increase in enrolment with 11,780 students enrolled in 2009-2010 and 13,652 students enrolled in 2012-2013. *Comparative Civilizations 12*, *History 12*, and *Geography 12* have all seen decreases in enrolment from 2009 to 2013, with geography's decline being the most marked.

Not only is there less mandatory First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content present in the upper level social studies courses, but also when students have the option, very few are choosing to take *BC First Nations Studies 12*. From 2009 to 2013 on average 4.5 percent of students in BC took social studies courses to fulfill their elective credits in grades 11 and 12, and only 2 percent took *BC First Nations Studies 12*, the only grade 12 course with mandatory First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. *Law 12* and *History 12* are the two courses taken by the most students, and while *Law 12* has some very minor First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content as suggestions or examples in its AIs, the PLOs and AIs for *History 12*, focused on 20<sup>th</sup> century world history, do not mention First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, or indeed global Indigenous, content or issues. While *Social Justice 12* contains 4.6 percent First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in its AIs, only about 2 percent of students took this course between 2009 and 2013, similar numbers to *BC First Nations Studies 12*. So, while grade 11 and 12 students in BC have the option of taking a dedicated First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies course, not only are the overwhelming majority of students not taking it, but those that are taking social studies courses are taking courses that do not require any coverage or discussion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues or perspectives.

The message from the curriculum is that, similar to the findings of Godlewska et. al. (2010), discussion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues and perspectives is largely confined to elementary and middle school, and worth minor mention in grade 11. The course titles of the three grade levels that deal with any significant required First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content – *Social Studies 4: Aboriginal Cultures, Exploration, and Contact*; *Social Studies 5: From Colony to Country*; and *Social Studies 9: Europe and North America 1500-1815* - suggest how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and issues are perceived: focused on the past, succeeded and superseded by the non-Indigenous, settler present, a key theme taken up below. It is striking that secondary level courses on geography, history, law and social justice contain no required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, nor Indigenous perspectives and issues. Further, less than 5 percent of the upper level social studies and the civic studies courses are concerned with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives and issues. Whether or not this is a deliberate Ministry policy, by concentrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in a few courses, the curriculum is failing to provide a significant proportion of BC students with adequate or substantial exposure to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' perspectives and issues.

## **Sciences**

The science curriculum in BC contains the second highest proportion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content: about 2 percent of the prescribed science curriculum from grades K-12 contains mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives or issues. Tables 5 and 6 list all the Science courses in British Columbia, showing the percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in each.

**Table 5: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: British Columbia Sciences K-10**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Processes and Skills of Science</b>	<b>Life Science</b>	<b>Physical Science</b>	<b>Earth and Space Science</b>	<b>Total Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Total Possible (%)</b>
K	Observing Communicating (sharing)	Characteristics of Living Things	Properties of Objects and Materials	Surroundings	0	0
1	Communicating (recording) Classifying	Needs of Living Things	Force and Motion	Daily and Seasonal Changes	10	8.3
2	Interpreting observations Making inferences	Animal Growth and Changes	Properties of Matter	Air, Water, and Soil	8.3	6.9
3	Questioning Measuring and reporting	Plant Growth and Changes	Materials and Structures	Stars and Planets	9.1	6.9
4	Interpreting data Predicting	Habitats and Communities	Light and Sound	Weather	9.1	3.9
5	Designing experiments	Human Body	Forces and Simple Machines	Renewable and Non-Renewable Resources	7.7	12.1
6	Controlling variables Scientific problem solving	Diversity of Life	Electricity	Exploration of Extreme Environments	0	2.9
7	Hypothesizing Developing models	Ecosystems	Chemistry	Earth's Crust	0	2.5
8	Safety Scientific Method	Cells and Systems	Optics Fluids and Dynamics	Water Systems on Earth	0	1.2
9	Representing and interpreting scientific information Scientific literacy	Reproduction	Atoms, Elements, and Compounds Characteristics of Electricity	Space Exploration	4.3	2.5
10	Ethical behavior and cooperative skills Application of scientific principles Science-related technology	Sustainability of Ecosystems	Chemical Reactions and Radioactivity Motion	Energy Transfer in Natural Systems	0	2.1
Total Mandatory Coverage in PLOs		1.3%	0%	2.6%		
Total Coverage in AIs		1.6%	0.2%	1.8%		
Total average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in required sciences courses					4	4

**Table 6: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: British Columbia Sciences 11-12**

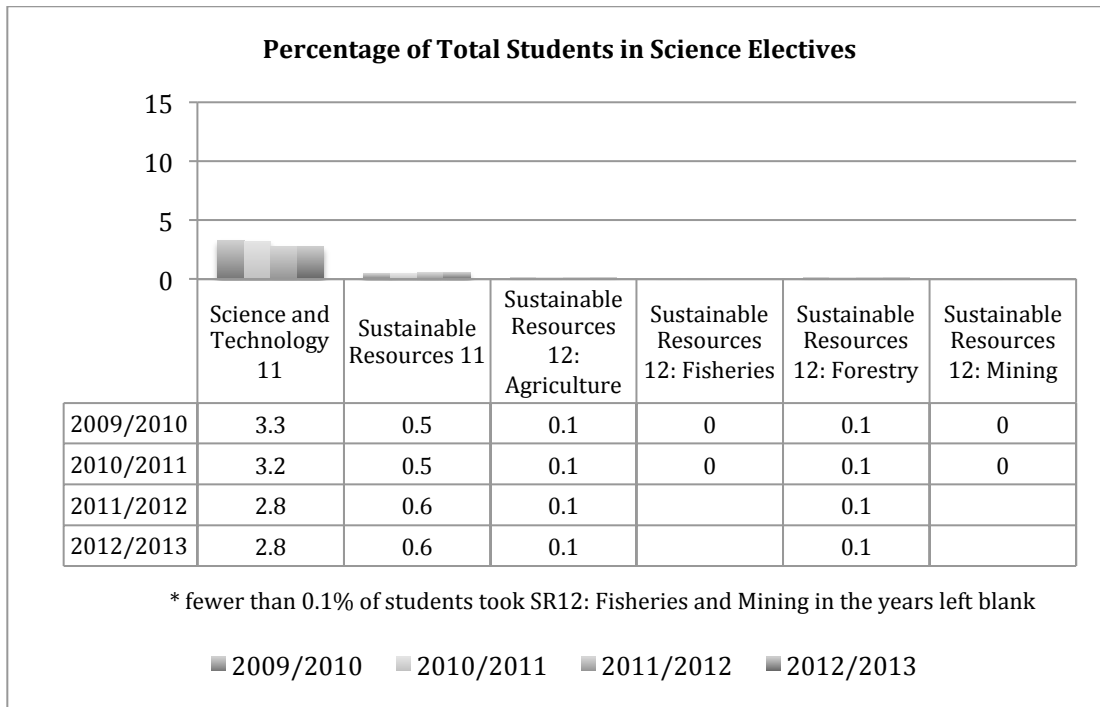
Grade	Course	Total Mandatory (%)	Total Possible (%)
11	Chemistry	0	0
11	Physics	0	0
11	Biology	0	0
11	Earth Science	0	0
11	Science and Technology	2.5	3.5
11	Sustainable Resources	0	6.1
12	Chemistry	0	0
12	Physics	0	0
12	Biology	0	0
12	Geology	0	0
12	Sustainable Resources: Agriculture	0	8
12	Sustainable Resources: Fisheries	0	5
12	Sustainable Resources: Forestry	0	2
12	Sustainable Resources: Mining	0	1
Total average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in elective sciences courses		0.2	2

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

Science in elementary education contains the highest amount of required First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, with an average of 8.8 percent through grades 1-5, and a total average of 4 percent from K-10. After grade 5, only *Science 9* and *Science and Technology 11* contain any required First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the PLOs, with 4.3 and 2.5 percent respectively. The average amount of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the K-10 science AIs is 4 percent. In grades 1-10 there is at least some mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the AIs, ranging from 1.2 percent to 12.1 percent. Grades 1-5 contain the most First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in their AIs, on average 7.6 percent. The First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in AIs drops considerably starting in grade 6, with an average of 2.2 percent in grades 6-10. In BC one

science course is mandatory in each grade from grades K-10. Only one upper-level science course, *Science and Technology 11* has any required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives or content, with only 2.5 percent, resulting in a negligible 0.2 percent average in grade 11 and 12 science courses PLOs, and 2 percent average coverage in the AIs. Of these courses, only *Science and Technology 11* and *Sustainable resources 11*, and the four *Sustainability Resources 12* courses, contain any mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content or perspectives in their AIs.

Students in BC are required to take a mandatory science course each year from grades K-10, and a minimum of one of a selection of science courses, worth four credits, in either grade 11 or grade 12. By grade 10, an average of 4 percent of the material students have been required to learn will have contained some coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content or perspectives. However, this coverage stops almost entirely in grade 5. Between 2009 and 2013, an average of 3 percent of grade 11 and 12 students took *Science and Technology 11*, the only course in the upper level sciences that has any required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives or content (figure 5). The data on course completion illustrates that the overwhelming majority of students in BC stop being exposed to any substantial coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content or perspectives in the science curricula by grade 6. When given choices about which science courses to take, students in BC overwhelmingly take courses that contain no mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives or issues. Upper level science courses that contain any coverage, required or suggested, of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content are vastly underrepresented in student completion.



**Figure 5:** Science Electives Grades 11-12 Enrolment Percentages

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Schools: Course Enrollment and Completion by School  
 Available at: <http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset?sector=Education&page=4>

Again, the message from the science curriculum is that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and content are appropriate only for elementary school. Significantly, upper level courses that deal with resources, the economy, and technology in BC and Canada, like *Science and Technology 11* and *Sustainable Resources 11* and *12*, contain a negligible amount of coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, considering their subject matter. In any case, very few students are taking these courses.

**Table 7: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: English Language Arts Grade K-9**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Total Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Total Possible (%)</b>
K	English Language Arts	0	0
1	English Language Arts	0	0
2	English Language Arts	0	0
3	English Language Arts	3	0
4	English Language Arts	2.9	0.3
5	English Language Arts	2.9	0
6	English Language Arts	2.9	0
7	English Language Arts	2.9	0
8	English Language Arts	2.6	0.2
9	English Language Arts	2.6	0.2
Total average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content in required English language arts courses		2	0.1

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

## Language Arts

After Social Studies and Science, the Integrated Resource Packages for Language Arts contain the highest percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, with 1.7 percent of the PLOs containing required coverage. This figure does not include the dedicated Aboriginal Studies courses *English 10-12 First Peoples* for which I do not generate a proportion or percentage of the content of their PLOs or AIs that deals with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content or Indigenous perspectives. Table 7 shows the percentage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the Language Arts courses for grades K-9. Students in BC are required to take one Language Arts course every year up to graduation in grade 12.<sup>5</sup> From grades K-9, students across the province are required to take a mandatory *Language Arts* course. There is no required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in K-2.

<sup>5</sup> Curriculum content for French Language learners is the same as for English. In this thesis I analyze only the documents in English.

**Table 8: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: English Language Arts Grade 10-12**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Total Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Total Possible (%)</b>
10	English Language Arts	2.6	0.2
11	English Language Arts	2.6	0.4
11	Communications	0	0
12	English Language Arts	2.6	0.5
12	English Literature	0	0
12	Communications	0	0
Total average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in elective English language arts courses		1.3	0.2

\* English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12 are offered as options for fulfilling the mandatory Grade 10-12 English Language Arts requirements

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

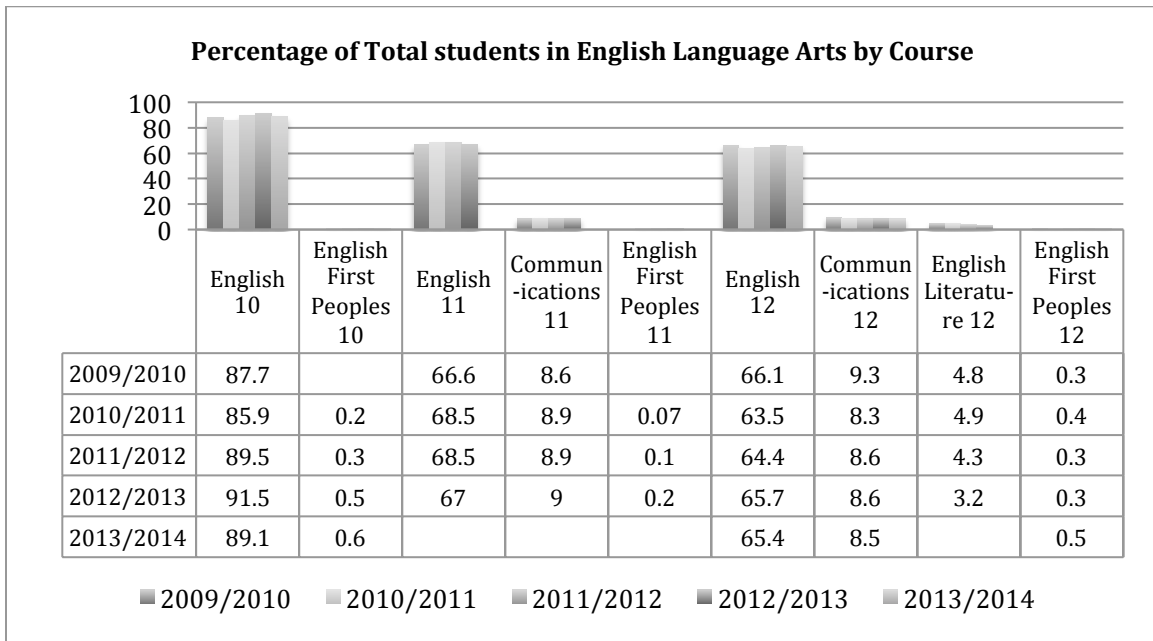
In grades 10-12 students have choices to fulfill their Language Arts requirement, shown in Table 8. Students must take at least one Language Arts course in each of grades 10-12, which are provincially examinable in grades 10 and 12. Students may also choose *English 10-12 First Peoples* to fulfill their Language Arts requirement. The *English 10 First Peoples* and *English 12 First Peoples* courses were developed to be equivalent to the standard English 10 and 12 courses, meaning that they require a provincial exam, and all three courses count as credits towards the Language Arts requirements for grades 10-12. On average, the upper-level elective Language Arts courses contain 1.3 percent coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in their PLOs and 0.2 percent in their AIs. 2.6 percent of the PLOs for each of *English Language Arts 10, 11, and 12* contains coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, while *Communications 11 and 12* and *Literature 12* contain no required coverage. Only the AIs for the *English Language Arts* courses contain any mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Starting in grade 3 and continuing until graduation, the core Language Arts courses require an average of 2.8

percent of their content to provide some coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Interestingly, for these same courses virtually no examples or suggestions are provided for how to determine student achievement regarding this required coverage; on average only 0.2 percent of the AIs contain any mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

*English 12 First Peoples* was first rolled out in BC in the fall of 2008; it was developed to focus on literature written by and about Indigenous peoples and designed to incorporate Indigenous pedagogies and principles of learning as well as content into the curriculum (Mason, 2008). *English 10 First Peoples* and *English 11 First Peoples*, based on the same pedagogical principles as the grade 12 course, were introduced into the BC curriculum in 2010, and since their introduction they have been overwhelmingly under-attended. Figure 6 shows the percentage of students who took each Language Arts course per year, and Figure 7 shows the number of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and non-Indigenous students enrolled in *English 10* and *12 First Peoples*, from 2009 to 2014. First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students made up between 11 and 12 percent of the grade 10 population from 2010 to 2014 (BCME, 2014)<sup>6</sup>. Since it was introduced in 2010, enrolment in *English 10 First Peoples* has increased from 104 students in 2010-2011 - 91 of whom were First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students - to 336 in 2013-2014 - 255 of which were First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students.

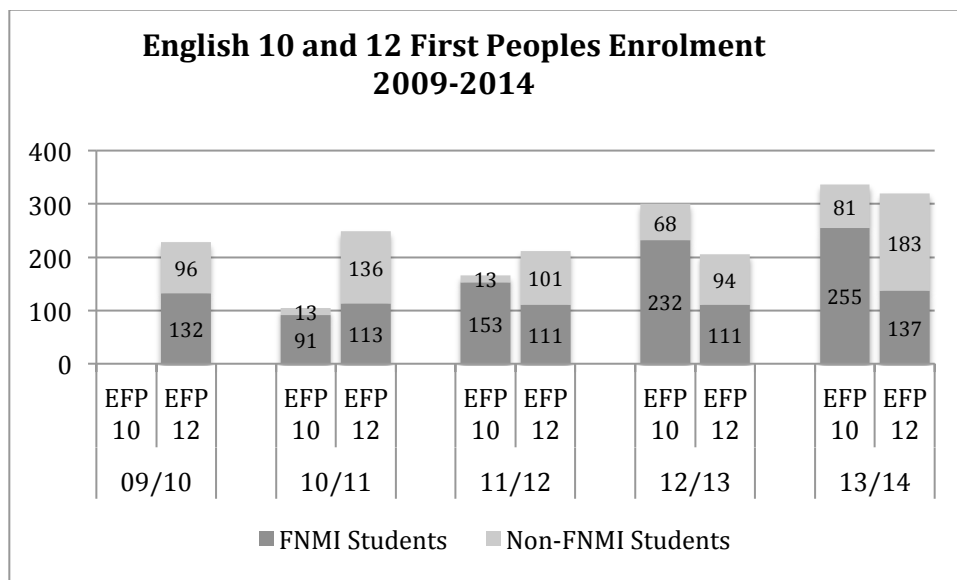
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<sup>6</sup> Includes students who have self-identified as being of Aboriginal ancestry (First Nations: status and non-status; Métis, and Inuit). Some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students may not self-identify.



**Figure 6: English Language Arts Grades 10-12 Enrolment**

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Schools: Course Enrollment and Completion by School Available at: <http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset?sector=Education&page=4> and BC Ministry of Education 2014: Provincial Required Examinations



**Figure 7: English 10 and 12 First Peoples Enrolment**

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Ministry of Education 2014: Provincial Required Examinations

However, this represents only 0.2 percent of all grade 10 students and 1.4 percent of grade 10 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in 2010-2011, and 0.6 percent of all grade students and 4.4 percent of grade 10 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students in 2013-2014. In comparison, from 2010 to 2014 an average of 89 percent of all grade 10 students took the standard *English 10* course to fulfill their grade 10 provincially-examinable Language Arts requirement. During this same time, an average of 70 percent of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students took the standard *English 10* course; the overwhelming majority of both First Nations, Métis, and Inuit and non-Indigenous students are not taking *English 10 First Peoples*. Forty-six students enrolled in *English 11 First Peoples* when it was introduced in 2010-2011, and since then enrolment has increased to 114 in 2012-13, or 0.07 percent to 0.2 percent of grade 11 students. In comparison, an average of 67.7 percent of grade 11 students took the standard *English 11* course and an average of 8.9 percent took *Communications 11* between 2009 and 2013. None of the grade 11 Language Arts courses have provincial exams. Enrolment in *English 12 First Peoples* hovered between 200 and 250 students, around 0.3 percent of grade 12 students, from 2009 to 2013, and got up 320 students, 0.5 percent, in 2013-2014. For these same years, on average 65 percent of grade 12 students took the standard *English 12* and 8.7 percent took *Communications 12* either to fulfill their provincially examinable grade 12 Language Arts requirement or as an elective. *English 12 First Peoples*, *English 12*, and *Communications 12* are accepted for the entrance requirements of the major Universities in BC, yet the vast majority of students are choosing the latter two courses. *English Literature 12* is offered as an elective Language Arts course, and does not count as one of the options for the grade 12 provincial exam requirement. From

2009-2013 an average of 4.3 percent of grade 12 students took this course, significantly more than took *English 12 First Peoples*, which does count toward the Language Arts requirement.

The standard Language Arts curriculum from K-12 contains little substantial coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Though in some years students are required to learn some small amount of content, discussed in the next section of analysis, only 0.1 percent of the AIs contain suggestions or examples for delivering this content or assessing students' learning of it. The Language Arts curriculum contains the largest number of dedicated Aboriginal Studies courses with the three offered in grades 10-12. However, these courses have not been offered in every school or in every year, and enrolment in these courses since their introduction has been very small. These courses may redress the lack of inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives, pedagogies, and ways of learning in the general BC curriculum, yet as they are not mandatory they remain on the extreme fringes of enrolment.

### **Fine Arts/Arts Education and Applied Skills**

The Integrated Resource Packages for the Fine Arts/Arts Education and Applied Skills curricula include the least required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives, issues, or content. Table 9 shows the percentage of required coverage for the Fine Arts courses for grades K-7: there is no coverage required in the PLOs for these grades, and an average of 0.7 percent of the suggestions and examples in the AIs contain mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content.

**Table 9: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: Fine Arts Grades K-7**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Possible (%)</b>
K	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	0.4
1	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	0.4
2	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	0.8
3	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	0.3
4	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	1.6
5	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	1.3
6	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	0.5
7	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts	0	0.3
Total average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in required fine arts courses		0	0.7

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

From K-7 all students in BC are required to take one course each year in Fine Arts/Arts Education that includes instruction in dance, drama, visual arts, and music. For grades 8 and 9 students are required to take at least one Fine Arts/Arts Education course each year in one of the four arts subjects: dance, drama, visual arts, or music. Students are required to take at least one Fine Art/Arts Education or Applied Skills course in either grade 10, 11, or 12. Table 10 shows all the grade 8-12 Fine Art/Arts Education courses and the percentage of coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. Table 11 shows the 8-12 Applied Skills courses that include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content.

**Table 10: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: Fine Arts Grades 8-12**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Total Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Total Possible (%)</b>
8	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts*	0	0.8
9	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts*	0	1.3
10	Dance, Drama, Music, Visual Arts*	0	1.5
11	Fine Arts	0	2.3
11	Art Foundations	11	13.3
11	Studio Arts	11	11.4
11	Choral Music	2.3	1.6
11	Instrumental Music	2.9	2.6
11	Theatre Performance	3	2
11	Theatre Production	0	1.4
11	Drama, Film, and Television	0	1.9
11	Media Arts	0	0
11	Music Composition and Technology	0	1
12	Art Foundations	2.6	6.3
12	Studio Arts	4.4	6.5
12	Choral Music	0	2
12	Instrumental Music	0	2.5
12	Theatre Performance	0	1
12	Theatre Production	0	2.2
12	Drama, Film, and Television	0	1.8
12	Media Arts	0	1.9
12	Music Composition and Technology	0	1
Total average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Coverage in elective fine arts courses		1.7	3

\* Each of these is its own course with its own IRP, they have been collated for this table

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

**Table 11: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content: Applied Skills Grades 8-12**

<b>Grade</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Total Mandatory (%)</b>	<b>Total Possible (%)</b>
8	Business Education	0	2.1
8	Food and Nutrition	0	4
9	Business Education	0	3.9
9	Food and Nutrition	0	3.7
10	Information Technology	0	4.2
10	Food and Nutrition	0	6
10-12	Family Studies*	0	1.5
11	Food and Nutrition	0	5.9
11	Applied Skills	0	0.2
11	Drafting and Design	0	3.1
11	Tourism	0	2.2
12	Tourism	3.7	4.8
12	Food and Nutrition	0	1.9
12	Economics	0	2.3
Average First Nations, Métis, and Inuit coverage in applied skills courses		0.5	3.3

\*Family Studies is a modular course for which students are given half credit each module

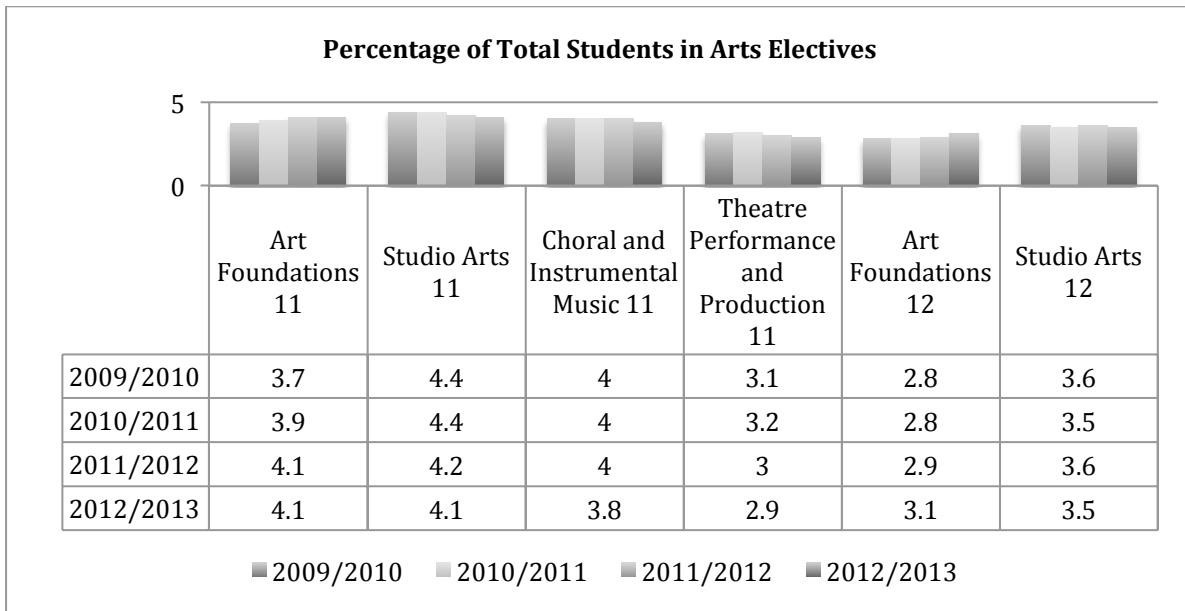
SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

There is no required coverage in the PLOs in any of the IRPs for grades 8 and 9 *Dance, Drama, Visual Arts, or Music*. The suggestions and examples provided in the AIs include mentions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in 0.8 percent of the grade 8 IRPs and 1.3 percent of the grade 9 IRPs. For grades 8 and 9 students are also required to take one Applied Skills course from the following subjects: technology education, information technology, home economics, or business education. Table 10 shows those Applied Skills courses that contain any mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in their PLOs and/or AIs. There is no required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the PLOs for any of the grades 8 and 9 Applied Skills courses, and there is only mention of

First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the AIs of the *Business Education* and *Food and Nutrition* IRPs for these grades.

The only upper level arts courses that contain required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in their PLOs are *Arts Foundations 11* and *12*, *Studio Arts 11* and *12*, *Choral Music 11*, *Instrumental Music 11*, and *Theatre Performance 11*. 11 percent of the PLOs for *Arts Foundations* and *Studio Arts* in grade 11 contain mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, while the music and theatre courses have between 2 and 3 percent. In grade 12 *Arts Foundations* and *Studio Arts* have only 2.6 percent and 4.4 percent respectively. Most of the Fine Art/Arts Education courses contain some mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in their AIs. The most significant presence is in *Arts Foundations 11* with 13.3 percent and *Studio Arts 11* with 11.4 percent, and *Arts Foundations 12* with 6.3 percent and *Studio Arts 12* with 6.5 percent. *Tourism 12* is the only upper level Applied Skills course that contains any required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, at 3.7 percent of its PLOs. 6 percent of the *Food and Nutrition 10* AIs contain mentions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, the highest percentage of coverage in the Applied Skills IRPs.

Figure 8 shows the percent of grade 11 and 12 students who took Fine Arts/Arts Education courses that have required coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. From 2009-2010 to 2012-2013, an average of 4 percent of all grade 11 and 12 students took *Art Foundations 11* and an average of 4.3 percent took *Studio Arts 11*, the two courses with the highest percentage of coverage in their PLOs.



**Figure 8:** Arts Electives Grades 11-12 Enrolment

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Schools: Course Enrollment and Completion by School Available at: <http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset?sector=Education&page=4>

Around 1 percent fewer students took the grade 12 versions of these courses in the same years, 2.9 and 3.6 percent respectively. On average 3-4 percent of grade 11 and 12 students took the theatre and music classes with required coverage in their PLOs. Generally, the Fine Art/Arts Education and Applied Skills curricula contain very little substantial coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. There is no required coverage in the courses that students are required to take, and negligible mention in examples and suggestions throughout these courses. Once students begin to have options of courses to take for their Fine Art/Arts Education, few are taking courses with required coverage. Fewer students are taking the one course in the Applied Skills selections that contain any required coverage.

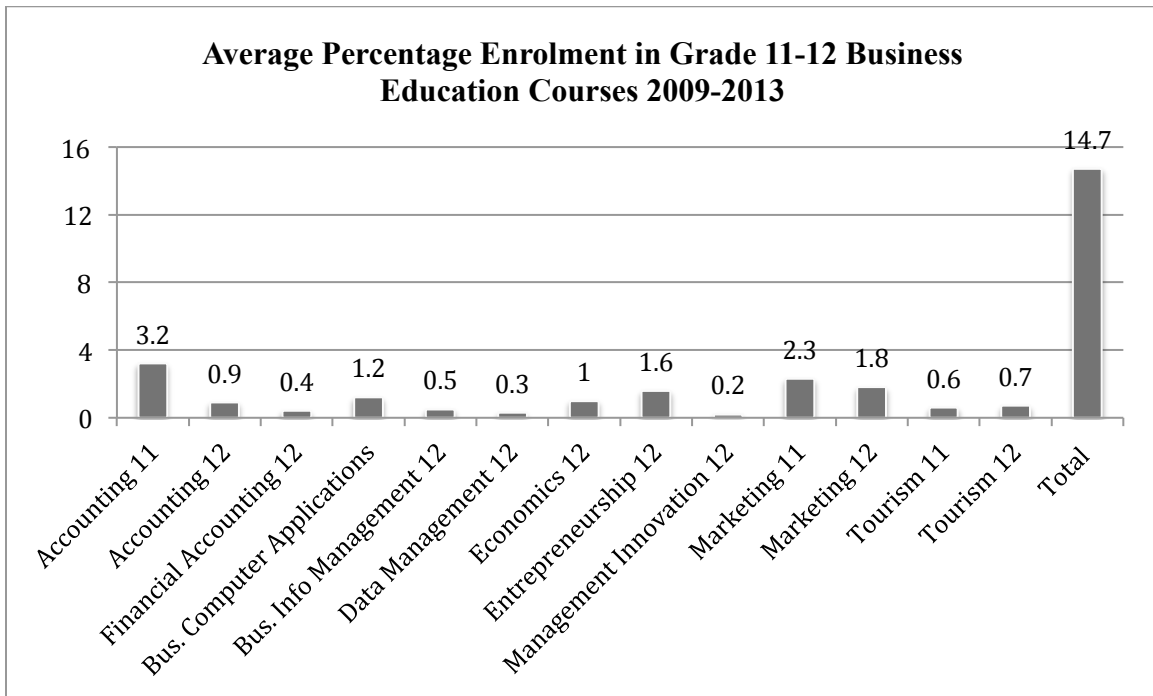


Figure 9: Business Education Grades 11-12 Enrolment

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Schools: Course Enrollment and Completion by School Available at: <http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset?sector=Education&page=4>

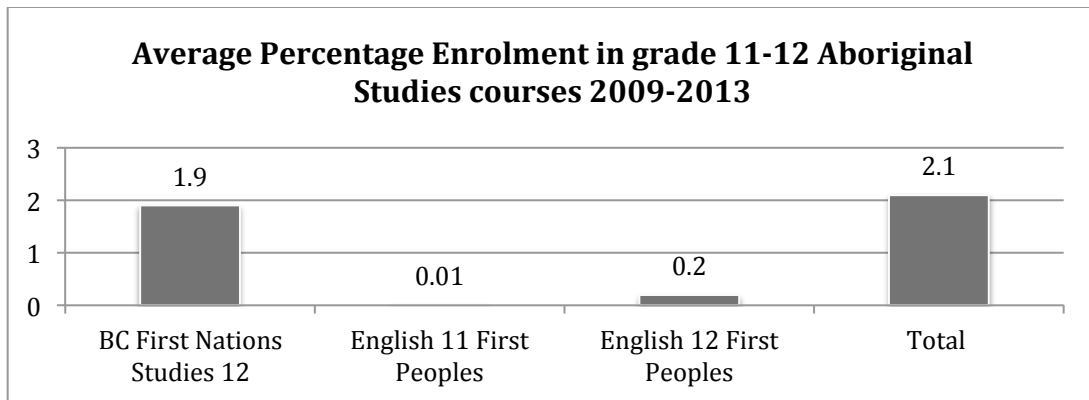


Figure 10: Aboriginal Studies Courses Grades 11-12 Enrolment

SOURCE: Calculated from BC Schools: Course Enrollment and Completion by School Available at: <http://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/dataset?sector=Education&page=4> and BC Ministry of Education 2014: Provincial Required Examinations

As Figures 9 and 10 demonstrate, significantly more students are taking Business Education courses than the dedicated Aboriginal Studies courses; nearly 15 percent versus 2 percent, or 7.5 times as many students took Business Education courses as Aboriginal Studies courses. That there are many more courses offered in Business Education for grades 11 and 12 than Aboriginal Studies courses, and that these are significantly more attended, demonstrates that Business Education is much more highly prioritized in the province.

## **CHAPTER 4: FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS, AND INUIT PEOPLES IN THE CURRICULUM: A CRITICAL READING**

Chapter 6 includes a critical reading of the BC curricular documents to understand the depth and quality of the included First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, and the absences and silences regarding key historical and epistemological content. Perspectives drawn from recent scholarship on settler colonialism, Indigenous critical theory, and critical pedagogy provide a methodology for understanding the aggressive nature of settler-colonial and neoliberal governmentalities in school curricula. These perspectives also point to an understanding of Indigeneity, whose aim is the substantive decolonization of education and society in Canada, which resists essentialisms, ahistoricization, and the constraints of settler discourses of authenticity. I conduct a critical reading of the PLOs and AIs of each subject and grade level for grades kindergarten through twelve, as well as the introductory sections of each IRP. I focus first on the introductory sections, PLOs and AIs that deal specifically with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, to understand and critique how the documents identify and represent Indigenous perspectives. I also analyze a report issued by the BCME on the incorporation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in courses in 2006 (revised 2010) that establishes the BCME's position on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the curriculum. Next, I conduct an analysis of the whole of the introductory, PLOs, and AIs sections in the documents of each subject and grade level, drawing on CIT, SCT, and CP, to understand and critique how the documents incorporate and develop settler-colonial and neoliberal governmentalities.

## **Integrating Indigenous Perspectives in the BC Curriculum**

So far my analysis of the integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content into the BC curriculum has focused on a quantitative assessment of content by subject, and the number of students taking the courses as a way of beginning to explore the influences acting on the average high school student in the Province. For the purposes of that analysis, the criteria for determining First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is broad and includes any mention whatsoever of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, places, practices, perspectives, and history. This presents the most generous picture of coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the BC curriculum. The next stage of my analysis gets at the quality, depth, and breadth of the coverage present in the BC IRPs, in particular: what students are required to learn through the PLOs and how this may be achieved through the AIs.

### **BC Ministry Policy on Integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content**

The Introduction sections of the BC IRPs present the Ministry's rationale for integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and can be interpreted as representing the Ministry's policy on integration. Curricular documents typically undergo revision on a schedule to manage the workload. Over the past 15 years the BC Ministry of Education has taken an iterative approach to changing how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is integrated in the K-12 curriculum. This approach is the result of partnerships and work with local First Nations communities and scholars, and in response to events province- and nation-wide. While the Ministry's approach and policy has continued to develop, revisions to curricular documents have been made in stages. The dates of publication for course IRPs currently in use range from 1995 to 2010. Due to the iterative nature of

curriculum revision, some course IRPs from earlier years still contain ‘old’ and ‘unrevised’ sections on integrating coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content.

### A Policy of Decentralization

Most course IRPs include a section in their introductions that outlines the rationale for integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, called *Working With the First Peoples Community* in the most recent IRP revision. The revisions to this section over the 15-year period from 1995 to 2010 are shown in Table 12.

**Table 12:** Integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Content

Year of IRP Publication	Section Title	Subject	Course IRPs
1995-1997	Integrating First Nations Studies	Applied Skills	Applied Skills 11, Tech Education 8-10
		Fine Arts	Arts 8-10, Fine Arts 11
1996-1998	Integrating Aboriginal Studies	Applied Skills	Info Technology 8-10, Business Education 8-10, Tech Education 11-12, Business Education 11-12
		Fine Arts	Music: Composition and Technology 11-12, Visual Arts: Media Arts 11-12, Drama, Film, and Television 11-12
		Social Studies	Social Studies 8-9
		Language Arts	Communications 11-12
2002-2008	Working with the Aboriginal Communities	Applied Skills	Health and Career Studies K-9, Planning 10, Family Studies 10-12, Food Nutrition 8-12, Textiles 8-12, Tourism 11-12,
		Fine Arts	Music: Choral and Instrumental 11-12, Studio Arts 11-12, Drama 11-12,
		ELA	English Language Arts K-12
		Science	Science K-10, Biology 11-12, Chemistry 11-12, Applied Physics 11-12, Physics 11-12, Earth Science 11, Geology 12
		Math	Math K-9
2008-2010	Working with the First Peoples Community	Social Studies	Social Studies K-7, Social Studies 10-11, Civic Studies 11, Comparative Civilizations 12, Geography 12, History 12, Social Justice 12
		ELA	English First Peoples 12, English First Peoples 10-11

SOURCE: Calculated from British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

The most recent iterations of the Ministry’s approach to integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, included in the revised IRPs from 2002-2010, focus on partnering with the local Indigenous community to develop and deliver appropriate coverage of content. This represents a shift away from previous iterations present in IRPs published in 1995-1998 that include specific discussions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives on knowledge, values, and relationships. These older iterations include a number of examples of Indigenous beliefs and values, discuss contemporary issues like treaty negotiations, and include some examples of learning exercises and assessment strategies for incorporating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content into the curriculum. They contain calls for validating and substantiating “durable and relevant” First Nations values and beliefs and identify a need for “mutual respect” and “informed, reasonable discussions and decisions” based on accurate information about, for example, current treaty negotiations between Canada, British Columbia, and First Nations. The older iterations of policy lay out a series of expectations for students that include demonstrating understanding and appreciation for First Nations traditions, communication systems, relationship with the natural world, artistic and cultural expression, and social, economic, and political systems in traditional and contemporary contexts.

The revisions to the Ministry’s approach to policy on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content recommend that teachers work with local Indigenous communities to establish appropriate local content delivered by local community experts. Where the older iterations include discussion and examples of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content to be covered in the curriculum, the revised approach does not define or describe the cultures and contributions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in this

section of the documents, but instead encourages teachers to seek out local resources and contacts for possible instructional and assessment activities. The most recent iteration of the Ministry's approach emphasizes the importance of the experiences and wisdom of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit teachers, elders, and knowledge holders to incorporating information about First Peoples in the classroom. Here the Ministry stresses that effective incorporation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content relies on strong community links including contacts with chiefs, elders, and local First Nation authorities. Teachers are encouraged to connect with their local First Nations education coordinator and consult Ministry publications on content development and delivery.

The Ministry's recent approach and policy on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is evident in the 2006 (Revised 2010) publication of *Shared Learnings*. Written in collaboration with many local First Nations communities and educators, this report focuses on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content into the K-10 classes and includes respectful and substantial instructional strategies and locally developed learning resources for Social Studies, Science, Language Arts, Fine Art/Arts Education, Health and Career Studies, Mathematics, Physical Education, and Applied Skills. The report recognizes the need to provide all students in BC with knowledge of, and opportunities to share experiences with First Nations in BC. Its aim is to promote understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues in BC among all students. The report is based on a series of "assumptions about peoples and their cultures, values, beliefs, history, and languages" (BCME, 2006/2010, p. 4). These assumptions include an emphasis on the dynamic and evolving nature of Indigenous cultures, the durability and relevance of Indigenous values and beliefs, the connection between

contemporary events and issues with historical developments, and the rooting of culture in language. These strategies are attentive to the importance of the diversity of Indigenous peoples in BC. The learning resources describe Indigenous ways of life including: individual responsibility to family, community, and nation; the importance of intellectual, emotional, physical, and spiritual balance; and respecting the relatedness of all things in the natural world.

While recent revisions in the Ministry's approach and policy on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content into the curriculum do a good job addressing the diversity of Indigenous peoples and cultures in the Province and across Canada by encouraging the participation of local First Nations and Métis communities in developing appropriate content, they also follow the more worrying trends of decentralization and neoliberalization in education. The Ministry's recent approach places the responsibility for making connections, establishing relationships, and facilitating the participation of the local Indigenous community on individual teachers. Furthermore, it gives teachers the responsibility for choosing to do so. Whereas discussion of specific First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and issues was included directly in the sections on integrating content in older IRPs, the sections in the recent iterations suggest that teachers access resources outside of these documents. The revised iterations emphasize the Ministry's dedication to "ensuring that the cultures and contributions of Aboriginal peoples in BC are reflected in all Provincial curricula," and to "providing students with knowledge of, and opportunities to share experiences with, Aboriginal peoples in BC." Yet, though revisions have made coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content more sophisticated, in-depth, and locally developed, they have at the same time removed this

coverage from the core IRP documents to satellite locations. There is an absence of reference to specific issues in the recently revised IRPs, especially the kind of references that allow all students to see themselves as connected to “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues” like the current treaty negotiations between First Nations, BC, and Canada, and “Indigenous perspectives” on ways of knowing and ways of being. While the publication *Shared Learnings* provides a much more sophisticated and in-depth discussion of integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content than is available in the older IRPs, this publication is not mandatory for teachers to view or use, nor are the content or instructional strategies provided in it mandatory for students to learn. Teachers have potential access to better content on the BC MOE website or through their district Aboriginal Education coordinator, but, as accessing this content is not mandatory, they have to choose to seek out these additional resources, connections, and collaborations. As evidenced by the 2014 BC teachers strike, which kept schools closed from June until late September 2014, the climate of budget cuts, decreasing education funding, and increasing class sizes have made BC teachers less inclined to take on extra work (BCTF, 2014).

Teachers are made responsible for finding appropriate resources and developing connections and collaborations with local First Nations communities, yet there is no clear indication that this is a commonly held goal. Orłowski’s (2008) study on attitudes towards the inclusion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives and issues in BC Social Studies by teachers in Vancouver suggests that while Social Studies teachers in BC may be aware that “some people would like social studies to be taught from other perspectives,” a commonly held perspective among many social studies teachers is that this is “some sort of movement steeped in ‘political correctness’” (122). Orłowski argues

that the teachers who participated in the study, and indeed a significant number of BC teachers in general, consider the formal curriculum to be ‘neutral,’ and that they, “whether consciously or not, support the State’s strategy of representing the Other in ways that make it easier to manage them” (125). Furthermore, the study identifies the “lack of time teachers have to learn so that they fully comprehend complex socio-political issues” (127). The Ministry’s recent approaches and policy on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content are based on a kind of decentralization that creates real concerns about the probability, let alone extent, of integration. These problems are exacerbated in the climate of learning for the ‘knowledge society’ and ‘knowledge economy’: how will accurate and appropriate education about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experiences and perspectives be seen as useful for helping produce ‘flexible’ and ‘dynamic’ entrepreneurial subjects? And what might be the place of Indigenous relationality in and with land in a neoliberal governmentality geared towards the global capitalist economy? One of the stated goals of *Shared Learnings* is to promote understanding of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in BC among all students, a sentiment echoed in the recent revisions to the Ministry’s IRPs. Aspirations of the optional coverage aside, the success of this goal needs to be measured according to what the Ministry requires all students in the Province to learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

**Table 13:** Integrating Indigenous Perspectives

<b>Year of IRP Publication</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Course IRPs</b>
2005-2008	Aboriginal Content in the Science Curriculum	Science	Science K-7, Science 8-10, Science and Technology 11, Sustainable Resources 11-12
2006	Philosophy of BC First Nations Studies 12	Social Studies	BC First Nations Studies 12
2007-2008	Aboriginal Perspectives	Math	Math K-9
2008	First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives	Math	Math 10-12
2008-2010	First Peoples Principles of Learning	ELA	English First Peoples 12, English First Peoples 10-11

SOURCE: British Columbia Curricular documents available at the Ministry of Education. Available at: <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca>

### **Integrating Indigenous Perspectives**

In addition to the *Working With the First Peoples* section on integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in recently revised IRPs, some subjects and courses contain a rationale for integrating Indigenous perspectives. These rationale sections differ significantly from “*Working With*” sections in that they describe particular Indigenous epistemologies (ways of knowing) and ontologies (ways of being). Table 13 shows the subjects and courses that include this kind of rationale. Most of the Math and Science IRPs include references to particular articulations of Indigenous perspectives including ‘holistic’ worldviews and ways of living and the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Wisdom (TEKW) to Indigenous peoples. The Math curriculum introduces a unique section called “Aboriginal Perspectives” in the K-9 IRPs from 2007-2008, modified as “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives” in the 10-12 IRPs in 2008. These sections remind teachers that students come from a “diversity of cultures and

experiences,” and that learning in Indigenous cultures “takes place through active participation.” It suggests that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students “live and learn best in a holistic way,” and may learn best when math is “contextualized, and not taught as discrete components.” The revision in 2008 to “First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives” updates and clarifies the language regarding First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and emphasizes the “whole-world view of the environment” of many Indigenous peoples, demonstrating an awareness and will on the part of the writers of these curricular documents to make Math learning relevant to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and contexts.<sup>7</sup>

The science curriculum rationale goes some way in legitimizing Indigenous perspectives: the science IRPs from K-10, as well as *Science and Technology 11* and *Sustainable Resources 11-12*, contain a section on “Aboriginal Content in the Science Curriculum,” which includes an emphasis on promoting an understanding of BC’s First Nations peoples among all students. It suggests that the incorporation of Indigenous science can enhance the learning of all students, and make learning the subject “more authentic, exciting, relevant, and interesting for *all* students.” The section discusses TEKW, defined as the “study of systems of knowledge developed by a given culture,” and as a branch of ecological and biological science. TEKW is identified as consisting of proven conceptual approaches that are “becoming increasingly important to all BC residents.”

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<sup>7</sup> Though this rationale demonstrates awareness of and sensitivity to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ contexts and perspectives, there are no mentions in the PLOs or AIs of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives or any relevant content.

The four dedicated Aboriginal Studies courses in BC, *BC First Nations Studies 12* and the *English 10-12 First Peoples* courses, provide detailed and sophisticated rationale for integrating Indigenous perspectives. *BC First Nations Studies 12* is the only social studies course that provides a rationale for integrating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum. In its section titled *Philosophy of BC First Nations Studies 12*, the course IRP makes reference to Indigenous epistemology, stating that “language and land are the foundation of Aboriginal identity and culture,” and “Aboriginal views of knowledge and learning may differ from those of other societies” (BCME, 2006a, p. 4). This course’s “philosophy” also makes reference to Indigenous ontology, defining Indigenous peoples’ ways-of-being in terms of the “sense of individual responsibility to family, community, and nation;” the “recognition of the importance of a continual pursuit of spiritual, emotional, physical, and intellectual balance;” and the “respect for the relatedness of all things in the natural world” (BCME, 2006a, p. 4). The language arts courses *English 10-12 First Peoples* include rationale for integrating Indigenous perspectives based on “First Peoples principles of learning,” emphasizing, among other points, that learning is “holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place),” and “recognizes the role of Indigenous knowledge” (BCME 2010a, p. 11).

Discussion of rationale for integrating Indigenous perspectives is peripheral in the social studies and language arts curricula. None of the required social studies or language arts courses mentions Indigenous perspectives in their rationale. Coverage of Indigenous ways of knowing and ways of being is included in the rationale for *BC First Nations Studies 12* and the *English 10-12 First Peoples*, which can be taken as part of the

compulsory upper level social studies and language arts credits and even count as provincial exam credits for university entrance. Yet, the restriction of coverage of Indigenous ways of knowing and ways of being to only those elective courses specifically concerned with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content demonstrates the core curriculum's ambivalence towards integrating Indigenous perspectives: a continuation of the theme of decentralizing coverage and making peripheral the presentation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. The contrast between the current required science and math IRPs' references to particular Indigenous perspectives like TEKW and 'holistic worldviews' with the lack of rationale for integrating Indigenous perspectives into required social studies and language arts courses is a theme taken up below.

### **Analyzing Prescribed and Suggested Content**

Analyzing the rationale provided for integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum is important because it provides a picture of the Ministry's approach and policy. Analyzing the content of the PLOs and AIs gives a much more comprehensive picture of the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives included. Coverage is included in the IRPs in three ways: 1) some PLOs are specifically concerned with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, perspectives, or issues and these may or may not have attendant AIs that include First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content; 2) some AIs that are concerned specifically with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content are given for PLOs that are themselves not specifically concerned with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, perspectives, or issues; 3) First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is mentioned among the list of examples for some AIs that themselves are not specifically concerned with First Nations, Métis,

and Inuit peoples, perspectives, or issues. These mentions are peripheral in that they are just possible examples among many for optional coverage, as well as effectively random due to lack of explanation or context.

### **Social Studies**

Unsurprisingly, the most significant coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and perspectives in the BC curriculum is in Social Studies courses. The BC curricular documents define Social Studies as a “multidisciplinary subject that draws from the social sciences and humanities to study human interaction and natural and social environments.” The aim of Social Studies K-11 is to “develop thoughtful, responsible, and active citizens,” and provide students with “opportunities as future citizens to reflect critically upon events and issues in order to examine the present, make connections with the past, and consider the future” (BCME, 1997, p. 1; 2006f, p. 11). There are three key themes in the social studies curricular documents’ coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives. 1) The social studies curricular documents frequently historicise First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and Indigenous perspectives; 2) First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues and Indigenous perspectives are subsumed in settler perspectives and interests; and 3) the social studies curriculum contains significant omissions and silences about settler colonialism in Canada. The general effect of this coverage in the social studies curriculum is one in which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and Indigenous perspectives are peripheral to a ‘core’ content that privileges settler perspectives. While the curriculum does teach students about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, ultimately it fails to teach or integrate Indigenous perspectives as legitimate and viable worldviews and ways of being. This is a failure both

of accurately representing Indigenous perspectives, as well as a failure of accurately representing settler traditions and identity.

### **Historical treatments**

Two themes in the curriculum contribute to the historicization of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives: the representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and Indigenous perspectives as objects of the past, and the representation of Indigenous peoples, cultures, and perspectives giving way to settler peoples, cultures, and perspectives. In part this is due to the fact that most of the coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' cultures, including worldviews, technologies, and governance structures, pertains to the time periods of first contact and European exploration. For example, while there is no required coverage in grade 3, it is suggested that students “demonstrate knowledge” of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit groups as the country's original communities, focusing on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit life in the past, and identifying even First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the past as connected, and belonging to, the future nation. The only required social studies course in which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is central is *Social Studies 4: Aboriginal Cultures, Exploration, and Contact*, and this course represents the majority of what students learn about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' cultures, technologies, and governance structures. As the title suggests, this course is focused on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, technologies, and governance structures at the time of contact with Europeans, as well as some of the effects of contact on both parties. Students are required to give examples of technologies used by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, including traditional technologies like the travois, hide scraper, adze, and weir, and to describe

economic and technological exchanges between explorers and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples (BCME, 2006, pp. 85-86). This coverage touches on how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples integrated European technologies into their daily life and traditions from the earliest moments of contact with explorers. However, there are no mentions of the exchanges between settlers and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

Once the social studies curriculum starts dealing with the periods of settlement and the early development of Canada as a nation, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are generally discussed in relation to settlers. In grade 4 students are required to make comparisons between governance in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and early European settlements in BC and Canada, positioning First Nations, Métis, and Inuit governance as historical artifact. Similarly, students are required to identify the impact of Canadian governance on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples' rights, articulated in the past-tense of interactions with early governments in Canada like the Indian Act, banning of the potlatch, reserve system, and treaties (BCME, 2006f, p. 84). Positioning these issues as “interactions with early governments in Canada” obscures their enduring realities in the present day. Though the IRP for the grade 4 course does a good job of introducing students to the different First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the province and Canada, it is primarily concerned with discussion of historical rather than contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. The historical treatment of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures continues in grade 7 where it is described as an example of “ancient civilization.” elders and chiefs are offered as examples of governance in ancient civilizations alongside kings, pharaohs, and samurai; inuksuit as ancient communications technologies alongside papyrus scrolls.

### **Contributing to Standards of Authenticity**

Connected to the historical treatment of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and the historicization treatment of Indigenous perspectives is a trend in some of the social studies curriculum of contributing to standards of ‘authenticity.’ In effect, aspects of the social studies curriculum reflect a key settler-colonial strategy of elimination: the representation of Indigenous peoples as historical objects and settlers as agents and producers of that history. In grade 4, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures are identified in art, examples of which include masks, paintings, carving, baskets, dances, and stories. Here First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art is represented as ‘traditional’ and there is no mention of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art like graphic novels, literature, film, music, and drama, obscuring the dynamic and evolving nature of cultural production. Students in grade 4 are also expected to describe First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ “relationship with the land and natural resources” (BCME, 2006f, p. 87). While this relationship is explained as a close alignment with the natural world, as evidenced through stories and ceremonies, the examples given paint a picture of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as hunter-gatherers: the document makes no mention of the plant cultivation and aquaculture methods developed by many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

### **Co-opting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Cultures**

A significant theme in many of the social studies IRPS is the treatment of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures as aspects of Canadian culture, connecting to the historicization of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, the subsuming of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures to settler perspectives and interests, and the naturalization and

reification of settlers' place in Indigenous lands. As early as grade 1, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and perspectives are co-opted and subordinated to a view of Canadian identity. Coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in social studies in grades 1 and 2 consists of a single optional mention and these mentions co-opt aspects of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures as characteristic of Canada: in grade 1 totem poles are identified as Canadian symbols, likened to such settler-nationalist symbols as the maple leaf, Canadian flag, and symbols on coins; in grade 2 inuksuit are listed alongside the Canadian flag, maple leaf, beaver, parliament buildings, and poppy as Canadian symbols. In *Social Studies 6: Canada and the World* students are asked in to describe characteristics of Canadian culture and identity, students may list "Aboriginal cultures" alongside official bilingualism, education, special interest groups, and multiculturalism (BCME, 2006f, p. 101).

### **Naturalizing Settler Perspectives**

The naturalizing of settler-colonial perspectives in coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content extends throughout much of the social studies curriculum. A number of significant silences and omissions in discussions of key contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues point to how the subordination of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives to settler perspectives misrepresents key historical and contemporary issues. In *Social Studies 6: Canada and the World*, students may be asked to speculate how past incidents of inequality, for example residential schools, might be handled differently under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (BCME, 2006f, p. 102). However, the curriculum makes no mention that the last residential school in BC, St. George's Indian Residential School in Lytton, was closed in 1986, four years after the

Charter came into effect. In the upper-level social studies courses, the curriculum frequently presents the experiences of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as Canadian events, obscuring the perspectives of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and remaining silent about the curriculum's own positionality and perspective. The *Social Studies 10: Canada from 1815-1914* IRP suggests, but does not require, that students critique the rationale for the numbered and Vancouver Island treaties in BC, yet makes no mention of the fact that there are to date only 8 modern treaties in effect in BC, that most of BC is unceded territory, or that the Province is now in a significantly high number of treaty negotiations. The omission of the realities of the treaty process in BC is one of the most extreme silences in the curricular documents given the current state of negotiations between the BC government and First Nations. The lack of information on treaties in BC, and in Canada, is made more problematic considering the recent SCC rulings on First Nations land rights, most notably the in BC the June 26, 2014 SCC ruling that declared the Tsilhqot'in Nation's title to approximately 1900 km<sup>2</sup>, and confirmed that Aboriginal Title gives the Tsilhqot'in the right to control the land (Tsilhqot'in Nation v British Columbia, 2014). Yet this omission is unsurprising in consideration of the settler-centrism of the 'core' curricula.

As with the co-opting of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures, the emphasis on "Canadian identity" in the *Civic Studies 11* curriculum centers settler perspectives. In this course, Canadian civic identity is emphasized and discussed in an AI in terms of events from the 20th and 21st century. Canadian civic identity is identified as having developed through events related to governance; rights and responsibilities including Anti-Potlatch legislation; and culture, language, and community, examples of which include residential

schools and the Meech Lake Accord. How exactly these events have contributed to Canadian civic identity is not made clear, and as these remain suggestions and not required content, it is hard to imagine how the Ministry expects teachers to deal with this content. In another AI in this course, the Indian Act is given as an example of an ‘event’ that students might relate to the principles of democracy, though how students might be expected to make this relation is not suggested.

### **Liberal Multiculturalism and Settler Sovereignty**

The representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures as Canadian culture is exemplary of the attitude in the social studies curriculum of a settler-Canadian liberal-multicultural identity that ‘includes’ First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures as a part of Canadian society. Significantly, coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples portrays them as culturally, but not politically, distinct, a simultaneous allowance of ‘cultural diversity’ and disavowal of political and economic difference, an example of the naturalizing of settler sovereignty in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ lands. In *Social Studies 5: From Colony to Country*, students are required to identify “distinct governance structures of First Nations in Canada,” but the examples given for how First Nations governments are established include the Indian Act and treaties. Here, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit forms of governance make way for and are obscured by the relationship between First Nations and the Canadian state. This kind of subtle subordination of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit sovereignty naturalizes the conception of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit governance as always in relation to, and ultimately structured by, the settler state. In *Social Studies 6: Canada and the World*, students are encouraged, though not required, to provide examples of approaches different societies

have taken to cultural diversity such as segregation, assimilation, integration, and pluralism. The examples given are “multiculturalism policies” and then a less favourable list including residential schools, Apartheid, the Holocaust, Japanese-Canadian internment, and the Chinese Head Tax (BCME, 2006f, p. 101). Not only are First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples positioned here as cultural groups to be managed in settler society, the suggestions provided indicate that segregation and assimilation are ‘approaches’ of the past and that ‘multiculturalism policies’ are innocent of assimilationist interests.

Settler perspectives are further naturalized in upper level Social Studies. In *Social Studies 11*, while students are required to know the major provisions of the Canadian constitution, and examples given include the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom, the British North America Act, and the Bill of Rights, there is no required coverage of how these have constricted and constructed the realities of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples throughout the development of Canada. Nor is there any mention whatsoever of how these documents have helped ‘establish’ and ‘guarantee’ settler-Canadian sovereignty in First Nations, Métis, and Inuit lands. The *Social Studies 11* curriculum favourably plays up Canada’s role in international development and human rights issues while remaining silent about issues within its own borders. In this course students are required to “assess Canada’s participation in world affairs” in relation to human rights and the United Nations, yet there is no required or suggested mention of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In this same course, required coverage also includes analysis of standards of living based on a comparison between Canada and other countries, with particular reference to poverty and indicators of human development

(BCME, 2005c, p. 34). This coverage portrays a blanket picture of Canada in terms of standard of living, with no reference to how standards of living differ among certain groups in Canada, discussion of poverty within the country, or of the challenges facing many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities. The one required mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the *Civic Studies 11* IRP is an expectation for students to learn about the “division of powers in Canada among federal, provincial, territorial, First Nations, and municipal governments” (BCME, 2005a, p. 36). The curriculum suggests that students compare rights, responsibilities, freedoms, and privileges of individuals and groups in Canada, and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are differentiated from citizens, landed immigrants, and refugees. While this would be a logical place to address standards of living, issues of poverty and the challenges facing many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit communities, no such guidance is offered. Furthermore, this AI mentions “language-based” and “religion-based” rights, yet it makes no mention of the rights of Indigenous peoples, let alone connecting the rights of Canadian citizens to their responsibilities as treaty people. A mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ rights appears in an assessment plan: students can provide their own definitions for terms such as “Aboriginal rights, English Canadian, French Canadian, immigration, and women’s rights,” and then discuss their definitions as a class. Without significant dedicated coverage of the rights of Indigenous peoples in this curriculum, it is difficult to imagine how students might be expected to demonstrate deep or substantive knowledge of the issues or provide accurate and sensitive definitions of various rights.

## **The Dangers of Casual References**

Throughout the social studies curriculum, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is frequently included as an ‘add-on’ with little indication of purpose and insufficient explanation to make its inclusion meaningful. Such coverage starts in Kindergarten: the single mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in this grade is in a parenthetical list where Aboriginal friendship centres are given as an example of familiar places that students might recognize in their communities, alongside recreation centres, war memorials, libraries, and fire halls. The adding-on of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content becomes more problematic in the upper-level social studies courses. For example, in *Social Studies 5: Canada from Colony to Country*, students might “compare modes of transportation used in different places and times in Canada (e.g., railway, dog sled, canoe, wagon)”; without any evident purpose or method, this kind of comparison could support a ‘progress’ view of history. *Social Studies 9: Europe and North America 1500-1815* offers a more troubling example of inadequate explanation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content: “First Nations land claims” is provided as an example of a contentious current event that has its roots in the period 1500 to 1815, one of the only mentions in the social studies curriculum of land claims (BCME, 1997, p. 22). No explanation is given of what makes land claims a “contentious” current event; teachers are directed to get students to read an article and then “adopt roles of people with opposing views” and compose letters-to-the-editor stating their views. This is the first time land claims are mentioned in any of the social studies IRPs; what kind of article will be proposed and how can any single article about land claims provide adequate preparation for view formation?

## **Avoiding Talk About Colonialism**

The curriculum remains largely silent on the topic of colonialism, and the inadequacy of explanation and discussion of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and perspectives in relation to colonialism becomes more pronounced in later years. While the grade-four course has the greatest coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and perspectives, later grades increasingly frame the coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives according to settler-colonial perspectives. Settler-centrism is evident in the problematic silence about the experiences of colonialism of both First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and settlers. The grade four curriculum, which focuses entirely on contact between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and explorers and settlers, does not contain a single reference to colonialism; students in this course might compare “discovery” and “exploration” of North America from European and Indigenous peoples’ perspectives, but the failure to address colonialism here ends up naturalizing colonialism. In fact, there is no required coverage of colonialism in Canada in any of the social studies curricula. While coverage of “contact, conflict, and conquest” is required in *Social Studies 8: World Civilizations 500-1600*, no explicit connection is made to colonialism. In grade 9, students are required to analyze the relationship between Indigenous peoples and Europeans, each group’s role in the development of Canada, and to describe daily life in Indigenous communities, New France, and British North America. While making reference to “settlement, land ownership, and daily life,” the PLOs and AIs in this course make no connection between these and colonialism. Indeed, while students are required to define colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism, Canada is not explicitly identified as a colonial place.

Students are required to analyze the effects of colonialism on trade and conflict, in order to “gain understanding of colonialism and how trade and competition helped shape Canada’s development” (BCME, 1997, p. 28). This is the closest that the curriculum gets to providing a critical reading of the connection between economic development and colonialism; one of this PLOs AIs suggests that students “research monopoly and competition in the fur trade” and how they affected exploration and the settlement of the west and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. However, another suggestion, not a requirement, is that students analyze several historical examples of colonialism looking for common factors like industrialization, overpopulation, national pride, and the need for resources and new markets. Here, the focus is on explanations for European expansion as colonialism rather than on the effects and impacts of colonialism on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people in Canada. This kind of treatment is tame and apologetic at best: colonialism is naturalized as necessary to European and Canadian development and the curriculum remains silent about the problematic ideological assumptions at colonialism’s core and ignores the violence brought about in its name. The result of this naturalizing of colonialism is a privileging of settler perspectives on colonialism and the development of Canada, a theme that continues in *Social Studies 10: Canada from 1815-1914*. Required coverage in this course includes the impact of interactions between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and explorers and settlers from 1815-1914. In the AIs, suggestions for achieving this PLO include analyzing interactions between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and the stakeholders in the fur trade, a use of language that, while subtle, implies that First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples were not themselves stakeholders.

The lack of mandatory coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives in the upper-level courses is severe. By grade 12, coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives is entirely peripheral to the core perspectives of the curriculum. The only grade 12 Social Studies courses that contain any mention of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content are *Law 12*, *Social Justice 12*, and *BC First Nations Studies 12*. The coverage in *Law 12* is not mandatory; the single mention in this course is a parenthetical reference to “Aboriginal treaty issues” and the Nisga’a Treaty as examples, alongside minority language issues, same-sex marriage, suffrage, and immigration, of the legal rights and responsibilities of individuals, groups, and organizations in Canadian society (BCME, 2006c, p. 29). The IRP makes no mention of how students are to understand their rights and responsibilities in reference to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit treaty issues in BC and the Nisga’a Treaty. The *Social Justice 12* curriculum is certainly the most critical curriculum with regard to Canada’s and BC’s actions regarding First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. The IRP for *Social Justice 12* contains an AI with the only example in the Social Studies curricula of direct connection between “the continuing legacy of colonialism and its effects on Canada's Aboriginal peoples in contemporary Canadian society” (BCME, 2008d, p. 40). One of the AIs suggests that students apply principles of social justice to analyse “specific historical and contemporary examples of injustice in Canada” related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples (BCME, 2008d, p. 40). Examples included represent the most critical and thorough list of the legacy of colonialism in Canada: anti-potlatch policy and legislation, the reserve system, the "status" classification system set out in the *Indian Act*, the residential school system, and foster placement or adoption of First Nations, Métis, and

Inuit children. Yet, these are not required coverage, and there is no guarantee that this content will be included.

The *BC First Nations Studies 12* course is the one example in the curriculum that contains significant breadth and depth in its coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, which is little surprise considering it is a dedicated Aboriginal studies course. Mason (2008) provides a good discussion of the merits of and issues with this course. In the mid-nineties the course had a reputation as a ‘craft’ course meant for ‘dummies,’ intended only “for First Nations students, who were considered not smart enough to take other social studies courses” (Mason, 2008, p. 135). In 1999, after lobbying from educators, First Nations communities, and First Nations political organizations, the BCME made the course one of two alternatives to Social Studies 11 as credit required for graduation, and received the same status as Social Studies 11 for university entrance. As a result, the course became standardized and its focus more generalized to cover the history and cultures of all First Nations in BC rather than local First Nations. Mason argues that a key limitation in the delivery of this course has been the necessity to tailor the content to a standardized provincial exam. Mason reports that frequently the local focus and inclusion of community experts, key aspects of this course, are forgone in order to teach content that will be more generally applicable to a standardized provincial exam. In particular, the new focus includes “little content based on cultural knowledge and nothing based on local knowledge,” instead emphasizing the “general political history of First Nations peoples in BC” (Mason, 2008, p. 136). Beyond these limitations, this course has only had an average of two percent of students enrolled, effectively placing its content on the periphery of the core courses taken by students in BC.

## **Science**

The BC curriculum states the purpose of science education is to provide opportunities for students to “develop scientific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will be relevant in their everyday lives and their future careers.” Though First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people and land are a central part of our daily lives and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ issues are our issues and central to our future, the science curriculum leaves little room for substantial or meaningful integration of Indigenous perspectives or First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. There are two key interrelated themes in the science curriculum: a) the subordination of Indigenous perspectives and, b) the naturalization of settler perspectives and settler sovereignty.

### **Subordination of Indigenous Perspectives**

The cumulative effect of the elementary science curricula, while subtle, is twofold: Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are part of the natural world, while non-Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are concerned with controlling the natural world. A key theme throughout the science curriculum is that Indigenous peoples are connected to the natural world, as made evident in their knowledge and traditions. In the elementary science curricula, each of grades 1-5 contains one PLO that deals with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content or Indigenous perspectives. These PLOs are oriented towards Indigenous peoples’ relationship with the natural world. However, these are situated amongst PLOs for ‘core’ scientific knowledge and content, and there is no context or discussion provided for the meaning or purpose of Indigenous peoples relationships with the natural world or those of TEKW. The result is that Indigenous perspectives and knowledge feel like add-ons: rather than being presented as legitimate place-based

knowledge, they are largely portrayed as cultural beliefs alongside ‘scientific’ knowledge. Furthermore, the treatment and positioning of Indigenous perspectives and TEKW, and the privileging of scientific knowledge, delegitimizes Indigenous place-based knowledge. Throughout the science curricula, the relationships between living things, places, and seasons, are discussed only in reference to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and animals. In the grade 1 *Earth and Space Science* organizer, students are required to describe how activities of different Indigenous peoples in BC are regionally and seasonally dependent. The attendant AIs differentiate between regions and their corresponding seasonal activities, like the interior and coast, north and south. This coverage is given alongside a PLO that deals with the impacts of daily and seasonal cycles on “living things” (BCME, 2005b, p 62). As a part of the organizer *Life Science: Animal Growth and Changes* in grade 2 students are expected to describe the importance of animals in the lives of Indigenous peoples in BC. For *Earth and Space Science: Stars and Planets*, grade 3 students are expected to demonstrate awareness of the “special significance of celestial objects for Aboriginal peoples” (BCME, 2005b, p. 81). In the grade 4 organizer *Life Science: Habitats and Communities*, students are required to “demonstrate awareness of the Aboriginal concept of respect for the environment;” they may do so by “illustrating stories” that demonstrate “Aboriginal relationships with land, water, animals, plants, and sky,” with a focus on respect for water and earth. In a grade 5 PLO for the organizer *Earth and Space Science: Renewable and Non-Renewable Resources*, students are required to “analyse how the Aboriginal concept of interconnectedness of the environment is reflected in responsibility for and caretaking of resources” (BCME, 2005b, p. 101). Throughout, the elementary science curriculum

portrays connection to and responsibility for the natural world, for the land and the places in which we live, as Indigenous phenomena.

The representation of connection to the natural world as discretely Indigenous subtly reinforces the nature/society binary where Indigenous peoples belong to nature and settler society has mastery over it. Tellingly, when students are required to learn about ecosystems in grade 7, the “things” *in* an ecosystem include “soil, bacteria, plants, and animals,” while humans are discussed in terms of the impacts they have *on* ecosystems (BCME, 2005b, p. 117). Indeed, the rationale for the grade 7 science organizer *Life Science: Ecosystems* is for students to develop a basic understanding of ecosystems in order to make decisions about their conservation. The perspectives of scientific knowledge, not themselves portrayed as perspectives, help students make decisions *about* the natural world. Through grades 8-10 Indigenous perspectives become more peripheral in the science curriculum. When learning the grade 8 science organizer *Earth and Space Science: Water Systems on Earth*, students are required to describe factors that affect aquatic species productivity and distribution. An AI for this outcome suggests that students may “relate human activities to the distribution of aquatic species, with specific reference to First Nations peoples in BC” (BCME, 2006d, p. 49). Students are encouraged to learn about the interdependence of various species and their environments and the scientific methods for monitoring aquatic environments, as well as the historical and current use of aquatic “resources” by First Nations peoples in BC. The underlying perspective presented in this content is one of managerial concern for marine ecosystems, which positions Indigenous “use” as “an effect” on productivity and species distribution. Such a perspective on aquatic systems is in keeping with the trend in the science curricula

of picturing Indigenous knowledge as novel cultural productions rather than legitimate ways of understanding and relating to the natural world. In *Science and Technology 11* students are required to learn about “Indigenous shelters and the influence of local cultures and natural environment on their construction” (BCME, 2008c, p. 51). This is one of the few times that the science curriculum deals with the concept of the connection between culture, the environment, and raw materials, in this case in the construction of shelters. Yet, the influence in this connection runs from nature to Indigenous peoples, and this mention contributes to the underlying message that only local, as in Indigenous, cultures are connected to and influenced by the natural environment. In *Sustainable Resources 12: Agriculture*, the minimal coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content portrays First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples’ agricultural practices, alongside “religious communal farms,” as cultural, yet the course makes no mention of the culture of industrial farming. Focusing on the “progression” from hunter-gatherers to subsistence and then cash crops in early Canada, the content in this course aligns with the stages view that takes “humanity” as progressing through ever-increasing levels of civilization. This view is problematic because it is Eurocentric and colonial, and in particular because it reifies a linear notion of history and an abstract notion of space at the expense of place-as-lived (Casey 1996, Malpas 1999). Further, this curriculum sets aside that many Indigenous peoples had been cultivating food for personal use as well as trade before contact with Europeans. An AI mentions Indigenous peoples’ beliefs about stewardship and sustainability in agriculture, but provides no discussion or explanation of these beliefs or why people might think this way, ignoring how culture and place interact to allow sustainable development. The one mention in the *Sustainable Resources 12:*

*Mining* IRP mentions how First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people have shared their knowledge and expertise about hydrocarbon and mineral exploration, demonstrating the priorities of settler interests in energy resource development. As such, the science curriculum presents two visions of responsibility: responsibility to the natural world evident in place-based knowledge, and responsibility for the natural world evident in scientific and managerial knowledge.

Linked to ‘preservation,’ Indigenous knowledge about the natural world is added, almost as an afterthought, to the rest of the ‘scientific’ content about the ways natural systems ‘actually’ work. An assessment plan in the appendices for grade 9 science suggests teachers might “explore with students some of the applications of knowledge about chemistry” (BCME, 2006e, p. 75). An example provided deals with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit technologies that involve applications of chemical understanding like curing hides, preserving food, and using plants for medicinal purposes. This example is one option among a list of options for assessing whether students have met one of the Achievement Indicators for a Prescribed Learning Outcome; coverage of this content is not a priority. In the grade 9 science organizer *Earth and Space Science: Space Exploration*, students are required to “describe traditional perspectives of a range of Aboriginal peoples in BC on the relationship between the earth and the celestial bodies.” This is in addition to learning about how scientific technologies have advanced understanding of the “major components and characteristics of the universe and solar system” and “the implications of space travel” (BCME, 2006e, p. 48). As well as learning about how “astronomical and space exploration technologies advance understanding of the universe and solar system,” and describing “the formation of the solar system” and

“the processes that generate the energy of the sun and other stars,” students might also “create illustrations” for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit stories about “the relationship between the Earth and various celestial bodies” (BCME, 2006e, p. 48). The message is very clear: here is how the universe works; here are some First Nations, Métis, and Inuit stories. Though the rationale for integrating First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the science IRPs emphasizes the importance of TEKW into all science courses, the grade 10 organizer *Life Science: Sustainability of Ecosystems* contains the only mention of TEKW in the Science K-10 PLOs and AIs. “Spring burning by Cree in northern Alberta” is given as an example of how “natural populations are altered or kept in equilibrium” (BCME, 2008b, p. 43). For a science curriculum that includes in its rationale an emphasis on integrating TEKW, this one optional mention is underwhelming. The *Science and Technology 11: Space Exploration* organizer suggests students “describe Aboriginal beliefs, particularly those of BC First Nations, related to cosmological structures” when identifying recent contributions to the development of space exploration technology (BCME, 2008c, p. 55). As in previous coverage, there is no explanation for teachers or students as to how Indigenous cosmology has contributed to space exploration technology. Without significant explanation of what students are expected to learn about Indigenous “cosmological structures” and how these have influenced recent developments in space exploration, this AI is token at best.

### **Naturalizing Settler Sovereignty**

Those upper-level science courses that contain coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and Indigenous perspectives draw on and further reify settler-colonial structures, presenting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and particularly

their sovereignty as obstacles to resource and land development. The *Sustainable Resources 11* curriculum compares Indigenous cultures to settler society and largely portrays First Indigenous cultural practices as challenges to resource development. Students might compare “current agricultural practices” to “traditional practices” like “Aboriginal, communal societies, [and] family farms.” The telling word in this AI is *current*, suggesting that Indigenous practices should be considered “traditional” and not current, as in legitimate, practice (BCME, 2008e, p. 37). The *Sustainable Resources 11: Fisheries* organizer includes optional coverage about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit fishing licenses, how the First Nations fishing sector contributes to the provincial economy, and how fishing is historically important to Indigenous peoples and important to them in the present day. In the same organizer, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit treaties are considered a challenge to fishery industries (BCME, 2008e, p. 40). In both the *Forestry* and *Mining* organizers, land claims and treaty negotiations are identified as challenges to industry and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit rights as a problem rather than rights and responsibilities worthy of respect. First Nations in BC are portrayed as users among many others of “forest resources,” effectively naturalizing Crown Sovereignty in their traditional lands. In fact, the concept of Indigenous sovereignty is completely absent from the entire BC curriculum. In discussion of mining too “land title” is identified as “part of the processes and regulations related to mine development,” a portrayal that inevitably subordinates the possibility of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit title to the inevitable actuation of development, whether or not development is desired by First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples (BCME, 2008e, p. 46). Mention of land claims in content dealing with Agriculture is tucked away in parentheses with the Agricultural

Land Reserve, hydroelectric water reserves, conservation, and urban sprawl as “key local and provincial land development issues in terms of stewardship and responsibility” (BCME, 2008e, p. 62). Treaties are considered to have an impact on policy on agricultural activity, which this curriculum presumes is industrial agriculture. First Nations peoples’ agricultural activities are identified as historical, alongside the practices of early settlers and immigrant workers, and contrasted with current practices. In *Sustainable Resources 12: Fisheries* students are required to learn about economic, political, and sustainability issues and challenges. First Nations treaties are identified as issues that have an impact on fisheries in the same vein as moratoria and taxes. First Nations ceremonial activities are considered alongside commercial and recreational practices as pressures on fish population. The IRP for *Sustainable Resources 12: Forestry* identifies forests as “important to Aboriginal peoples,” while land claims are considered to be “conflicting societal expectations” alongside agriculture and recreation. When discussing Forestry, the curriculum presents treaties as conflicting land use requirement alongside parkland conservation, ranching, mining, and recreation. Everywhere in the science curriculum, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples interests and rights are subordinated to settler interests and capital, land, and resource development.

### **English Language Arts**

Save for the *English 10-12 First Peoples* courses, the language arts curriculum does not contain any significant integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content or Indigenous perspectives. There is no mention whatsoever of First Nations, Métis, or Inuit peoples from K-2, and the coverage that is included throughout grades 3-12 is entirely peripheral to the core content. Students in grades 3-7 are expected to read fluently and

demonstrate comprehension of a range of grade-appropriate texts, including “stories from Aboriginal and other cultures.” In grades 8-12 students are required to read and comprehend a variety of literary texts including “traditional forms from Aboriginal and other cultures.” This means that the extent of required coverage for the English Language Arts curriculum is that students have an opportunity in each grade to read stories from Indigenous cultures. None of the AIs for K-12 provide any further discussion of the context of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit stories, or any discussion of Indigenous perspectives on the purpose of learning, the meaning of stories, the importance of oral tradition or contemporary Indigenous literature. The several mentions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the ELA AIs are very peripheral and insubstantial. In the grade 4 IRP, the “traditional differences between the Haida and Okanagan peoples” are used as an example of how students might observe how their own thinking has changed due to new information or ideas (BCME, 2006b, p. 272). In an AI in the grade 10 IRP, an article “written as though all Aboriginal Peoples have the same perspective” is used to show students how to recognize missing perspectives (BCME, 2007a, p. 188). In an AI in the grade 11 IRP, a “belief [that] has been part of many First Nations cultures since...” is used to explain “historical, cultural, and political influences on the **text**” (BCME, 2007a, p. 199). Each of these parenthetical examples lacks any further description or discussion. This kind of inclusion seems incidental and is ultimately insufficient to effect meaningful, accurate, and respectful coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit stories, let alone integration of Indigenous perspectives.

## Fine Art/Art Education

### Sensitivity to Cultural Appropriation and Appropriate Presentation

The coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the Fine Art/Arts Education curriculum, while slight, is generally fairly good. Much of the coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art in the Fine Art/Arts Education curricula is concerned with the ownership and copyright of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people's art. Sensitivity to the problems of cultural appropriation is a theme in many of the Fine Art/Arts Education, particularly the upper-level courses. Generally speaking, the Visual Arts curriculum is the most concerned with this issue, while the dance and drama curricula are less consistent in their approach. *Visual Arts 5* identifies the need for permission to reproduce Indigenous images. In *Visual Art 9 Image development and Design Strategies* students research traditional design approaches and strategies by inviting an elder or artist from a local First Nation to meet the class. They may then attempt to apply those strategies and discuss whether what they have produced constitutes cultural appropriation. This suggestion instigates a discussion of cultural appropriation and incorporates First Nations, Métis, and Inuit experts in the learning process. Music courses, too, show significant sensitivity to cultural appropriation and even values contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artistry. In *Choral Music 11* students might analyse the function of vocal music in traditional Indigenous societies in British Columbia. The course's IRP suggests that teachers invite reps from local communities to share a song and teach it, if appropriate, and ask students to focus questions on the purpose and meaning of the music and on performance protocol. An AI for *Choral Music 12* suggests teachers invite experts from local communities to talk about music and cultural influences, issues of ownership and copyright of songs particular to their culture.

*Instrumental Music 12*: Includes John Kim Bell as a Canadian composer, emphasizes his cultural influences in his composition. Teachers are instructed, after listening to a variety of recordings from a specific culture, to bring in a musician from that culture to do a workshop and compose a new work in that style. But the discussion of cultural appropriation is more patchy in dance. An AI in *Dance 4* reads “many dramas cannot be shared without permission,” but in *Dance 5*, students are to be invited to create movements that depict “first contact” or potlatch, or recognize characters and archetypes like “Raven” and “Trickster” in a variety of dramas, yet the warning about permission and appropriation is absent.

There are some good examples of integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content into the main themes of the curriculum, largely in Visual Arts. In grade 2 *Visual Art*, students might identify Inuit animal carvings alongside Georgia O’Keefe’s flower paintings as examples of abstraction and simplification, or create images, like weaving in Coast Salish style, to demonstrate the effects of patterns (BCME, 2010b, p. 19). The Medicine Wheel is mentioned in grade 3 *Visual Art* as an expression of “wholeness” though there is no further discussion or explanation (BCME, 2010b, p. 23). First Nations, Métis, and Inuit artists such as Robert Davidson, Daphne Odjig, Deborah Sparrow, and Roy Henry Vickers are given as examples for “various historical, cultural, and social contexts” in grade 4 (BCME, 2010b, p. 29). In *Theatre Performance 11*, students are required to “analyse purposes and styles of drama of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal peoples in BC” (BCME, 2002, p. 28). In an AI for this PLO teachers are encouraged to invite a guest from the community to discuss the role of storytelling as a form of Indigenous drama. While this AI emphasizes the cultural values and transmission

of Indigenous stories, it also differentiates between and compares the performance elements of stories with contemporary plays. While there is no mention here of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit playwrights or the aspects of contemporary Indigenous drama in this grade, for students who continue with drama, this issue is addressed in *Theatre Performance 12*. In the later course students have the opportunity to students to read a contemporary Indigenous play like *The Rez Sisters*, *Toronto at Dreamer's Rock*, or *fareWel*, and “discuss the juxtaposition of contemporary and traditional imagery, characters, and themes” (BCME, 2002, p. 40).

### **Peripheral Coverage, Insufficient Discussion**

Beyond the discussion of ownership and appropriation, coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit art and culture in the Fine Art/Arts Education IRPs is largely peripheral and inadequately discussed, and in some instances this results in problematic presentations of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. In grade 5 *Drama*, students might use vocal and movement elements to indicate thoughts, feelings, and mood, and the example given for this exercise is first contact between Indigenous peoples and new settlers. Without further discussion or explanation, it is unclear what kind of representations teachers might expect students to give of Indigenous peoples or of settlers.

There are instances of silencing or misrepresenting First Nations, Métis, and Inuit perspectives in the Arts curriculum demonstrating the curriculum's settler-centric perspective. In grade 9 *Drama*, after brainstorming local concerns over land issues and logging, students are to be asked to assume roles and come up with ideas for “solving, probing, or illuminating the problem.” The suggested roles include “mayor, irate

taxpayer, business person, wealthy person, street person” (BCME, 1995a, p. 38) but First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples are not included in the list of possibilities. In the grade 9 *Visual Art* IRP students are invited to discuss whether certain non-figurative abstract art works have “meaning.” Australian Aboriginal songline paintings, presented as “ethnic decorations,” are included as an example for discussion, yet no mention is made of the connection between Australian Aboriginal peoples, their ancestors, their land, and the Dreaming (BCME, 1995b, p. 34). In the *Fine Arts 11* organizer *An Exploration of Music and Sound*, students are encouraged to identify “unfamiliar instruments” from various cultures like the diggery-do and sitar and “First Nations instruments” yet no examples are provided. An assessment plan for this organizer suggests that teachers have students examine music from an unfamiliar culture, for example Inuit throat singing, Japanese No plays, and First Nations drumming, and write a report on how music is used in that society. These are good examples of how Indigenous cultures are discussed throughout much of the curricula as “unfamiliar,” an Othering process that demonstrates the assumed settler use of the curriculum. The *Instrumental Music 11* IRP suggests that students analyse the purposes of instrumental music in traditional Indigenous societies in British Columbia: referring to “various Aboriginal music styles” as examples of Canadian music is an example of subsuming First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures into Canadian culture. The *Media Arts 12* IRP suggests that small groups of students should each choose a current social issue (e.g., AIDS, world peace, land claims) and develop a presentation to influence the attitudes and emotions of the school community. While this seems an interesting possibility to influence attitudes and emotions of school community about land claims, this example is parenthetical and there is no supporting or context.

## Applied Skills

The Applied Skills curriculum has both the smallest amount and least significant coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the BC school curricula. This curriculum is entirely organized according to a settler concerns, and any coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives is peripheral. In the organizer *Finance in Business Education 9*, “Aboriginal people on reserves” are included with non-income-earning spouses and seasonal employees as problem-borrowers and credit risks. In *Economics 12* students might analyse historic trends in the per-capita income of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people, yet there is no discussion or explanation of the causes or consequences of this “economic change.” In *Family Studies 10, 11, and 12* students might analyse the implications of issues facing families. “Cultural issues,” for example prejudice and racism, and “political factors,” for example residential schools and the Indian Act, are identified as discrete issues facing families. This presentation subtly obscures the racist and prejudicial nature of residential schools and the Indian Act (BCME, 2007b, p. 60). Furthermore, thrown in as parenthetical mentions, it is unclear how the examples residential schools and the Indian Act might be sufficiently explained or understood.

Coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the *Tourism 11 and 12* curricula, in particular, subordinate First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples to settler interests. These course IRPs portray First Nations history and cultures as aspects of tourism in “tourism regions.” They are identified as factors influencing tourism alongside facilities, infrastructures, marketing organizations and tourism resources. In *Tourism 12* students might “analyse how BC First Nations cultures and traditions have a role in BC’s

tourism sector” (BCME, 2006g, p. 33). In analyzing the role of BC First Nations in tourism, this IRP suggests students identify values and elements common to First Nations cultures, learn terminology related to First Nations cultures, and identify First Nations cultural tourism activities. Students are encouraged to discuss the benefits and drawbacks of \ First Nations cultural tourism, yet there is no direction as to what these might be or how students are to be exposed to differing views.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

### Settler-Centrism in the BC Curriculum

The BC curricular documents demonstrate the deep-rooted structures of settler-colonialism in Canada in two interrelated ways. 1) The placement of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives often outside or incidental to the ‘core’ areas of study makes them token. The almost complete absence of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies in the curriculum further exacerbates the curriculum’s tokenism. 2) The BC curriculum contributes to the naturalization of settler traditions and settler commonsense, and the development of settler-citizen subjectivity. The curriculum then replicates and reproduces settler society, whose sovereignty, epistemology, and ontology are largely geared towards domination and exploitation of land and place, the interests of which are significantly at odds with Indigenous sovereignty, epistemology and ontology. At the heart of the difference between settler and Indigenous peoples are the different ways of organizing and enacting relationships between people in and with land and places more generally.

#### **Integration or Tokenism?**

This analysis of the coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in the BC school curricular documents, suggests that the Ministry’s aim of providing the opportunity for all students in BC to learn about and with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as laid out in *Shared Learnings* is poorly supported by the curriculum. It is likely that all students in BC will learn *something* about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples throughout their K-12 years. However, in terms of the decolonization of education, the BC K-12 curriculum is weak. While some courses in the BC curriculum contain more

substantial and sophisticated coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and Indigenous perspectives than others, overall this content plays a peripheral role in the BC school curriculum. Many courses contain little to no coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content; the content in those courses that contain minimal coverage is generally peripheral to the core content and token. In some such instances coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is included merely as an add-on example; such coverage is typical in the required courses from K-9 in Language Arts and Fine Art/Arts Education. In some cases First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives are placed alongside other content in a way that supersedes, trivializes, or undermines them. The elementary Science curriculum contains the only significant coverage of Traditional Indigenous knowledge in the BC curriculum but though the Science IRPs identify TEKW as “proven conceptual approaches,” and recognize the importance of these to all BC residents, Indigenous epistemology and ontology are delegitimized and trivialized in the way they are included alongside the core scientific, and frequently settler, perspectives in the science curriculum.

The more significant and substantial coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in social studies in the required K-10 courses historicizes First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and issues and Indigenous perspectives. Not presented as distinct societies with legitimate forms of governance, knowledge, or ways of living, they appear as historical artifacts, having autonomous existence prior to contact with Europeans ultimately subsumed by settler society and within settler perspectives. In this curriculum Indigenous societies give way to settler society, and First Nations, Métis peoples in BC are represented as cultural groups to be managed through settler-colonial strategies of

liberal-multiculturalism (Hale, 2006; Postero and Zamasc 2004 in de la Cadena & Starn, p. 8; Singh 2014; Smith, A., 2012a; Turner, 2000). It is entirely in keeping with this trope that the only required course in the curriculum on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and perspectives *Social Studies 4: Aboriginal Cultures, Contact, and Exploration*, is historical. There are no other significant opportunities to learn about Indigenous peoples as distinct social groups with legitimate and viable worldviews and knowledge systems. More senior level required social studies courses deal with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples largely in a manner defined by settler interests and perspectives. According to the curricular documents, as students mature contemporary Indigenous epistemology and ontology are deemphasized and delegitimated, contributing to a narrative that refuses the idea of Indigenous peoples as politically sovereign or possessing viable and legitimate ways of knowing and being. Such representations of Indigenous cultures historicize and ossify Indigenous cultures and continue the execution of material and cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2013; Povinelli, 2011a; 2011b).

Some of the upper-level courses in the BC curriculum do provide students with the opportunity to learn critical and meaningful content about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and Indigenous perspectives. The grade 11 and 12 Fine Art/Arts Education electives do emphasize awareness of the issues of ownership and cultural appropriation. But this emphasis replaces meaningful integration of Indigenous perspectives about culture, tradition, and artistic production, and coverage of contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural and artistic production. *BC First Nations Studies 12* and the *English 10-12 First Peoples* courses are good examples of collaboration with local Indigenous communities and meaningful coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

content and Indigenous perspectives. However, four upper-level optional courses that demonstrate nuanced and respectful coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and effective coverage and inclusion of Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies, is small cause for celebration as students in BC are overwhelmingly choosing to not take these courses. The significantly low enrollment in these four courses is a good demonstration of the failure of the Ministry's decentralizing policies regarding coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content. In effect, the coverage of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content is peripheral to the core curriculum content, Indigenous perspectives are peripheral to the core curriculum perspectives, and Aboriginal studies courses themselves are peripheral to the core curriculum courses.

### **Naturalizing Settler Tradition and Commonsense**

The problems of peripheral treatment of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, delegitimization of Indigenous knowledge, and underwhelming enrollment in dedicated Aboriginal studies courses are exacerbated by the prominence of settler interests and the ignorance of settler-centrism in the curriculum. The core curriculum, into which First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives are supposed to be integrated, privileges settler perspectives and interests. The elementary curriculum co-opts First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures to present a ubiquitous and blanket 'Canadian' identity that naturalizes settler presence. To this effect, First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultural 'symbols' come to symbolize an overarching settler-nationalist vision of Canada. This is a particularly salient example of how images of Indigeneity are assimilated and celebrated in settler states as shining examples of liberal multiculturalism (Cornellier, 2013; LeFevre, 2013; Povinelli, 2002). The representations of First Nations,

Métis, and Inuit peoples in contemporary contexts frame issues in relation to, and ultimately subordinated, to settler interests. The social studies courses from grades 5-11 are concerned primarily with settler-Canadian identity, governance, and economy, further reinforcing and reaffirming settler accumulation by dispossession and racialized, anthropocentric, and capitalistic understandings of places (Brown, 2014; Seawright, 2014). *Social Studies 5: From Colony to Country* is primarily concerned with the “development of the nation,” focusing on stories of resource exploitation in BC, the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and the establishment of Canadian Confederation. Where First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and perspectives are included, it is in relation to, and according to the terms of, the settler state: students may “represent the roles of Aboriginal peoples, the British, and the French in key events in Canadian history” (BCME, 2006f, p. 93). *Social Studies 6: Canada and the World* is concerned with establishing a “Canadian identity” and comparing “Canadian society” with the societies of other countries. This course plays up Canada’s liberal-multiculturalism; students may learn how “individuals experience cultural influences,” distinguished from social characteristics such as “history, daily life, work, language, family structures, age roles, gender roles, and religion and beliefs” (BCME, 2006f, p. 101). Framing “cultural influences” as different from “social characteristics” in this way exemplifies the settler-colonial distinction between culture and society. The notion that culture is separable from history, daily life, work, language, family structures, age roles, gender roles, and religion and beliefs illustrates the settler-colonial attitude towards both the acultural vision of liberal society and the historicized vision of Indigenous peoples (Malpas, 2012; Povinelli, 2011; Raibmonn, 2006). Cultural diversity in Canada is spoken

of in terms of strategies of cultural management, such as “segregation, assimilation, integration, and pluralism,” further illustrating the curriculum’s commitment to liberal-multiculturalism.

The BC Curricular documents omit critical discussion of Canadian settler colonialism, and this omission is one of the most significant and enduring themes in the social studies curriculum where this kind of critical discussion ought to be expected. The grade 8 and 9 social studies courses, dealing primarily with the periods of 1500-1815, detail aspects of the interactions between First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and European explorers and settlers, yet while certain major settler-colonial events in Canada are covered, the role of the Canadian government and settler-Canadian society in the dispossession, displacement, and elimination of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples is downplayed, overlooked, and ignored. *Grade 8: World Civilizations 500-1600* makes no mention of Indigenous peoples as “world civilizations;” the focus on “medieval and Renaissance” societies reveals the Euro-centrism of the course’s curriculum. The course is oriented to comparisons of government, economics, science, and technology between European, Asian, and African civilizations, and reproduces and naturalizes the Eurocentric narratives of ‘discovery’ and ‘exploration’ (Fitzmaurice, 2007; Reid, 2010). The only mentions of Indigenous North Americans are optional parenthetical references to the Navajo and Mayan civilizations: the omission of Indigenous peoples in BC and Canada in general subtly reinforces the settler perspective that Indigenous peoples in these places were not “world civilizations,” not culturally and socially advanced groups. *Grade 9: Europe and North America 1500- 1815* continues the Eurocentric story, now focused on “expansion.” This course discusses the “relationship between Aboriginal

people and Europeans, and their roles in Canada's development" (BCME, 1997, p. 7). The key phrase is "Canada's development," particularly in its silence about the core issues of colonialism in Canada: dispossession, displacement, and elimination. The Social Studies curriculum generally reproduces the settler-commonsense notion that colonization and settlement of Indigenous lands, because of the needs of expanding European civilizations, was necessary, inevitable, and just (Brown, 2014; Seawright, 2014; Wolfe, 1999). Tellingly, while students are required to learn about colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism it is not in reference to the Canadian context. Students might "compare the exploration mandate given to Captain James Cook with that of the charter of the starship *Enterprise*, focusing on reasons for exploration" (BCME, 1997, p. 28). Colonialism, imperialism, and settler-nationalism are portrayed as adventurous and exciting, effectively naturalized in a curriculum where students are supposed to be learning about the effects of settlement, colonialism, and the monopoly capitalism of the fur trade on First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples (BCME, 1997, p. 28). Remarkably, the one history course in the BC curriculum, *History 12*, contains no mention whatsoever of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content, Indigenous perspectives, or issues. This course is concerned with world history from 1919 to 1991, focusing on the Second World War, decolonization in Africa and Asia, the development of civil and human rights, and the Cold War. Nationalism and imperialism are presented only in reference to the Mandate system and the changed European and Middle Eastern maps leading up to WWII. Colonialism then seems only to exist in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Palestine and the Indian subcontinent, though students learn about the struggles for rights in the United States and South Africa. In a curriculum dedicated to inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and

experiences, these subject areas would be prime places for discussion of settler colonialism and Indigenous rights in Canada and North America.

Discussions of Indigenous sovereignty, rights, and responsibilities in the curriculum are inadequate and problematic. The curriculum remains largely silent towards the historical and contemporary reasons and contexts for treaty negotiations as well as towards the responsibilities of settlers. Further, Indigenous rights are largely represented negatively, as impediments and nuisances to settler interests. In the Social Studies curriculum, students also learn about the Canadian justice system, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and individual and collective rights, yet nowhere is it required or even recommended that students learn about the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples, let alone the rights and responsibilities of settlers. *Social Studies 10: Canada from 1815-1914* is once again primarily concerned with Canadian national identity and the development of government structures, and yet the only mention of treaties are in terms of how these affected First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. As with its treatment of colonialism, the curriculum remains silent about the realities of treaties in terms of dispossession, displacement and elimination, further naturalizing settler sovereignty in Canada. In *Social Studies 11* students learn about the Canadian politics, “autonomy and international involvement,” and major provisions of the Canadian constitution like Charter rights, minority rights, and fundamental freedoms; yet they are not required to learn about the rights of Indigenous peoples. The only mentions of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content in this course focuses on the “challenges faced by Aboriginal people.” This course, like much of the social studies curriculum, frames First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues like treaty negotiations and the rights of Indigenous

peoples as fundamentally the concern of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. *Civic Studies 11* continues this theme, focusing on the development of Canadian citizenship in terms of rights and responsibilities, culture, heritage, and politics. This course contains one of the only mentions in the curriculum of the rights of Indigenous peoples. That it appears as a parenthetical example in a course that is expressly concerned with rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship demonstrates the curriculum's ambivalence about the rights and responsibilities of Indigenous peoples, as well as how Canadian rights and freedoms might relate to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples and treaties.

Land rights and Indigenous sovereignty, are “obstacles,” “problems,” and “challenges” affecting settler sovereignty, particularly in the case of economic activities and development in both the social studies and science curriculum. Indigenous perspectives about rights, land, and resource use are to be managed alongside those of other stakeholders, presuming and naturalizing settler sovereignty in the land and over resources as always-already established (Brown, 2014; Seawright, 2014). Indigenous sovereignty is further eroded in the curriculum's treatment of Indigenous knowledge: The nature of Indigenous relationships in and with land is shunted aside by managerial settler perspectives on ecosystem functioning and natural resource use (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013; Vimalassery, 2013). Tellingly, the only upper-level science courses that contain any mention of Indigenous perspectives are *Science and Technology 11* and *Sustainable Resources 11* and *12*, which present capitalist and managerial perspectives on ecosystems and resources as scientific knowledge. The *Geography 12* curriculum is also silent about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, issues, and Indigenous perspectives. While this course deals with the effects of particular environmental processes on human activity,

students are not expected to make any connections to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. In assessing the environmental impact of human activities, primarily energy consumption and the exploitation of resources, students are not expected to learn anything about Indigenous activities. The course content continues the narrative of settler-centric managerialism and exploitative capitalist development, effectively naturalizing settler attitudes towards place as the perspectives of both the curriculum and settler-Canadian society (Brewer, 2013; Brown 2014; Elson, 2003; Malpas 1999; 2012; Pasternak 2015; Saranillio, 2013; Smith, L., 2007;, Vimalassery, 2013). Of critical importance, nowhere in *Law 12* are students required to learn about Canada's treaty responsibilities, or the rights of Indigenous peoples, past or present. settler-colonial perspectives frame this course's curriculum, particularly in how it silences key rights and responsibilities relating to both Indigenous and settler peoples.

Not only are very few students being exposed to Indigenous knowledge and ways of being, but significantly more are being exposed to neoliberal governmentalities. Nearly seven and a half times as many students took Business Education courses as Aboriginal Studies courses from 2009 to 2013 (Figures 8 and 9). This statistic is important because it represents a key social issue blocking the recognition of Indigenous perspectives both in the curriculum and in the larger society. The rationale for the Business Education curriculum identifies the mandate of the BC school system: "to enable learners to develop individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy society and a prosperous and sustainable economy" (BCME, 1998, p. 9). As such, Business Education in the BC curriculum keys into the neoliberal narratives of responsabilization, entrepreneurialism, and human capital

development (Carter, 2009; Gordon, 1991; Kaščák & Pupala 2012; Pongratz, 2012; Simons, 2002). The courses in the Business Education curriculum are concerned to “develop an effective and prosperous economy,” and are focused on teaching business principles, and the “creativity and skills to apply them in creative ways:” education for the development of human capital for the global knowledge economy through creative and dynamic skills training (Besley & Peters, 2007; Carter, 2009). These courses identify students as “tomorrow’s leaders,” who “need to be increasingly entrepreneurial and flexible” and possessing the skills of “lifelong learning” (BCME, 1998, p. 9). The rationale for Business Education demonstrates the neoliberal ethic of lifelong learning that responsabilizes individuals and responds to the needs of the economy of global capitalism: flexibility, skills in management, information handling, communication, problem solving, and decision-making to privatize and commercialize knowledge which individuals must approach as entrepreneurs and market competitors (Kaščák & Pupala, 2012; Pongratz, 2012). Neoliberal governmentality is not as explicitly demonstrated within the curriculum of the other subject areas – Social Studies, Science, Language Arts, Math, and Fine Art/Arts Education – though the rationale for each of these subjects includes an emphasis on the future employability of students. However, the *Planning 10* and *Graduation Transitions 10-12* that all students in BC are required to take are largely focused on students’ career development and informed by neoliberal discourses of responsabilization, entrepreneurialism, and flexibility.

### **Groomed to be ‘Canadian’**

The common goals of each curriculum subject are to develop students into active citizens capable of making informed decisions while providing the skills for their future

careers and lifelong learning. The poor integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content into the curriculum poses significant challenges to students' ability to understand their roles and make informed decisions about key issues in the relationship between settler and First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, particularly in regards to issues like past treaties, current treaty negotiations, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, and the recent recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC, 2015). Students in BC, brought through the education system, enter social life and the workforce and have to make political, social, and economic decisions when they vote, seek employment, buy property, and generally relate in and with the land and places of BC and beyond. The curriculum ill-prepares students to understand and relate with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in the province and Canada, and fails to adequately teach students about their rights and responsibilities towards First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. Further, through its reinforcement of settler traditions of place, the curriculum perpetuates settler attitudes towards land and place that will continue dispossession of Indigenous lands and elimination of Indigenous worldviews as legitimate and viable ways of being. The BC curriculum fails to educate students about past and present settler colonialism, through inadequate or insufficient integration of Indigenous perspectives as well as continued silence regarding settler colonialism in Canada.

The settler-centricism of the curriculum is demonstrated in the representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content as an object of study and the simultaneous lack coverage and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, let alone recognition of the curriculum's own perspectives. Two themes illustrate the absence of recognized 'settler'

content - critical discussion of settler-colonial events and structures like dispossession, displacement, or elimination – in the curriculum: first, that the curriculum does not appear to reflect awareness that it represents a perspective; second, that the curriculum sees and pronounces First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples as objects of study while delegitimizing Indigenous perspectives. The curriculum is represented as an ‘objective’ perspective from nowhere, and Indigenous perspectives are effectively nowhere present. Thus the curriculum continues the project of the (a)perspectival and non-placed view from nowhere, the centre from which liberal and settler society looks at the Indigenous ‘Other’ (Malpas, 1999; 2012; Povinelli, 2011a; 2011b; Raibmonn, 2006).

Finally, the BC curriculum fails to provide students with the tools to question and challenge contemporary settler-colonial structures and neoliberal governmentality, and sometimes directly contributes to their development. The underlying message in the BC curriculum supports and furthers settler-colonial legal and economic structures. At present, Indigenous epistemologies and ontologies are subordinated to settler-colonial and (neo)liberal discourses. The subordination of Indigenous perspectives occurs alongside the failures of liberal-multicultural promises of identity politics that do nothing to shake the core foundations of settler colonialism. The curriculum’s portrayal of ‘cultural citizenship’ reinforces the settler-colonial structures of liberal multiculturalism: the curriculum presents a picture of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures but does nothing to teach students of the unnaturalness of the dominant cultural, epistemological, and ontological paradigm. The BC curriculum focuses on identity, citizenship, and cultural politics while remaining silent about issues like sovereignty and land rights. The silences and omissions in the curriculum are connected and contribute to settler-colonial

disavowal of Indigenous sovereignty. The curriculum also contributes to the deligitimization, through silence and omission, of Indigenous knowledge and ways of being, particularly relationships in and with land and place. These silences reinforce the current Indigenous dispossessions taking place under the auspices of neoliberal economic policies and entrench neoliberal governmentalities and settler commonsense by naturalizing settler sovereignty over Indigenous lands and resources. Settler capitalism and neoliberal economic policies are reliant on the continued dispossession of Indigenous peoples. The integration of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit content and Indigenous perspectives into the BC curriculum is limited by the settler-colonial framework that requires the continued dispossession, displacement, and elimination of Indigenous peoples for the continuation of settler-Canadian society. Particularly, the extent to which Indigenous perspectives can be successfully and meaningfully incorporated into school curricula is limited without a significant alteration of the means and ends of education as/for a settler-colonial society and global capitalism.

## **Unsettling Education**

### **Thinking Differently About Place**

There is a tradition in Western philosophy of thinking about place differently from the commitments to the material extension and pure relationality of space and sites that are at the core of settler, liberal, and neoliberal traditions of place. This alternate tradition is grounded in relationships and responsibilities through active engagement with place (Casey, 1997; Malpas, 1999; 2012). This tradition, stemming from the thinking of ancient Greek philosophers, emphasizes the features of boundaries, limits, edges, and horizons that are present in places. Place, in this tradition, is seen as that which makes possible the appearance of things in the world. Rather than the qualities or character of a thing being given by some intrinsic nature of the thing-in-itself, the thing is sustained, supported, and formed by and through its boundaries (Casey, 1997a; 1997b; Malpas, 1999; 2012). Boundedness is thus a fundamental ontological feature of place and is connected to the concepts of openness and extendedness. Malpas argues that in place, boundaries enclose but also make room for things, and similarly making room for things is necessarily a bounding of them (1999, p. 234). There can be dangers associated with the thinking of boundary and limit in place, particularly in how bounded place can be taken up by reactionary politics (Israel, 2012; Massey, 2005; Thrift, 2006). The drawing of boundaries, and boundedness, can result in the articulations of ‘inside’ and ‘outside,’ belonging, and ‘us’ versus ‘them’. However, distinct and impenetrable borders are more in line with the reduced and reducible ‘mere sites’ of geographical and legal control in discourses like private property, where the mutuality and interconnectedness of things in place is ignored in favour of treating these things as resources separate and separable

from their place. The conception of place devoid of boundary is connected to the thinking of space as distinct from place, according to the pure extendedness of matter. Rather, the boundaries of place can be seen as porous, characterized by ‘external horizons,’ which open out even as they enclose (Casey, 1997a, p. 43). Accordingly, we can think of place as the structure within which things appear or take place both spatially and temporally. If we think of a dot of ink on a sheet of paper, the place of the dot is as much the surrounding paper as it is the impression of ink, as it stands in relation and contrast to the paper that surrounds and contains it. In fact, it is also the table on which the sheet of paper rests, the room in which this stable sits and so on (Hass, 2011; Merleau-Ponty, 1945). In this way, place can be understood as a succession of ‘nested places’. This understanding of place is not volumetric, or the sum of its parts, because the limits, or bounds, of the place always give onto another place. This concept of limit complicates the notion of containment in that a place is always only understandable in terms of both that which is within its boundaries and that which surrounds it. Malpas addresses this ‘nesting’ of places by describing how “places can turn outwards to reveal other places and locations,” or “turn inwards to reveal their own character or the character of the subject who identifies herself with that place” (1999, p. 172). At the same time, place should not be considered as series of ‘nesting’ in ever larger concentric circles of containment, or like a Russian Doll with an ultimately small, contained place and an ultimately large, containing place. There is no foundational place or total place, both of which require a subject outside of and separate from the place to view its ultimate and objective limit. Rather, places are made of things in their relationships to each other. These things are coherent and recognizable as themselves because of the particular

relations they have with other things in the specific places and regions where they relate. In a manner of speaking, things interrelate adjacent to each other in place, and places interrelate adjacent to each other in regions. Malpas argues that things are only ‘in’ the world in that they are “oriented and located in relation to the other things around them,” and the “around them,” or where these relations occur, is just as important as the relations (2012, p. 238). Places are certainly the relations between things, but the particular relationships and the particular things matter to what a place is. As Malpas points out, “[a]ll relations presuppose boundaries, while the boundary is properly that on which the possibility of relation is dependent” (238). Place, then, can be understood as a co-relation and co-constitution of the features in it. This understanding directly challenges the traditional understandings that pervade Western cultural attitudes towards place and our place within it.

### **Relating in Place**

The idea of boundary in the concept of place allows us to more concretely conceptualize the things that relate to each other in places. Following Malpas (1999) we can understand space as the opening up of place and place as that which is opened into other places. This distinction means that place has a qualitative content and character (Malpas, 2013b, p. 4). The content or character that belongs to a place is also such that it opens up onto other places. Things are only what they are in relation to other things in particular places, and places are what they are in relation to other places. This interplay of places requires a place within which they can interrelate, what Malpas calls “regionality”. Against the common understanding of relationality as spatial, relationality depends instead on regionality, the particular place where relations occur (Malpas, 2013b, p. 5).

The regionality of relationality and the importance of place have significance for how we understand the place of humans. Malpas argues that place and places are the ground in which experience, thought, and memory exist as well as the means through which the physical features and processes of landscapes reveal themselves. The physical features and processes of the ‘objective’ world – space and time – are accessible to humans through place-as-experienced, and are thus necessarily interconnected to the features of mental life. What is important in this account is that no aspect or feature is itself determining of another, but that all features are co-constitutive of place as the ground in and through which life, or being, is possible. For Malpas, then, place is the landscape of human existence. Humans are always emplaced, and have access to the world through their bodies/minds, and these are not separate or separable. We only have access to and knowledge of place through our being in it, and as such our knowledge is specifically ‘placial,’ gained through our bodies’ acquaintance with place (Casey 1997; Hass, 2008; Merleau-Ponty, 1945). Local knowledge is the “generally true in the locally obvious,” pertaining to “this place right here” and “that place over there” but only as these constitute a region of similarity, bounded by a horizon which opens on to further and distinct places (Casey 1997, 44-45). As we move through different places or regions, the knowledge pertinent to these new places will necessarily shift to accommodate the new relations these places are a part of with other, new places. The porous horizons or boundaries of places exist according to particular regions, just as a shoreline bounds and opens the land and the sea, each region onto the other.

## **Possible Futures of Co-presence**

Paying attention to the particularity of places and the knowledge that pertains to these places highlights the kind of violence done to places and their knowledges by the transformative processes of settler colonialism and global capitalism. In the contemporary context, these processes work to restructure relations in places according a global market relationality and rationality, privileging discourses of commoditization and profit to the detriment of the social and ecological relationships and responsibilities of people in these places. Attentiveness to and recognition of how globalized capitalism and neoliberal governance restructures the relationships to and in places also lends itself to the possibility of a critique of this way of ordering places in liberal and settler societies. Technological modernity and capitalism conceal many of our relations to and in place and order the remaining relations according to discourses of domination and mastery.

Indigenous relational identity presents a substantive difference to the liberal and neoliberal gambit of the ‘free-radical individual,’ the unbound subjectivity set free from structures and histories and networks, reliant on the violence of abstracting place into space, of rupturing networks, relationality, and community. Relational Indigeneity articulated by critical Indigenous theory presents elements of Indigenous identity in opposition to the alienable and the utilitarian, and, rather, interconnectedness as the source of obligation and responsibility to others, communities, and their places (Altamirano-Jiménez, 2013). As such, the achievement of true Indigenous sovereignty would result in liberation for all, not just for native peoples (Brown, 2007, pp. 174-175). Indigenous sovereignty gives the lie to liberal and neoliberal rationality as Indigenous relationality suggests an “immanent obligation” to nurture and care for these relations

with other humans, non-humans, land, and place (Povinelli, 2011a, p. 28). Articulations of Indigenous sovereignty by Indigenous critical theory present a form of sovereignty organized around a logic of citizenship based on a system of interrelatedness and mutual responsibility (Smith, A., 2010, p. 60), in ways that create alternatives to colonial structures (Saranillio, 2013, p. 290). Remembering how humans are essentially ‘placed beings’ reminds us that any knowledge of the world that exceeds the horizon of the place in which we find ourselves is necessarily an abstraction from that place. These abstractions can often be important and helpful, but the dominant discourses of technological modernity and capitalism have produced violent relations of domination and destruction towards (mostly non-white) others and their environments according to abstractions from the relationships and responsibilities we all have in and with our places. The resonances between Western traditions of place that recognize humans as ‘placed-beings’ and the importance of local knowledge and context, and Indigenous relationality in and with place open up possibilities for the coming together of Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to establish relationships of mutual respect and responsibility towards each other and the lands that we now share. Non-Indigenous peoples should look to learn from Indigenous peoples, their knowledge and experiences; they may also look to their own histories and traditions for non-dominating and ethical ways of relating with human and non-human others, in and with place.

The decolonization of education, and society in general, in BC and in Canada will require increasing inclusion and representation of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples in education and social institutions more generally, and particularly bringing Indigenous knowledge and practices into children’s lives (Abdi, 2012; Battiste, 2013; Battiste &

Henderson, 2009; Wane, 2009). In particular, the curriculum needs to better incorporate Indigenous perspectives, to make room for and legitimize Indigenous ways of knowing and being. This will also require the unsettling of settler traditions of place, and the refocusing of the goals of education and society to the care for and responsibility to human and non-human others in and with land and place.

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