THE TREATMENT OF WOMEN'S HISTORY IN THE GRADE TEN ONTARIO CURRICULUM AND SELECTED TEXTBOOKS

by

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Abstract

As a teacher of Canadian History, I am deeply concerned with Ministry-approved textbooks. I am frustrated by the poor representation of women's history in both the Grade 10 Canadian History curriculum as well as the textbooks. This study's intent is to raise awareness about how problematic the use of *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change* is in Ontario classrooms from a feminist perspective. This study seeks answers to the following questions: 1.) Is women's history a priority? 2.) Who is represented? 3.) How are those who are represented presented? To answer these questions, an analysis of the Ontario Ministry of Education Grades 9 and 10 Canadian and World Studies Curriculum and the two aforementioned textbooks was conducted. Data analysis concluded that women's history is not a priority, that those who are present belong to the dominant social class and that there is misrepresentation of key female figures. This study recognizes that change to curriculum will be slow to come on account of the overarching cultural model, patriarchy, which is at work in the expectations outlined in the document, and subsequently reflected in the textbooks. In order to make use of the resources given to them, teachers are encouraged to embrace critical pedagogy and feminist pedagogy to return the ownership of teaching to teachers and learning to students.

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formerly of the York Catholic District School Board), who helped me to distinguish the difference between teaching students history and teaching students to *do* history; and to all the students I have ever taught – the greatest teachers of all – for reminding me daily that their voices need to be heard, no matter who they are, and for demanding of me the best possible learning experiences that I can provide for them.

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

Since the start of my teaching career, I have struggled with the use of student textbooks and the particular presentation of women's history. I have had a hard time seeing myself in the history I teach, so I can only imagine how alienated my students feel. I cannot relate to the figures who were repeatedly celebrated as heroes, mostly because they are men, or women who belonged to a different social class. I am confused about how this history that I teach has become so "white-washed", and the pages of textbooks littered with polite and politically-correct accounts of the lives of those whom my students should come to know. This study seeks to examine how women's history is presented in the Ontario curriculum and two textbooks that are used in the York Catholic District School Board for the grade 10 Canadian History courses, and how this presentation is problematic.

I began my career in the elementary panel, teaching grade 8 and I was presented with a history textbook with an all-too-familiar theme: the accomplishments of dead, wealthy White men. Often, as a first-year teacher, one would heed the advice of avoiding rocking the proverbial boat, but not me. In the few days before classes began in the fall, I marched myself to the principal's office and informed him that I would not be using the textbooks in enacting the history curriculum. I was reminded about how costly the books were and remember how aggravated he was by the thought of the books sitting idly on a shelf. I refused to budge on my position and knew that I would be watched very carefully as a result of my actions.

When an opportunity arose to demonstrate why I had chosen not to provide my students with these textbooks, I invited the reluctant administrator to watch a class

presentation about the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway (C.P.R.). The C.P.R. was presented in the textbook as one of Canada's greatest achievements leading into the 20th century, so the lesson could not fall short of such expectations. I gave each student a copy of this photograph:

(Photograph courtesy of www.histori.ca)

I had found an excellent lesson on the Historica website, which allowed students to "step into history." As a class, we discussed the background information that was provided. Each student took on the role of one character in the photograph and had to research why he was included in this important photograph. Students had to determine what contribution their character had made in the building of the C.P.R. When the research was complete, students had to dialogue with each other, as they individually created a script of a number of conversations that their character might have had with other individuals in the picture. The conversations had to flow, had to be historically appropriate and had to anticipate possible responses from other characters. Ideally, if students had done their research well, the conversation would have made its way around

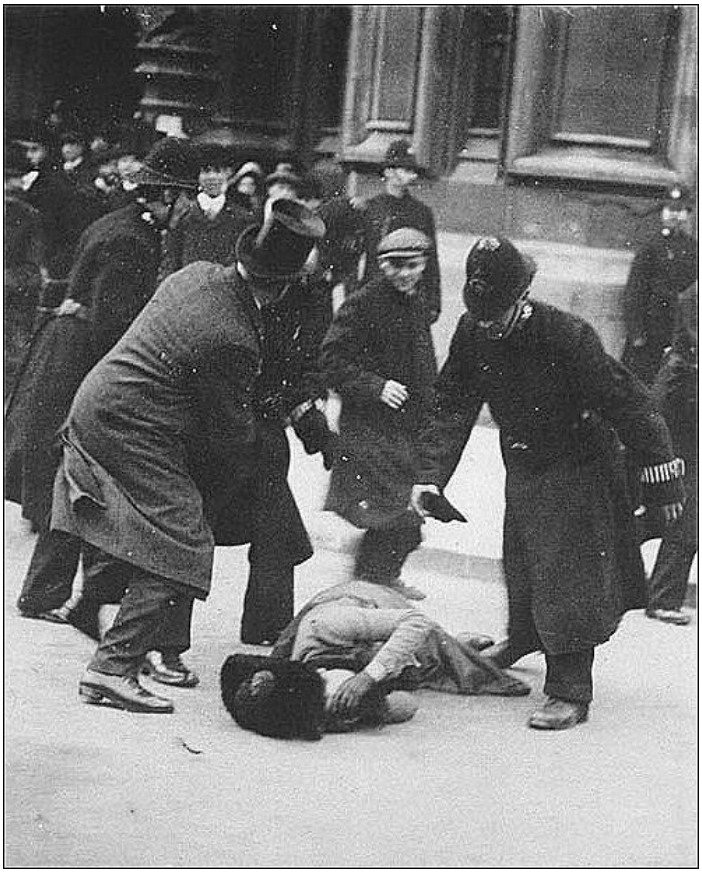
the entire group. During this entire process, there was a buzz in my classroom unlike any other I experienced. Students were *doing* history and they were excited. Students knew their principal would be coming to watch, and they wanted the work to be as perfect as possible. On the day of the big conversation, students, boys and girls alike donned cotton-ball beards and their fathers' suits. The class positioned their characters just as they would have been in the 1885 photograph, and the principal sat in the lone chair directly in front of the group. The conversation began. It was seamless! Students were able to speak to generally known facts about the building of the C.P.R. and even took the initiative to discuss what had happened to the Chinese workers who were responsible for so much of the railway being built, but who, for some reason were not at the momentous occasion. The last to speak was the student playing the role of Donald Alexander Smith, the gentleman who drove the last spike into the C.P.R. When the final sentence concluded, the class froze in their positions and I snapped a new photograph. The room was silent until a young man blurted out, "Hey Miss! There aren't any chicks in this picture!" Afterward, a number of female students began to look very uncomfortable in the suits they were wearing. Some even expressed disappointment in not even realizing that there were no women present. Seizing the teachable moment, I asked the students why they thought there were no women in the photo, and what the difference was between the photo they had been given to study and the one we had just taken as a class. These questions led to an entirely different type of conversation that became quite animated. Students concluded on their own that history might have been completely changed if women were involved in the process of building the C.P.R. Or, maybe women were involved, but for some reason someone thought that their contribution was not worth

writing down. One student even retrieved the textbook from my desk, and argued that it seemed as though the writers wanted students to think that the C.P.R. was the accomplishment of wealthy, White men, and why would any girls or anyone who was not Caucasian want to learn about its construction. At the conclusion of the presentation, the principal rose from his seat, congratulated the students on an excellent presentation, and gave me a wink of approval.

I now teach in the secondary panel and the transition has afforded me less freedom to deliver the sort of interactive, hands-on and creative teaching that fosters truly meaningful learning. It was made very clear that there must be as much uniformity as possible since students write a common exam. I find myself supplementing a tremendous amount of material to make up for what is lacking in the student textbooks. A vast majority of the resources I was infusing into the program were primary documents from women throughout various periods of history in Canada. Where I can, I have also tried to incorporate the experiences of non-Caucasian women to support the diverse nature of my classes. In turn, I have frequently had my hand slapped for superfluous photocopying and on many occasions an explanation was demanded as to why I felt it was necessary to supply students with additional resources outside of the textbooks. I was reminded that the textbooks are Ministry-approved and meet all Ontario curriculum expectations. It is my contention that the textbooks are inadequate. They are inappropriate for classroom use since they effectively alienate so many from their learning. Whenever I have attempted to justify my reasoning for refraining from textbook use, the common responses from administrators has been that no textbook is perfect but they are there to be used, and that I should make due with what I have. I was asked to remember that the

Grade 10 History courses are survey courses, and not specialized courses in women's history and I was sent on my way. I just want to make it clear that it really is not my intention to purposely ruffle feathers by resisting what seem like institutional norms, but it almost always happens…

I was recently preparing a lesson on women's suffrage for my grade 10 students and I had planned to incorporate this photo in the class activities:



(Photograph courtesy of www.hastingspress.co.uk/history/pics/1910)

A colleague of mine, also teaching Grade 10 History, caught a glimpse of it on my desk and remarked: "Uh… Christine, don't you think this image is sort of dramatic? I'm just sticking to the important stuff. I mean, do the kids *really* need to know this?" I think to say that I was flabbergasted is an understatement. DRAMATIC? Of course it is! This was

a time of political turbulence, where women and police clashing was commonplace, as were scenes such as the one in the photograph. Women participated in sometimes violent protests and were on the receiving end of batons, clubs and fists. My students needed to know that this was not a docile movement of polite, obedient, and middle to upper-class housewives in little white gloves. The textbooks are guilty of giving students the impression to the contrary. Misrepresentation of content is not uncommon, and by showing students this image, I wanted to give them a more complete picture. My colleague seemed unconvinced by this reasoning and was more perplexed that her students were not going to be learning the same material. I think a lot of her stress was fueled by the fact that she is not a qualified history teacher, and to this end I cannot completely blame her. That is a major institutional flaw - that educators with no background in history are permitted to teach it. They will ultimately rely completely on the textbooks and assume that the misrepresentations of the figures in the book are complete truths. My students have really enjoyed looking at primary documents like this photograph because they can extrapolate so much information for themselves instead of being subject to the dictate of textbooks. They can see for themselves that women met a great deal of opposition, some physical. They get that men generally did not support suffrage, and can come up with reasons on their own based on their life experiences and perceptions. These images become central conversational pieces for bringing history into the context of the 21st century. Students are aware that women still struggle around the world for equality and when contemporary parallels are drawn, the learning becomes real. In no way does this process prevent any student from failing his or her final exam.

By including the use of such resources like the photograph and avoiding the use of the textbook, particularly where the topic of the women's suffrage movement and the Person's Case of 1929 are concerned, I have been able to foster positive and meaningful learning experiences for my students, and at the same time, honour the history of the women in this country which has not, in my view, been properly treated in the student textbook or curriculum. In spite of all this, I am still left with questions about *why* we do not see images like this in textbooks. What invisible agendas are at work? Who is determining what is or is not appropriate for history textbooks? Who is deciding what is the "right" history to be teaching our students and what is the criteria being used to come to such conclusions?

It is my contention that women's history is simply not a priority in the Grade 10 Canadian history curriculum and this is subsequently reflected in textbooks. When women are included to any degree, they generally belong to the dominant social class and in some cases, they are misrepresented since only selected information is provided for students. My concern as a teacher of Canadian history is not only that we include the experiences of women in an equitable fashion, but the way in which the information is presented is done so in a manner that does not over-simplify, thus reducing the accomplishments of women in this country to mere myths and legends. In doing so, many more voices, often those on the margins are forever silenced. It is my view that by relying solely on textbooks, such as the ones which are the focus of this study, teachers are encouraged to be complacent by providing the minimum amount of what is deemed "appropriate" information for students. The result is the propagation of institutional

power structures and relationships, which keep certain students on the fringes of education.

The rest of this chapter has been organized into four parts: 1) Perspective, 2) Connections, 3) Method and Methodology and 4) Conclusions. The first section establishes the theoretical underpinnings of the data analysis in this study, feminism as defined by bell hooks. The second section highlights connections made between the purpose of this study, which is to expose the flaws associated with the presentation of women's history in the Ontario curriculum document and two textbooks, with what has been written concerning student texts and the teaching of history. The third section explains how the data taken from the Ontario curriculum document and textbooks were analyzed. The fourth section puts forth three specific conclusions arrived at in this study, which resulted from the data analysis.

1. Perspective

I never considered myself a feminist. Then I read bell hooks' *Feminism is For Everyone* and I had a sort of epiphany. I had read this book in my first year of university for a women and politics course I had taken, and I had forgotten about it. It collected dust on my bookshelf for almost 9 years.

This thesis adopts a feminist perspective, emphasizing the theoretical workings of bell hooks. According to hooks (2000), "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression." Feminism is not anti-male, especially since women can be just as sexist as men. In fact, I have since learned that to say feminism is anti-male is a gross over-simplification and trivialization of this movement. Feminism seeks to put an end to patriarchal structures. hooks (2000) writes that while men mostly benefit from

patriarchy in general, there is a price to pay. Essentially, in order to reap the benefits, men have to dominate women and sometimes it requires the use of violence (and by violence I mean the use of aggression, though not necessarily a physical act, to exert power over someone or something else), to maintain the structural integrity of the patriarchal system (hooks 2000). hooks (2000) argues that most men are not okay with this idea, but at the same time, they are somewhat stuck because they do not want to relinquish the privileges that go along with being male. It is simply easier to be complacent with the subjection of women. But a good dose of feminist theory is not enough to put this domination to rest. There also has to be conscious effort to eliminate racism, classism and imperialism as well, especially since women are accomplices in these acts of violence too (hooks 2000).

Feminism tends be construed as a white and "materially privileged" movement. The media often focuses on issues such as reproductive freedom, lesbians and challenges to violent acts against women (e.g. rape) (hooks 2000). Society tends to be primarily 'Christian' and therefore, there are undertones that it is the will of God for man to have dominion over woman, which hooks argues is illogical since women have entered the workforce, are heads of family and in some cases are primary breadwinners (hooks 2000). It was when women realized that women could be just as sexist as men that the feminist movement shifted toward achieving justice on the basis of gender as opposed to sex:

> Reformist thinkers chose to emphasize gender equality. Revolutionary thinkers did not simply want to alter the existing system so that women could have more rights. We wanted to transform that system, to bring an end to patriarchy and to sexism (hooks 2000, p .4).

The issue of race is also key for hooks. She writes that men were almost too happy to oblige the rights of women if it meant (subconsciously or consciously) maintaining the hegemony of white interests in the workplace, and this is when reformist thinkers began to shift their focus on workplace equality (hooks 2000). Achieving economic power became a focus. In a nutshell, these feminists became more concerned with achieving what their male contemporaries had, and thus equated equality to this condition, and ignored the voices of their revolutionary sisters (hooks 2000). What was created then, were two opposing camps within feminism, each looking to achieve completely different ends and using totally different means to do so:

> … revolutionary feminist thinking was most accepted and embraced in academic circles. In those circles, the production of revolutionary feminist theory progressed, but more often than not, that theory was not made available to the public. It became and remains a privileged discourse available to those among us who are highly literate, well-educated, and usually materially privileged (hooks 2000, p. 5).

Understandably so, reformist thinkers moved away from this school of thought and decided that the only way to break free of male domination was through class mobility and economic freedom. Basically, reformists decided to 'play the game' within an inherently sexist system, and they were okay with the fact that there were lower classes of women being exploited not only by men, but by women too. (If you ask me, these were women who not only sold themselves out, but sold out all women with an almost fatalistic attitude in that if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. When it came to becoming perpetrators in the exploitation of fellow women, it was almost as if reformists adopted an "us vs. them" mentality.) This is what hooks calls "lifestyle feminism", which is void of politics and has hindered progress (2000). It is almost as though reformists went from

believing that they were feminists to using feminism as a guise to justify actions that have an overt appearance of oppression, racism or sexism.

In order for feminism to work, men and women have to be allies and be on the same page about what exploitation is and the need for institutional change:

> …the most powerful intervention made by consciousness-raising groups was the demand that all females confront their internalized sexism, their allegiance to patriarchal thinking and action, and their commitment to feminist conversion (hooks 2000 p. 12).

Women adopted sexist modes of thinking that caused women to see other women as competition and almost like an enemy, instead of allies with common experiences. "Feminist thinking helped us to unlearn female self-hatred" (hooks 2000, p. 14).

hooks adds another dimension to this discussion of feminism when she calls attention to the fact that one of the hindrances to the feminist movement has been racism. When women of colour criticized the racism within society as a whole and called attention to the ways that racism had shaped and informed feminist theory and practice, many white women simply turned their backs on the vision of sisterhood, closing their minds and hearts. And that was equally true when it came to the issue of classism among women (hooks 2000). In other words, feminism has to be for all women, not just the ones who have access to patriarchal structures, but especially those who have not.

Education framed from a feminist perspective might make its greatest impact in children's literature, which presumably includes their textbooks. This is the perfect vehicle to introduce this sort of critical consciousness because "beliefs and identities are still being formed" (hooks 2000). I do not necessarily think that hooks would suggest calling such texts 'feminist' per se, but the point I think she is trying to make is that any sort of literature that is used in classrooms should reflect the ideals of feminism (i.e. those

resources which reject inherent racism, sexism and classism). hooks maintains that feminist education needs to be made significant for everyone.

2. Connections

Baker and Freebody assert that reading material used in classrooms are "cultural devices for introducing children to some conventions that govern contemporary schooling" and that one of the key issues is the relationship between the child reader and the selected text (Baker and Freebody 1989). Given this, what then are policy-makers and publishers trying to say about the relationship between grade 10 history students and their textbooks? Is there are a relationship? Can students relate to the prevalent discourses? Are students privy to those discourses? Baker and Freebody go on to discuss how early school books often reflected the very ordinary lives of the students so that they could relate, but as students get older, the relatability to the text lessens (Baker and Freebody 1989). For instance Baker and Freebody conclude that male figures make more frequent appearances in text (1989), therefore how can girls possibly relate to such material? Is this the world in which our female students live? Historically, women are not significant, not in numbers nor existence, and yet authors of history textbooks, whose job it is to construct text in ways that portray a specific view of the world (Baker and Freebody 1989), continue to exclude or relegate the history of females to the sidebars of the textbook whereas issues such as race and religion are not absent from historical accounts. What this creates is confusion in the existing social order for students where certain groups become disenfranchised from their own learning, continuing on in the tradition of those whose history 'counts' and those whose do not. In fact, Baker and Freebody suggest that power relationships are forged:

> Both 'informational' and 'interpretive' discourses about textual material become hard currencies, that is, the problems of precisely where and how to balance their investment portfolios (Baker and Freebody 1989, p. 191).

An alternative approach to this narrow vantage point of learning is global education. This refers to a way in which students can view people, places and things around the world. According to Case (1999), global education has two dimensions: 1) an object (events, places, things) that the educator wants the students to learn and 2) the lens or vantage point from which educators wish students to view the object. Case is making a case for critical literacy. Even if the textbooks were not to change, this approach would still be a viable one since

> (t)he aim in developing a global perspective is to expand and enrich students' perspectives, so that their views of the world are not ethnocentric, stereotypical or otherwise limited by a narrow or distorted point of view (Case 1999, p. 76).

That said, it does not excuse the fact that the textbooks in question are largely propagating a sort of Canadian 'mythology'. Alerting students to possible issues with prescribed textbooks provides an opportunity for students to acquire critical literacy skills, which focus on identifying power relationships, gender constraints and class allocation. It is relatively easy for students to locate these items once they have been taught. In doing so, they become more globally aware. They become cognizant of the fact that the text is positioned in particular ways, and so are they. Baker and Freebody would not likely suggest doing away with textbooks altogether, but if teachers treat them as "cultural devices" and explain this to their students, textbooks can actually be quite useful in showing students what and who is valued and who is not.

In his address at the inauguration of the Centre for the Study of Historical Consciousness, D. Kevin O'Neill begins by explaining that one of the major inhibitions to student success in the area of History is the textbooks. Textbooks, he says, are generally "oversimplified" and "present a single, homogenized perspective on events" and since students are rarely, if ever, shown multiple points of view of a single event, they do not know how to "develop ways of reconciling or selecting among differing accounts" (O'Neill 2001). O'Neill also discusses that schools prevent students from learning about the interpretive processes that are involved in creating history (2001). In other words, students are kept in the dark about who wrote their textbook, who published their textbook and why the information that is contained in the textbook was good enough to include. Misrepresentations are typical characteristics of student textbooks. Where women's history is concerned, it seems that the only history students ever seem to learn is the one that most closely resembles that of the male contemporaries. Textbooks rarely give students any opportunity to investigate this dichotomy.

Sewell acknowledges that while History textbooks are important, they are seriously flawed. Sewell claims that teachers, who are not knowledgeable in History, although they find themselves in the position of teaching it, are "overly respectful" of textbooks (Sewell 2000). They are generally appealing to most teachers because they are compact, relatively cheap and save teachers a lot time from doing research in order to prepare their lessons. In reality, according to Sewell (2000), textbooks were written for teachers who have limited amounts of time to plan, given all of the other demands of the job. Textbooks may alleviate the amount of planning that a teacher has to do to prepare lessons, but embedded in these texts are discourses and cultural models for which

students, and arguably teachers, are not aware. For instance, the fact that so little textbook and curriculum content is dedicated to women's history may not be noticed if it is not sought out.

Penney Clarke agrees that textbooks play an important role in the classroom but teachers must be aware of what messages they are sending out to students (1999). Clarke conducted an analysis of approved social studies textbooks between 1983 and 1995 from both the elementary and secondary panel, focusing primarily on the depiction of gender, race and ethnicity, the elderly and the disabled. For example, she notes that elementary texts generally do a far better job of representing women's issues, and that for the most part; the women found in secondary textbooks were not "ordinary", but rather women of distinction (Clarke 1999). She encourages educators to do three things when combating this issue in the classroom: 1.) teach students critical analysis skills in order to decipher bias, both in written content as well as illustrations as this will help in the sorting out of distortions and omissions; 2.) include the use of external sources, both primary and secondary documents, that help to counteract the 'myths'; and 3.) supplement textbooks with various other texts from other points of view so that students can compare portrayals as well as experiences (Clarke 1999). She strongly suggests that teachers introduce materials that contradict the textbooks and those which differ amongst themselves, as well as those sources which provide a better context and background in order to flesh out the generalized content of the textbook (Clarke 1999). Clarke is also a proponent of teachers using more than one textbook in the class:

> Using several sets of textbooks can be more effective in removing the text from its pinnacle than providing alternate source materials. .. Since students are

> inclined to view a textbook as the final word on a topic, it can be more unnerving to see a different perspective presented in … several texts (Clarke 1989, p. 346).

Essentially, Clarke is consistent with other theorists and educators in suggesting the need to equip students with critical literacy and thinking skills in order to navigate the dominant discourses found in approved textbooks. If teachers are not aware for example, that when they are teaching about suffrage, that they are perpetuating the ideals and celebrating persons of the dominant social class of the time, they may in fact be alienating a number of students from their learning, which will ultimately lose meaning.

Peter Seixas writes it best when he defines the role of the history teacher:

> We live with an abundance of myths, from our victory at Vimy Ridge to the death of Diana… Some of our myths feel crusty and irrelevant, some of them don't work particularly well any more, and many of them contradict each other in their social and moral context. But they surround us nevertheless. Neither historians or history teachers should think it their job as make more of them. Distinguishing between myth and history can help clarify what the job should be (Seixas 2007, p. 1).

More often than not, these myths unite Canadians and provide a sense of heritage and even nationalism. They translate into the narratives found in many school texts and because they seem so prolific in nature, no one dares to challenge them (Seixas 2007). While I can certainly appreciate the need for national narratives in a time when it is difficult to define what it means to be Canadian in terms of who we are as a collective (as opposed to who we are not), what is more useful is to engage in what Seixas refers to as critical historical discourse, that is "a rational way, on the basis of evidence and argument, to discuss the differing accounts that jostle with or contradict each other" (Seixas 2007). There is no use in trying to figure out anything definitive in order to teach students. Why not bring these dilemmas into the classroom and transform them into teachable moments? Competing discourses are acceptable in a history classroom, but it

becomes truly dangerous and harmful to suggest that certain ones count, and others do not.

An Interesting Conversation

I received confirmation for the relevance of this study through a chance encounter with a writer of one of the textbooks. There are few people in my school board who do not know his name. Marc Keirstead is the kind of educator who is all about getting students to "do" history as opposed to studying it. He has been named as a Governor General's Award finalist for Canada's National History Society on a number of occasions. He has been involved in writing curriculum and a number of textbooks used in classrooms across the Board. It just so happened that colleagues in my department were planning an afternoon with Marc, and in some free time before his presentation, we struck up a rather interesting conversation. Marc happens to be on the writing team that put the textbook, *Canada: Face of a Nation* together, but there was something that always bothered me about that. I always had a hard time finding any evidence of the dynamic educator that I knew within its pages, so I seized the opportunity and asked him, 'what's up with that?' The nod and half smile on his face was indication that there was a lot more to this textbook than I realized.

Admittedly, I had no idea about how textbooks are compiled, except for the very basic fact that there is a writing team and some sort of editorial body. According to Marc, when the writers of *Face of a Nation* began their work, they had no set or predetermined identity of Canada that they were attempting to establish, at least consciously. The title – *Face of a Nation* – was intended so that it incorporated many "faces"/facets of Canada in the 20th century that contributed to the nation's emerging identity. The authors had to take

into consideration that there were likely two kinds of teachers who might use it: 1.) the experienced history teacher who is very comfortable with the material and would know where supplementing was necessary, even though the manual does contain very useful resources in addition to the suggested activities in the book; 2.) the inexperienced and less-knowledgeable teacher who has been asked to teach history (since the grade 10 programs are not considered "protected" areas of the curriculum) – the book and manual contain enough information to meet all curriculum expectations. Writers tried to avoid featuring only positive accomplishments; they also wanted to include some negative aspects of Canadian history.

My biggest area of concern with the textbook was the sparse representation of women's history and the misrepresentation of some of the women who were selected as key figures during specific events and issues. Marc said that if he could re-do the section on women's history, he would have included more on the experience of minority women. He said there was a women's history expert contributing but there was too much information; a lot of what was given had to be cut since the sections had to conform to Ministry expectations and essentially, the writers' hands were tied.

There is a tendency to play the wars up more in the curriculum. The Canadian and World Studies curriculum was the only curriculum document that ended up on the Premier's desk; there was obvious intent to make sure the "right" history was being taught to students. Clearly, the writers had to review the expectations and the book had to be a mirror image of the curriculum expectations. The goal, by publishers and authors alike, is to get on the Trillium List; schools cannot and will not use books if they are not on the list and publishers cannot sell them,

Marc described a great deal of pressure from two lobby groups in particular when the curriculum document was being developed. The first group was Holocaust survivors. The second group was war veterans. Marc made the point that while the veterans of the First and Second World Wars are slowly disappearing, the appearance of war narratives in textbooks are not likely to disappear any time soon as we are creating a new generation of veterans in Afghanistan. As such, succumbing to this pressure is evident in the student textbook. Incidentally, the authors' hands are tied to war, violence and conflict. There is not the same sort of urgency with regards women's history, which coincidentally also contains connections to war, violence and conflict. I find this sort of twisted. I truly believe that students should always learn about the Holocaust, who the perpetrators were, what they did and why they did what they did so that something like this does not happen again. Honestly, this is something I feel strongly about. And I would NEVER want to diminish the efforts of Canada's armed forces at any point in history, especially in its formative years, since the contributions of this nation during the First and Second World wars were instrumental in shaping the nation's identity both at home and abroad. But there's more to Canada's story than this! We cannot continue to hold our students' learning hostage to the agendas of pressure groups.

To improve the book overall, Marc would want students to be able to more personally relate to the content but that is so difficult given regionalism, not only nation-wide but within each province. For example, the experiences of students in the Greater Toronto Area are much different than those living in the northern, more remote parts of the province. For this reason alone, I can appreciate why it is so difficult to write a Canadian history text that will please everyone. In my own studies of Canadian history,

one fact has be galvanized in my brain, and that is that no one province, city, or group ever experiences any one event in Canada's history in the same way and the lenses through which we look at our nation's history are relatively unchanged.

Given all this, I still feel that there are some key issues missing in this textbook, which I discuss in the following chapter. Marc pointed out that in the teacher's manual, there are resources that address this issue, because he wanted to encourage teachers to help students to look for what is missing.

Ministry Control Over the Production of School Textbooks

In the end, textbook authors are kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place when it comes to the daunting task of re-telling the story of Canada's past. After having this very interesting conversation, I have come to appreciate writers a lot more and have criticized them a lot less. Where we should begin to address the issue of what needs to be taught is not so much with the Ministry-approved texts, but with the Ministry itself. This conversation confirmed my suspicions that the Ministry of Education does not prioritize women's history, except the history belonging to the dominant social class of the time, which inevitably results in a great deal of misrepresentation of people and events. The intention of the study is to demonstrate the lack of value of women's history, physically accounting for the allotted space in textbooks and curriculum documents; to survey which women are included in the textbooks and curriculum document and show that they prescribe to the dominant, patriarchal views of the day; and to investigate any misrepresentations of two women, Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy, who are highlighted as key figures in Canada's women's movement, and explain the relative dangers of giving too much credence to their accomplishments over other women.

3. Method and Methodology

This study involves the analysis of three of texts, The Ontario Ministry of Education Grade 9 and 10 Canadian and World Studies Curriculum, and two textbooks used in the grade 10 history programs in the York Catholic District School Board– *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change*. The data collected involved text from the curriculum document and textbooks, as well as photographs from the textbooks. In order to examine whether or not women's history is a priority, a two-part analysis was conducted. The first part involves the curriculum document. The Overall and Specific Expectations were categorized and counted to determine how many of each type of curriculum expectation related directly, indirectly, or not at all to women's history. The second part of the analysis focuses on the text and photographs in the textbooks. The focuses of inquiry are the number of page references given for women's history and frequency with which women appear in the photographs throughout the textbooks. This analysis is presented in Chapter 2. To explore how women are represented in the curriculum and the textbooks, the names of women who played a key part were tabulated by frequency of mention. The names of women identified in both the curriculum document and the textbooks were compiled into lists and each figure was subsequently identified by their race, political enfranchisement and occupation. The purpose of this classification was to determine which social class the majority of the women belong. This analysis is presented in Chapter 3. To investigate how women who are presented are represented, case studies were conducted on two female figures that are identified by both the textbooks as significant to the women's movement. Pen sketches of the textbook content are contrasted to other details which have been omitted. This

analysis is presented in Chapter 4. The analysis of the data in this manner will emphasize an overarching *cultural model* at work – patriarchy. This cultural model is consistent with the assertions made by bell hooks.

4. Conclusions

An analysis of the curriculum documents and the textbooks will show that:

a.) Women's history is not a priority;
b.) Who are represented belong to the dominant social group; and
c.) Who are represented are misrepresented.

At this juncture, it is impractical and unrealistic to suggest that Ontario's curriculum documents for history and the two main textbooks used in the York Catholic District School Board used to teach history need to be re-written immediately. There are deeply-rooted institutional changes that need to occur before expensive changes are made. For the time being, teachers need to make use of what they have, but can do so effectively through the use of *critical pedagogy* and feminist pedagogy. Students need to be encouraged to question not only the validity of the resources they are learning from, but how the information is being presented and what hegemonic interests at the forefront.

Chapter 2: Women's History is not a Priority

This chapter addresses this issue of how women's history is not a priority. The first section analyzes the curriculum expectations outlined in the Ontario Grade 9 and 10 Canadian and World Studies Curriculum. The second section analyzes two grade 10 history textbooks, *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change*.

The Curriculum

There are two Grade 10 History courses included in the Ontario Canadian and World Studies curriculum, academic and applied, both titled Canadian History Since World War One. The document provides these descriptions for distinguishing between the academic and applied course:

> ***Academic*** courses develop students' knowledge and skills through the study of theory and abstract problems. These courses focus on the essential concepts of a subject and explore related concepts as well. They incorporate practical applications as appropriate.
>
> ***Applied*** courses focus on the essential concepts of a subject, and develop students' knowledge and skills through practical applications and concrete examples. Familiar situations are used to illustrate ideas, and students are given more opportunities to experience hands-on applications of the concepts and theories they study (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 8).

The curriculum expectations occupy 11 of the 74 pages of the document.

The analysis of the curriculum expectations was performed using three categories, 1.) explicit reference, 2.) "read-in" reference and 3.) parenthetical reference.

An *explicit reference* points to instances where women's events, issues or individuals are the main curricular expectation. An example of a curricular reference is:

> Analyze the impact of the women's movement in Canada since 1914 (e.g. suffrage, the Famous Five, broadening access to employment, Royal Commission on the Status of Women, enshrining gender equality in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, combating violence against women, equal pay for work of equal value) (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 50).

In this example, teachers are asked specifically to cover topics related to the women's movements, and have been provided with some examples of those topics in parentheses.

A *"read-in"* reference refers to those instances where there exists the possibility to discuss women's history but it is not overtly suggested or mentioned in the document. An example of a "read-in" reference is:

> Identify contributions to Canada's multicultural society by regional, linguistic, ethnocultural and religious communities (e.g. Aboriginal peoples, Franco-Ontarians, Métis, Black Canadians, Doukhobors, Mennonites, local immigrant communities) (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 46).

In this example, women are not specifically referred to in any of the groups listed in parentheses; however the groupings are general enough that women could fall into any of the mentioned groups as examples of contributions to multiculturalism in Canada. Outside of the textbooks, students could learn about Kay Livingston, a black woman who coined the phrase "visible minority" in 1975, which referred to people of Black, Asian and First Nations descent (Braithwaite and Ireland 1993). Within the textbooks, students will learn about Rosemary Brown, the first black woman to be elected as a Member of Parliament in 1972 (Bogle *et. al.* 2000) or Susan Aglukark, a First Nations Juno-award winning musician (Bolotta *et. al* . 2000).

A *parenthetical reference* refers to instances where examples of a concept are highlighted using a specific female figure or women's event as suggested examples, separate from the main expectation itself. An example of a parenthetical reference is:

> Assess the scientific and technological contributions of Canadian scientists and inventors (e.g. Sir Frederick Banting, Edward Rogers Sr., Joseph-Armand Bombardier, Elsie Gregory MacGill, Ursula Franklin, the Avro Arrow, the Canadarm) (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 48).

In this example, two women appear on the list, and their stories are only suggested ways of assisting teachers to meeting this curriculum expectation. Theoretically, teachers could teach students about the mentioned scientists, minus Elsie Gregory MacGill and Ursula Franklin, and they would have met this expectation.

The analysis of the curriculum document is offered in Figure 2.1, which presents the analysis of the overall expectations outlined in the Ministry of Education Canadian and World Studies Grade 9 and 10 curriculum for the grade 10 academic and applied courses. There are 14 Overall Expectations and 65 Specific Expectations in the academic course, 13 Overall Expectations and 54 Specific Expectations in the applied course. The two sets of expectations are analyzed separately because of the nature of each type of expectation. Overall Expectations can be defined as the overarching points of interest within each specific strand of learning. They are a summary of what students can expect to learn by the end of the course. Within each strand, there are two, three or four of these types of expectations listed. For example: "…analyze the development of French-English relations in Canada, with reference to key individuals, issues and events" (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 46). Specific Expectations can be defined as those topics which expand from the ideas given in the Overall Expectations. For example: "…describe how

the conscription crises of World War I and World War II created tensions between English Canada and Quebec (Ministry of Education 2005, p. 47). These expectations itemize what teachers should teach in these courses.

Figure 2.1 - Overall and Specific Expectations Pertaining To Women's History

	Academic Course		Applied Course	
OVERALL EXPECTATIONS	**Total**	**Percent**	**Total**	**Percent**
Explicit References	0	0	0	0
"Read-in" References	4	29	2	15
Parenthetical References	0	0	0	0
SPECIFIC EXPECTATIONS	**Total**	**Percent**	**Total**	**Percent**
Explicit References	1	2	2	4
"Read-in" References	2	3	3	6
Parenthetical References	5	8	5	9

From this analysis, it is evident that women's history is not a priority in the Ontario curriculum document. Clearly, the "right" history that Marc Keirstead refers to does not include women's history. Incidentally, women did not lobby hard enough to have their voices heard in this document. The absence of any mention of women in the Overall Expectations suggests a lack of value of their history. The minimum reference of women in Specific Expectations suggests that only certain people, events or issues matter.

The Textbooks

Just as there are two sets of curriculum documents for each grade 10 history course, there are also corresponding textbooks that have been produced to reflect those expectations. In the York Catholic District School Board, all secondary schools use *Canada: Face of a Nation* in the academic course and *Canada, Continuity and Change* in the applied course.

The focus of this section of analysis is the physical space allocation for women's history, in total page count and in photographs. The textbooks have been analyzed in this way to determine if women's history is given priority in the physical space of the textbook. The analysis is broken down into five categories: 1) total pages, 2) explicit/textual references, 3) photographs, 4) photographs that include women, and 5) photographs exclusively of women.

Pages refer to the total number of pages in the textbook; this excludes the index, glossary, and pages set aside for skills development.

Explicit page/textual references refer to those instances where pages in the textbooks deal exclusively with a topic directly related to the historical experience of women. This could include whole page references, paragraphs, charts and graphs, or terms on a word list. For example, pages 28-31 in *Canada, Continuity and Change* deal only with the topic of women's suffrage.

Photographs refer to the total number of black and white and colour photographs used throughout the entire textbook.

Photographs that include women include those photographs where women are present, along with men and/or children. The following photograph appears on page 136

of *Canada, Continuity and Change*, and on page 85 of *Canada: Face of a Nation*. It was taken to commemorate the work of the Famous Five, and includes women who were part of the group, along with Prime Minister Mackenzie-King. There are both women, as well as a man in this photograph.

Photographs exclusively of women include those photographs of women only. On page 17 of *Canada: Face of a Nation*, the following photograph of prominent suffragettes, Emmeline Pankhurst and Nellie McClung appears.

The examination of the textbooks presented in Figure 2.2 presents the analysis of the text and photographs in *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change*. Text and photographs have been analyzed separately to determine how women's history is prioritized in both written and visual formats.

Figure 2.2 – Textual and Photographic References Concerning Women

	Canada: Face of a Nation		Canada, Continuity and Change	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Pages	401	100	497	100
Explicit page/textual references to women, and/or related issues and events	21	5	25	5
Photographs	227	100	355	100
Photographs that include women	50	22	57	16
Photographs exclusively of women	40	18	45	13

The analysis of this data demonstrates consistencies with the data shown in Figure 2.1. The physical space allocated to women's history in the textbook is minimal, which reflects the curriculum expectations. Keirstead makes an argument for this fact in that if textbook publishers want to sell their textbooks and make the cut on the Trillium List, the books have to mirror the curriculum expectations in the Ministry's document. The result is limited space allocated to women and their experiences, which also means that the

roughly 50% of the student population who are female, who use these textbooks will only see themselves in 5% of the text, and will quickly learn that their history does not count.

Discussion

What is confirmed by these findings is that the curriculum document and the textbooks are working within a specific cultural model. According to James Gee, cultural models are describes as follows:

> an important tool of inquiry because they mediate between the "micro" (small) level of interaction and the "macro" (large) level of institutions. They mediate between the local interactional work we do in carrying out the six building tasks… and Discourses as they operate to create complex patterns of institutions and cultures across societies and history (Gee 1999, p. 58).

By 'cultural model', Gee is referring to people's constructions of the world that include what is 'typical' and what is 'abnormal'. The usual result is "dismissive and derogatory assumptions about other people" (Gee 1999). Cultural models lend themselves to exclusion and marginalization:

> …cultural models can be about "appropriate" attitudes, viewpoints, beliefs and values; appropriate ways of acting, interacting and participant structures; "appropriate" social, cultural and institutional structures; "appropriate" ways of talking, listening, writing, reading and communicating; "appropriate" ways to feel or display emotions; "appropriate" ways in which real and fictional events, stories and histories are organized and end… (Gee 1999, p. 68)

We are generally unaware of the cultural models within which we are working or what the implications are until they are contested. In order to determine which cultural model(s) are at work, we must interrogate assumptions being made, since they impose on the world specific viewpoints of 'right' and 'wrong'. They inform about what people say and do, the social practices that are engaged, social and institutional interactions, and dominant influential Discourses. For instance, if bell hooks were to interrogate the curriculum and the textbooks, she might ask: 1.) what are the underlying patriarchal

structures at work? and 2.) which women are presented and do they bear allegiance to the dominant patriarchal structures? It is safe to say that hooks would conclude that the cultural model that is clearly at work is *patriarchy:*

> In almost every society, it is men who decide on the rule, control the economy, and define the dominant cultural rituals or ideologies. This male control of laws and institutions so that men have a superior status to that of women has been defined as patriarchy (Reynolds 2001, p. 246).

It is not in the obvious examples that this patriarchy is sought, but rather the actions which take place in the background that end up having the greatest amount of impact. The interaction between the content and the institution that evaluates that content and then determines what is important is what is problematic. What is patriarchal is the process of prioritizing those figures, events and issues in history that tend to be more *male* in nature (e.g. war, politics, etc.) over those which involve women. No one can fault war veterans or Holocaust survivors for wanting their experiences galvanized into the minds of our young people so that perhaps they will think twice about encouraging violence in the world or persecution of religious groups, but in doing so, an act of violence and persecution has been perpetrated on women –again! There is no hesitancy to exclude women from the telling of Canada's past and the permission to do so is ingrained in the institutional structures that set the standards for defining which is the "right" history that should be taught. The role of the teacher in this instance is to help students to become more aware of who is deciding on their behalf what they should and should not learn and to encourage students to ask questions about why they are learning what they are learning. This approach will enable students to take more ownership over their education and make it more meaningful in the process.

Chapter 3: Who are Represented Belong to the Dominant Social Group

Having shown in the last chapter that women are underrepresented in the Canadian History presented to grade 10 students, this chapter examines which social groups are represented within this already underrepresented group. As in Chapter 2, the data analyzed comes from the curriculum expectations outlined in the Ontario Grade 9 and 10 Canadian and World Studies curriculum and two grade 10 history textbooks, *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change*. The data is discussed in terms of the printed text in the curriculum document and textbooks and in terms of the photographs used in the two textbooks.

The Curriculum

Within the curriculum for both courses, the only time that women's names are identified in the expectations is when they are part of an example within parentheses (see Figure 2.1). If a teacher with no history background were teaching either course, he or she would be oblivious to any of the names mentioned in the expectations, not to mention of which race or social class any of the individuals belonged. For the purposes of this section of analysis, the use of names is important since the curriculum documents do not contain photographs or any other type of visual representation. As well, in both the academic and applied curriculum, there is only one explicit expectation that makes reference to women's history (see Figure 2.1), so the reliance on the use of names is important in determining which women the curriculum suggests that teachers use as examples to highlight specific concepts.

The analysis of the curriculum expectations presented in Figure 3.1 presents the data taken from both the academic and applied grade 10 Canadian History courses in the Ontario Curriculum.

Figure 3.1 – Names of Women Referenced in the Curriculum Document

(Note: The names of women in bold denote those women who belong to an ethnic minority group, however they participate in the dominant social class on account of their employment, access to wealth, their enfranchisement, etc.)

Course	Curriculum Expectation	Names of Women in Parentheses	Racial/Economic/Political Affiliations
Academic	-describe some of the ways in which American culture and politics have influenced Canada since World War I	-Eleanor Roosevelt	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; the First Lady of the United States
	_____	_____	_____
	-describe Canada's and Canadians' contribution to the war effort at home during World War I and World War II, as well as some of the effects the wars had on the home front	-women war workers	-too ambiguous; worked in munitions factories (this is very interesting because this is a specific reference to women doing "men's work" and yet no effort has been made to identify who they were)
	_____	_____	_____
	-assess the scientific and technological innovations of Canadian scientists and inventors	-Elsie Gregory MacGill	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; electrical and aeronautics engineer recognized for patenting and testing warplanes
		-Ursula Franklin	-Caucasian, enfranchised, middle- to upper-class;

			metallurgist
	_____	_____	_____
	-assess the contribution of selected individuals to the development of Canadian identity since 1914	- Nellie McClung	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; journalist, suffragette, MLA
		-Therese Casgrain	-Caucasian, enfranchised, middle to upper-class; suffragette, radio personality, Senator
		-Pauline Vanier	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; wife of Georges Vanier, co-founder of the Vanier Institute of the Family, philanthropist, currently being considered for sainthood by the Vatican
		-Rosemary Brown	-Black, enfranchised, middle-upper class; MP, an Officer of the Order of Canada
		-Adrienne Clarkson	-Asian, enfranchised, upper-class; former television personality, author, Governor General of Canada
	_____	_____	_____
	-assess the development of Canada's role as a world leader in defending human rights since World War I	-Louise Arbour	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; Chief Prosecutor for the UN International Criminal Tribunal

	_____	_____	_____
	-describe how artistic expression has reflected Canadian identity since World War I	-Gabrielle Roy	-Caucasian, enfranchised, middle to upper-class; author
		-Karen Kain	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; Prima Ballerina for the National Ballet of Canada
		-Susan Aglukark	-First Nations, enfranchised, middle-upper class; musician
	_____	_____	_____
	-assess the contributions made by Canadian entrepreneurs and Canadian-owned corporations to the development of the Canadian economy	-Heather Reisman	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; President and C.E.O. of Indigo Books
Applied	-describe the effects of selected scientific and technological innovation developed by Canadians	-Elsie Gregory MacGill	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; electrical and aeronautics engineer recognized for patenting and testing warplanes
		-Ursula Franklin	-Caucasian, enfranchised, middle- to upper-class; metallurgist
	_____	_____	_____
	-describe Canada's responses to some of the major human tragedies that have occurred since World War I	-Louise Arbour	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; Chief Prosecutor for the UN International Criminal Tribunal
	_____	_____	_____
	-identify key struggles	-Madeleine Parent	-Caucasian, enfranchised,

	and contributions of the labour movement in Canada		middle-class; feminist and trade unionist
		-Beverly Mascoll	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; community activist, founder and owner of Mascoll Beauty Supply
		-LuAn Mitchell-Halter	-Caucasian, upper-class, enfranchised; entrepreneur in the grocery industry
	_____	_____	_____
	-describe how selected individuals have contributed to a growing sense of Canadian identity since 1914	-Nellie McClung	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; journalist, suffragette, MLA
		-Therese Casgrain	-Caucasian, enfranchised, middle to upper-class; suffragette, radio personality, Senator
		-Rosemary Brown	-Black, enfranchised, middle-upper class; MP, an Officer of the Order of Canada
		-Adrienne Clarkson	-Asian, enfranchised, upper-class; former television personality, author, Governor General of Canada
	_____	_____	_____
	-describe how the work of selected artists has reflected Canadian identity	-Gabrielle Roy	-Caucasian, enfranchised, middle to upper-class; author
		-Joy Kogawa	-Japanese, enfranchised, middle-class; poet
		-Karen Kain	-Caucasian, enfranchised,

			upper-class; Prima Ballerina for the National Ballet of Canada
		-Susan Aglukark	-First Nations, enfranchised, middle-upper class; musician
	_____	_____	_____
	-identify the contributions of selected Canadian entrepreneurs and Canadian-owed firms to the development of the Canadian economy	-Heather Reisman	-Caucasian, enfranchised, upper-class; President and C.E.O. of Indigo Books

The analysis of the curriculum demonstrates an emphasis of teaching about the lives of those women who fall into the dominant social group. The vast majority of the women named in the document are white, middle to upper class and enfranchised. These women also hold positions in society that are *male* in nature (i.e. politicians, lawyers, in business, scientists, etc.) In contrast, few other women are shown to hold more traditionally *female* role, mainly in the arts (i.e. dancers, musicians, artists, etc.) Those women named who are not part of the dominant racial group, are as economically privileged as their Caucasian counterparts and are equally enfranchised.

The Textbooks

An analysis of the content of the textbook demonstrates consistencies with the conclusions draw from the curriculum document. In analyzing the printed text as well as the photographs, the data analysis presented in Figure 3.2 shows that the women who are

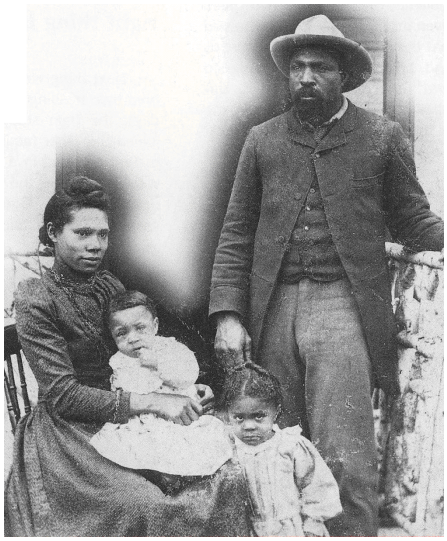
represented belong to the dominant social and economical class, namely Caucasian economically privileged, and politically enfranchised.

Figure 3.2 presents the data being analyzed in the following terms:

1. *Members of the Dominant Racial, Economic or Political Group*: the dominant racial group being defined here is Caucasian; the economically privileged class being defined here are those with access to wealth as well as to the government (i.e. they the can vote, are political officials – e.g. members of Parliament or the Senate, hold positions in legal profession, etc.). This includes an inventory of the women's names who belong to this group, as well as a total count of the number of photographs in which these women appear. The photographs are either of the women exclusively or with other people who do not fall into this category (this can include men, children and women in the second category described below). The photographs also include those women who have not been specifically named, but are part of this category. For instance, the women known as the Famous Five are an example of women belonging to the dominant social group as they were all Caucasian, economically wealthy, they were all enfranchised, and a number of them even held positions within government (i.e. Nellie McClung was a member of provincial legislature, Cairine Wilson was the first women to be appointed to the Senate and Emily Murphy was the first female magistrate in the British Empire).

2. *Members of any Other Racial, Economic or Politically Disenfranchised Class*: the racial group being defined here belong to a visually different racial group than Caucasian, which includes Asian, First Nation or Black; women in this category are

poor or working class, and those with limited to no access to the government, namely because they cannot vote. This includes an inventory of the women's names who belong to this group, as well as a total count of the number of photographs that are of these women. The photographs are either of the women exclusively or with other people who do not fall into this category (this can include men, children and women in the first category described above). Photographs also include those women who have not been specifically named, but are part of this category. For instance, this photograph, found on page 9 of *Face of a Nation* and on page 25 of *Canada, Continuity and Change*, is an example of the type of photograph being tallied in this category. Interestingly enough, the textbook authors tell us that the man's name is John Ware, but we have no indication as to the names of his wife or daughters. Further research has discovered that the mother's name was Mildred and that the older girl's name was Amanda Janet Ware, a woman who was active in the Kirkcaldy Women's Institute for over 50 years. (Braithwaite, p. 40)



3. *Hybrid Class* refers to those women who once would have belonged in the second category, largely due to race or economics, but have managed to advance themselves to a more privileged class. This includes an inventory of the women's names who belong to this group, as well as a total count of the number of photographs that are of these women. The photographs are either of the women exclusively or with other people who do not fall into this category (this can include men, children and women in the first category described above). For instance, Buffy Saint-Marie is an acclaimed First Nations self-taught musician who was born on a Cree reserve in Saskatchewan and was orphaned and adopted at a very young age.

Figure 3.1 – Names and Photographs of Women Referenced in the Textbooks

	Canada: Face of a Nation		Canada, Continuity and Change	
	Names of Women Represented	# of Photos	Names of Women Represented	# of Photos
Members of the Dominant Racial, Economic and Political Group	Rosalie Abella Doris Anderson Roberta Bondar Iva Campbell Fallis Emily Carr Aline Chrétien Céline Dion Dionne Quintuplets Duchess Sophia Nancy Green Henrietta Edwards Karen Kain J.C. Kenwood Agnes Macphail Nellie McClung Louise McKinney Audrey McLaughlin MCV Mrs. Muir-Edwards Mila Mulroney Emily Murphy	43	Kate Aitken Doris Anderson Louise Arbour Margaret Atwood Mary Bobak Gudrun Bjening Fern Blodgett Roberta Bondar Margaret Brook Kim Campbell Neve Campbell Therese Casgrain Kathleen Christie Dionne Quintuplets Edmonton Grads Iva Campbell Fallis E. Cora Hind Adelaide Hunter Hoodless Nicole Jenkins J.C. Kenwood Hugette Labelle	64

	Irene Parlby Emmeline Pankhurst Mary Pickford Queen Elizabeth Sue Rodrigues Bobbie Rosenfeld Jeanne Sauve Bertha Wilson Cairine Wilson WAC WCTU		Elsie MacGill Agnes Macphail Nellie McClung Pauline McGibbon Louise McKinney Joni Mitchell Henrietta Muir Edwards Mrs. Muir-Edwards Alice Munro Emily Murphy Marioan Orr Irene Parlby Julie Payette Mary Pickford Queen Elizabeth Bobbie Rosenfeld Gabrielle Roy Jeanne Sauve Sandra Schmirler Barbara Ann Scott Silver Cross Mothers Mary Simon Helen-Marie Steven Margaret Trudeau Shania Twain Pauline Vanier Maye Waters WCTU Agnes Wilkie Cairine Wilson	
Members of any Other Racial, Economic or Politically Disenfranchised Class	These women are not named in the text.	8	These women are not named in the text.	8
Hybrid Class	Susan Aglukark Carrie Best Ethel Blondin Adrienne Clarkson Anne Cools Pauline Johnson Buffy Saint Marie	7	Susan Aglukark Rosemary Brown Adrienne Clarkson Kim Phuc Vivienne Poy Buffy Saint Marie	7

Notes: MCV – Mothers Council of Vancouver
WAC – Women's Army Corps.
WCTU – Women's Christian Temperance Union

The analysis of the textbook is consistent with the findings in the curriculum document. Whether in the printed text or in photographs, the majority of the women presented belong to the dominant social class. Those women have, for the most part, been identified by name by the authors. Women, like Mildred Ware, have not been honoured in the same way. Unless the women in the textbooks belonged to the dominant social class, they have not been named, which diminishes their identity in history. A person's name is the most basic component of who he or she is and where he or she come from. The impression left by the textbooks is that names only matter in some cases for some people.

Discussion

In the previous chapter, it was established that the dominant cultural model that the curriculum documents, and subsequently the textbooks, are working within is patriarchy, and that could not be more evident in who is being portrayed as far as women's history goes. bell hooks would identify the women of the dominant social class as those who were accomplices to their male counterparts in being sexist (2000). For the most part, the curriculum and textbooks have named women who have sought out what men had, which further perpetuates patriarchy, not putting an end to it as feminism requires. What the curriculum and textbook content reinforces is the reformist feminism that held the movement back, or at least caused a divide. It seems as though the feminism being emphasized focuses on men and women working together to keep the status quo to prevent true gender equality (hooks 2000). Part of the problem is that the majority of the women who are presented in the textbooks are Caucasian, are interested in workplace equality and the moment economics factors into the equation, the context of achieving equality becomes very White. This fact is plainly shown in both the curriculum and the

textbook, as the majority of the professions held by women are in traditional male spheres. The result is alienating anyone who does not choose to “play the game” and literally removing their name from historical consciousness.

Chapter 4: Who are Included Are Misrepresented

The previous chapter demonstrates how the women presented to grade 10 Canadian History students belong to the dominant social group; this chapter examines how those women are misrepresented. This section of analysis focuses only on the textbooks. The reason for this is that the expectations in the curriculum are too general to ascertain specific data. My chief concern is how the curriculum expectations concerning women's history hav*e* been interpreted in *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change*.

This chapter has been divided into two parts or case studies. Each case study focuses on a specific historical figure that has had a prominent role in the telling of women's history in both textbooks. The women being discussed are Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy. These women were chosen since they are identified as important figures within the women's movement in the textbooks. Within each case study, pen sketches of the textbook excerpts are presented, which look at what the textbooks include about the lives and contributions of the women in question. As the information provided to students is essentially the same in both texts, they are not analyzed separately in this chapter.

It is my concern that pertinent information about the lives of these women has been excluded. The textbooks do not preface the discussion of these women with the hegemonic ideals of the time, which they possessed (e.g. racism, elitism, eugenics, etc.). If certain information had been included in the text, these women may have been painted in a slightly different light, or at least students may have been provided with a better reading of the world in which Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy lived. What the textbooks fail to do is engage with the ideals of this time period and demonstrate how

both Nellie McClung and Emily Murphy were proponents of those ideals. Where the misrepresentation occurs is where there is no comparison or contrasting between the acts which have earned these women iconic status and the beliefs they held, which seem contradictory in nature. Students are presented with an essentialized description of who these women were and what they did. The textbook authors have clearly veered away from including any information that could work to tarnish the reputation of these Canadian heroines.

Before I begin, I wish to say that it is not my intention to minimize the contributions made to the history of this country by either Nellie McClung or Emily Murphy. My intention is simply to point out the dangers in encouraging admiration for any historical figure without examining all angles of their stories.

Case Study 1: Nellie McClung

Nellie McClung is best known as an early 20th century women's rights activist, suffragette and author. I grew up with a great sense of appreciation for Nellie McClung. It was because of women like her that I can participate in elections and can even aspire to positions in government. My teachers always taught me that she was a hero. Throughout my post-secondary studies, I began to learn things about Nellie that were not in my history textbooks, things that I have not seen printed in any history textbooks with which I have ever taught.

<u>What the Textbooks Say</u>:

Nellie McClung did not see voting as a privilege that male politicians should bestow upon women, but rather it was a right. McClung spent much of her early days on

the suffrage campaign in constant struggle with Premier Rodmond Roblin of Manitoba, who thought the very idea of women voting was ridiculous:

> Let it be known that it is the opinion of the Roblin Government that women's suffrage is illogical and absurd as far as Manitoba is concerned. Placing women on a political equality with men would cause domestic strife... it will break up the home it will throw children into the arms of servant girls … The majority of women are emotional and very often guided by misdirected enthusiasms, and if possessed of the franchise would be a menace rather than an aid (Bolotta *et. al.* 2000, p. 17).

> I don't want a hyena in petticoats talking politics to me. I want a nice gentle creature to bring me my slippers (Bogle *et. al* 2000,. p. 29).

In response to Roblin's offensive remarks, McClung organized a Mock Parliament, where she presented an argument why men should not vote, and using similar and very sarcastic rationales to what those who opposed suffrage were using:

> The trouble is that if men start to vote, they will vote too much. Politics unsettles men, and unsettled men means unsettled bills, broken furniture, broken vows, and - divorce … If men were to get into the habit of voting - who knows what will happen – it's hard enough to keep them at home now. History is full of unhappy examples of men in political life – Nero - Herod – King John … (Bolotta *et. al.* 2000, p. 17)

Nellie McClung was a member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union as well as a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), who campaigned for more liberal divorce legislation, old age pension and mothers' allowances as well as better working conditions in factories, and she founded the Political Equity League. In 1927, she worked with Emily Murphy and other women from Alberta to establish that women were to be recognized as 'persons'. McClung was the first woman to sit on the Board of Governors of the CBC and in 1938, she was appointed a delegate to the United Nations.

While Nellie McClung was clearly an accomplished woman who worked hard her whole life, this was made easier in that she was a member of the dominant social group of

the time and possessed the hegemonic ideals of her time as well. These ideals are not published in either textbook.

What is Missing:

What is omitted from the textbooks as well as the curriculum document is McClung's frequent reliance on racial stereotypes and how that led her to supporting eugenics and the Alberta Sterilization Act, which McClung felt was her greatest achievement as an MLA (McLaren 1990). The term 'eugenics' was coined in 1883 by Francis Galton, cousin of Charles Darwin. According to Galton, eugenics was "the study of the agencies under social control that may improve or impair the racial qualities of future generations, either physically or mentally." In essence, this sort of 'selective breeding' was regarded as a resolution to a number of 'social ills' (McLaren 1990). In 1915, the National Council of Women (NCW), of which McClung was a member, appealed to Prime Minister Borden for a Royal Commission on "mental defectives". By 1925, the NCW had decided strongly in favour of sterilization. The strongest support came from the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta, and from the likes Emily Murphy, Henrietta Edwards (of the Famous Five), Helen Gregory MacGill (whose daughter is celebrated by both textbooks for her contribution to science and innovation in Canada), and Nellie McClung. (McLaren 1990). McClung had very little knowledge of what the process of eugenics would actually entail once put into practice. She did not make the connection that what she was actually supporting was physical mutilation (McLaren 1990).

As a member of Women's Christian Temperance Union, she shared the sentiments of her sisters in that they "tended to equate racial purity with the white race and Anglo-Saxon culture" (Fiamengo 2000). According to McLaren, Nellie McClung prescribed to these ideals:

> If Canada were to be healthy and happy, it was necessary to prevent the entry of immigrants who… were overrepresented by the feeble-minded, the epileptic, the idiotic, the tubercular, the dumb, the blind, the illiterate, the criminal and the anarchist (McLaren 1990, p.94).

It is also not written how McClung valued motherhood above all else, and that any woman who did not want children of her own was not 'normal' (McClung 1972). She saw women as guardians and preservers of what she called "the race", and civilization in general. Students also will not read how McClung blamed German women for the First World War. She described German women as "those faithful, patient, home-loving, obedient women, who never interfere in public affairs, nor question man's ruling." In *In Times Like These,* McClung continues, "The Kaiser says women have only two concerns in life, cooking and children, and the German women have accepted his dictum. They are good cooks and faithful nurses to their children" (McClung 1972). The sons of such women should have grown up to be good and gentle men, but instead what were produced were cruel soldiers, and it was the fault of the German women that the world hated them (McClung 1972). According to McClung, women like these, who set the bar so low for themselves, made life difficult for all women.

A quick read of McClung's short story *Red and White* reveals some very deep-rooted racist inclinations towards First Nations peoples, who interestingly enough were not permitted to vote until 1960 – more than 40 years after the women of Manitoba,

whom McClung championed (Craig 1987). McClung asserted that it would be detrimental to the "Indians" if they kept in contact with the Whites, and therefore their only hope for survival would be to remain in the bush (Craig 1987). Fiamengo offers, "McClung's racism has become a taken-for-granted blemish on her politics" (2000).

McClung is really a paradox of sorts. She was a radical on the one hand. She claimed to speak on behalf of all women when she demanded that women's right to vote be recognized by the government and society as a whole. On the other hand, she was a contemporary of her time, conservative in many of her beliefs concerning race and religion especially. Fiamengo suggests that instead of presenting overly simplistic representations of McClung's beliefs and achievements, a better alternative would be to show McClung in conflict with her protest over the injustices in society with "unconscious entanglement in cultural values" (Warne in Fiamengo 2000). If textbooks took this approach, student learning would be far more enriched as they would be engaging with commonly-held views of the day when they came into turmoil with the radicalism of McClung's actions. The result would be a fairer representation of who McClung was as a person and a more complete picture of the past.

Ultimately, by depicting the likes of McClung the way that textbooks currently do, suffrage appears as a means to an end, a movement by Anglo-Saxon elites looking to preserve their own privilege.

Case Study 2: Emily Murphy

History remembers Emily Murphy as a judge, the author of the Janey Canuck stories, and most importantly and member of the Famous Five, who campaigned to have

women recognized as 'persons' under the law. I first developed an interest in Emily Murphy when I saw a commercial on television. On the CBC, there are a series of commercials known as Heritage Minutes, and it was on one of these vignettes that I was first introduced to the lady responsible for women being recognized as persons under the law. It was when I began to teach about her and the Famous Five and through the course of research that I did to prepare my lessons, that I discovered some facts very unbecoming to the image created in the Heritage Minute.

What the Textbooks Say:

Emily Murphy is described as a journalist, politician, legal reformer and author (who wrote under the pseudonym Janey Canuck). She was the first female magistrate or judge in the British Empire, whose credibility was frequently questioned by her male counterparts due to traditional interpretations of law. She lobbied on behalf of the poor, new immigrants, children, First Nations, women and drug addicts

Emily wrote a number of fictional books, as well *The Black Candle*, which was about the drug trade in Canada at the time and had a great deal of impact on Canadian legislation up until the 1960s.

In 1921 the Montreal Women's Club asked Prime Minister Borden to appoint Murphy to the Senate. Borden claimed he was unable since the law said only "qualified persons" could hold such a position; he was accused of discrimination. In 1927, Murphy became part of a team of women from Alberta that comprised of Nellie McClung, Irene Parlby, Henrietta Muir Edwards and Louise McKinney, who challenged the definition of 'persons', and took their case to the Supreme Court of Canada only to be defeated; the

decision was appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London and it was successfully overturned in 1929. Emily Murphy was never appointed to the Senate (Cairine Wilson was the first female appointee in 1930). The speculation is that she had been too much of a trouble-maker for the government.

Like her contemporary Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy made great strides in women's attempt to shatter the glass ceiling under which they had been living and working for so long. Like Nellie McClung, Murphy possessed a number of beliefs, consistent with those of her time, that have been excluded from these textbooks.

What is Missing:

What students will not read or learn from their textbooks is that Emily Murphy too, subscribed to many of the commonly-held views of her times. These views were racist in nature, and influenced much of Murphy's work. For instance, students, unless exposed to these facts by a knowledgeable teacher, will never read Murphy's 1922 articles which were compiled into a book called the *The Black Candle*, written under her pseudonym, Janey Canuck. The student textbooks do in fact make mention of this book, but it is a gross oversimplification as to the content: "Murphy's comprehensive book about the drug trade, *The Black Candle,* was the first of its kind and it had an impact around the world" (Bogle *et. al.* 2000, p. 137). In her years as a police magistrate, Murphy witnessed a number of cases involving drug use. In her articles, she identifies "Chinese Assyrians, Negroes and Greeks" as the principle users of narcotics as well as the ones bringing the drugs into the country (Murphy 1922). In *The Black* Candle, Murphy also writes:

> Dr. C.W. Saleeby has recently pointed out that in Great Britain, in 1919, for the first time, the deaths have actually exceeded the births. He also points out that there are more Germans in Germany than there are Britons in the whole of our Empire and contends that in a generation or so, these prolific Germans, with equally prolific Russians, and the still fertile yellow races, will wrest leadership of the world from the British. Wise folk ought to think about these things for a while (Murphy 1922, pp. 46-47).

Not only did these writings contribute to the commonly-held racial biases of her day, but much of what she wrote is still reflected in current legislation. Emily Murphy made frequent appearances in Maclean's magazine with articles condemning the above races, who immigrated to the province of Alberta.

Like her friend Nellie McClung, Emily Murphy was a proponent of eugenics, or 'selective breeding'. Thanks to her efforts, the Alberta Sexual Sterilization Act was passed in 1928 and targeted those 'undesirables' who were deemed 'unfit' to reproduce. She promoted the benefits in her Janey Canuck book, *Sterilizing the Insane*. She writes that to protect women from sexual attack, as well as "to end the crippling expenses of incarceration and to promote the mental and physical betterment of the race, sterilization of the unfit was required" (McLaren 1990, pp.100-101). Emily Murphy claimed that syphilis and prostitution, its conduit, were a threat to the race. Her proof for this claim was that a large number of prisoners in the jails required treatment for either syphilis or gonorrhea, and that it was expensive. It seemed as though venereal diseases became more associated with behaviours as opposed to the bacteria that caused them (McLaren 1990). As well, Murphy felt sterilization was imperative so that insanity, venereal disease, tuberculosis and epilepsy could be contained: "We protect the public against diseased and distempered cattle. We should similarly protect them against the offal of humanity" (McLaren 1990). She also compared sterilization to the likes of pruning a tree. (McLaren

1990) The legislation influenced by the writings of Emily Murphy stayed on the books until 1972, until more that 4725 Albertans were sterilized due to their 'poor genetic makeup'.

The Famous Five have been immortalized on the back of Canada's $50 bill, along side a quotation for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights." As Deborah Yedlin of the *Globe and Mail* points out, "The thing is, not everyone in the Famous Five held those noble perspectives about equality, dignity and rights" (Yedlin 2004). Putting these facts aside and excusing them on account of the historical context in which certain things were written and said is a cop-out. It is a gross generalization to think that all Canadians felt this way. Certainly, not all Canadians believed in taking away a person's right to have children on account of inferior breeding. Not all Canadians were racist. So why do we make excuses for women whose participation in certain events, like the women's rights movement in Canada, who as more research has revealed, seem to have had ulterior motives?

Why Does This Matter?

What is missing from the textbooks tell a very interesting story about these two heroes in Canadian History. Had some of this information been included, when students read comments like, "She [Murphy] worked for poor people, for new immigrants, for Aboriginal Canadians, for children, for women and for drug addicts" (Bogle *et. al.* 2000), it is not so much that the comment is untrue, as it is incomplete. As a teacher of history, the importance of establishing context for the time period that is being taught is crucial so

that students can understand or at least have an appreciation for the hegemonic ideals or systems of beliefs widely held by society. The purpose of this is not necessarily to be critical in the negative sense, but rather so students can see how and why decisions are made and how people are really products of their environment, which is evident in what they say and do.

The purpose of this discussion, about what has been omitted from the textbook, is really not to besmirch Nellie McClung or Emily Murphy. Rather, the intention is to bring to light the fact that they held certain beliefs to be true that by 21st standards in this country are largely unacceptable. By exposing what has been left out, and comparing it to what is included in the textbooks, it is obvious that the writers are attempting to reinforce the legacies of McClung and Murphy as only positive and thus establishing these stories to be the *reality*. Atkinson identifies the problems with establishing 'realities':

> Texts do not simply and transparently report an independent order of reality. Rather, the texts themselves are implicated in the work of reality construction… There is no possibility of a neutral text. The text… is just as much an artifact of convention and contrivance as is any other cultural product (Atkinson 1990, p. 6 in Holliday 2002).

That said, the textbooks reflect an attitude in that Canadians are not really interested in a critical review of the life and times of Emily Murphy and Nellie McClung. After all, what really matters is the work they did to further the rights of women in Canada, and *eventually* all women were able to reap the benefits. Who decided this is right? Education should be geared towards helping students to think for themselves. Being exposed to excerpts of McClung's and Murphy's work allows students a better reading of the world in which these women lived. In doing so, students can decide for themselves just how worthy of a hero's mention they are.

Chapter 5: Conclusion of the Study

The three previous chapters have demonstrated that women's history is not a priority, the women who are represented belong to the dominant social class, and who is represented is misrepresented. Analyses of the curriculum document and the two textbooks have revealed that this is true because of the overarching cultural model at work, patriarchy. This study is a call to action, but unless there is institutionalized recognition of this patriarchy and how it impacts what teachers have to teach and what students have to learn, change will be slow to come. In the meantime, teachers have to work with what they have, and it is entirely possible to use both the curriculum document and the textbooks to their advantage. For instance, when I teach my students about Emily Murphy and what she accomplished, I usually allot about 5 days in class. Sounds excessive, I know! This learning experience consists of multiple steps and quite a bit of collaboration, so I make the time. I begin by showing students the Heritage Minute clip, "Emily Murphy". The clip features a monologue the retells the story of how Murphy was part of a group of women, The Famous Five, who challenged the definition of the word "person" as it was written in the Constitution, since it had been interpreted at the time that it did not include women. The actor dramatically recounts how the efforts of these women resulted in women being identified as persons under the law, thus allowing them to be appointed to the Senate. After watching the clip, I initiate a class discussion by asking students to comment on the effectiveness of the clip and how it was useful to them. Almost always, students want to know exactly what Murphy said and did. I provide students with copies of the correspondence between Emily Murphy and the Supreme Court of Canada and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, so that students can

read for themselves what was being discussed. While reading, I ask students to answer these questions: 1) What is Murphy asking for? 2) For whom is she speaking? and 3) What is the response? Students keep their notes in a separate folder because I then ask them to complete an online scavenger hunt. I ask them to research and take notes on what some of the main social beliefs in early 20th century Canada. Students then complete an online reading of *The Black Candle*. I ask students to determine the premise of Murphy's book and what her findings are. I also ask students to jot down their impressions of Emily Murphy after having read her own work. Students are then organized into small groups of 4 or 5. They compare the notes that they have been taking with each other and then they look at their textbook. Students discuss what is similar between the content of the textbook and their own discoveries. They point out what is missing from the textbooks. Students then compare the impression that the textbook gives of Murphy with the impression they arrived at on their own, and attempt to make connections or arrive at some sort of explanation when disparities arise. Groups record their findings on chart paper and post their notes for their classmates to read. Time is given to allow students the opportunities to peruse what their peers have noted and begin to have conversations in a very informal manner among themselves, about what they have found. Students regroup as a class and we briefly talk about what they found troubling and useful about this exercise. As a culminating task, students recreate a double-page spread that they feel *should* have been published in their textbooks. They include notes they have taken, images, excerpts and information that they discovered that they feel makes for a more complete telling of history. Students are allotted time in the computer lab to complete the layout. What is beneficial about this exercise is that each layout is completely different.

Depending on student (race, gender, socio-economic background, etc.), different pieces of information is valued and prioritized accordingly. Each has learned something valuable that is relatable. Some may find it troubling that I have still made room for the use of a resource that is potentially harmful if used as is, but what I believe this lesson demonstrates is that there is the potential for students to become critical consumers of information and that they can be empowered to seek out what is not included so as to take more responsibility for their own learning.

Moving Forward…

When I am looking to initiate change in my classroom, the one thing I hate to be told is to work with what I have, especially on account of budget constraints. On the one hand, I feel limited with what I can do and the temptation to tow the line and use the resources I have been given creeps up on me. Yet at the same time, I have to remember that my main goal is to prepare my students to live in the world as it is and that what and how I teach is a vehicle for that. I also want my students to feel that if something needs to be changed, they can be confident enough to at least identify what is problematic. I can help with that, even if it means using *Canada: Face of a Nation* or *Canada, Continuity and Change*. I believe all teachers can if they embrace 1.) *critical pedagogy* and 2.) *feminist pedagogy.*

1. Critical Pedagogy

When I was in my first year of teacher education, one of the books on the list of required readings was *Critical Pedagogy: Notes From the Real World*, by Joan Wink.

When I initially read it, I have to admit that I did not think much of it. I could not relate to it. I did not understand its relevance. In the midst of the research for this study, I came across the term *critical pedagogy* and wondered why it sounded familiar. It was on occasions like this that I was glad that I made a habit of keeping my university books, that when I went to peruse my bookshelf, I found my copy of Wink's book, and decided to give it another shot. After a second read, I realized that in my short teaching career, I had embraced these ideas, and with this study, I was solidifying their place in my practice permanently.

Throughout this study, I have been attempting to raise consciousness about some of the critical issues surrounding taking student textbooks at face value, that as educators, we owe to our students to be aware of the implications of relying solely on Ministry-approved texts, at least where the study of history is concerned. This call to action is an essential component of critical pedagogy. Joan Wink is hesitant to provide a definition for critical pedagogy. When put into action, a practitioner of critical pedagogy constantly runs statements such as the following in his or her head:

- I must continue to challenge my long-held assumptions;
- I must let practice inform my theory;
- I must continually build theory that informs my practice;
- I must find new answers for new questions;
- I must grapple with multiple ways of knowing;
- I must listen, learn, reflect, and act. (Wink 2000, p. 15)

Critical pedagogy is grounded in change (Wink 2000). From personal experience, I have worked with numerous educators who are not comfortable with being in a constant state of flux, but there is so much value in constantly engaging in the process of learning, unlearning and relearning. At the very least, we have to accept that if our students do not

care about what they are learning, they will not learn it. That is not to say that we throw the curriculum documents out the window and allow free reign in our classrooms. We have to be realistic, not to mention accountable for what we teach. My recognition of accountability does not necessarily refer exclusively to curriculum documents or to results of standardized tests, but at the same time, in the province of Ontario, this is a very real aspect of this profession, is it not? Regardless, where a very real sense of responsibility arises is in our need to figure out how our students learn, what is interesting to them and marrying it with the daunting task of meeting all of those curriculum expectations. This is where we begin to relearn our role in the classroom. Wink asserts that "… relearning involves a shift in methodology… Relearning takes place when kids teach us all those things we didn't learn in teacher education" (Wink 2000, p. 24). I think that from time to time, it is a useful exercise to examine why we do what we do. Why do we put so much faith in the Ministry-approved texts and use them in our classroom? Are these resources causing harm in any way? What are they good for? It is important to figure out if we, consciously or not, are alienating our students on account of the cultural models that we prescribe to or are unconsciously perpetuating. What critical pedagogy forces us to do is take a close look at our teaching practice; what we do and how we do it. Eventually, the closer you look at what you have been doing and examining how you know what you know and what constitutes that knowledge, we begin to unlearn:

> Unlearning is central to critical pedagogy, even though it often feels terrible. This is good. Does it feel like everything you ever learned, you now need to relearn and unlearn? This is good. At least for me, it often seems that all I ever held to be true about teaching and learning has been called into question. Many of my long-held assumptions have not stood the test of time (Wink 2000, p. 25).

Critical pedagogy allows the transition from passive to active learning, and not just for students, but for educators as well. The onus falls on the latter to be an example. Teachers need to be regularly engaged in the practice of thinking more about what they think they know and facilitating meaningful experiences for students to do the same.

Critical pedagogy does not look the same for everyone. Wink first examines the meaning of the word *critical*. One who is critical sees beyond surface meanings, looking from within and without, and appreciates complexities. *Pedagogy* involves looking at the relationship between teaching and learning experiences, and what the various theories/philosophies/ideas arise from those teaching and learning experiences. When these two concepts are espoused, Wink cites a definition from McLaren:

> … (critical pedagogy) is a way of thinking about, negotiating and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society and nation state… Critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge gets constructed the way that it does, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others are clearly not (P. McLaren in Wink 2000, p. 29).

Wink offers her own definition:

> Critical pedagogy is a prism that reflects the complexities of the interaction between teaching and learning. It highlights some of the hidden subtleties that may have escaped our view previously. It enables us to see more widely and more deeply… we have to look back at our own histories and generate new questions in order to find new answers based on our knowledge, and literacies, and culture… (Wink 2000, pp. 31-35)

When actively engaged in critical pedagogy, we create new knowledge; new ways of knowing and new ways of seeing the world around us. The trick is to figure out how to make this meaningful in our classrooms.

Critical Pedagogy in the Classroom

Critical pedagogy involves a three-step process: "to name, to reflect critically, to act" (Wink 2000, p. 120). In order to do this, Wink encourages teachers to take a serious look at what they are doing so that they can determine the kind of classroom they have set up. Historically, Wink says there are three models that teachers have used to base their practice:

1. Transmission Model: "The teacher is standing in front of the classroom, and the students are at their seats, which are in rows. They listen to what she says and write it down in their notebooks." (Wink 2000, p. 121) The analogy that comes to mind is that knowledge is like water in a jar, and that learning is the equivalent to teachers removing the tops of students' heads and pouring in the contents of that jar. There is no engagement with either the teacher or what she is teaching. Barnes contends that a Transmission teacher is "likely to defend fiercely the boundaries of his subject and be quick to dismiss non-specialists as unqualified to hold opinions about it." (Barnes 1992, p. 151). This teacher views him or herself as the 'gatekeeper' of all knowledge and does not expect nor desire to learn from students.
2. Generative Model: Wink says to imagine students "clustered around various learning centres" (Wink 2000, p. 122). The teacher's role is to structure the learning activities that facilitates student learning. Students work together and actively engage in learning to build their own knowledge based on prior learning.
3. Transformative Model: According to Wink, "this model reflects not only the changing world, but also our more complex understandings of meaningful

teaching and learning" (Wink 2000, p. 122). The previous two models deal with acquiring knowledge, and this one helps students figure out what to do with it. Wink gives this example:

> Imagine a classroom where small groups of students are outside working in their garden, which they planted several months ago. The students are digging the potatoes, carrots, and onions and weighing them. Based on their production costs, the students will determine their price per pound later in math class. The group has decided in their class meeting that they will sell a portion of the roots in order to earn money for the scholarships for a field trip. The remainder of the garden vegetables will be donated to the local food kitchen (Wink and Swanson 1993, pp. 30-35).

Not only have students acquired knowledge, they have brought that learning into their community in a very practical way. In this example, students have taken ownership of their learning. The teacher has created an environment where they feel empowered to do so, since the students make decisions together in a very democratic way. This practical learning experience is guiding what they want to learn.

In the context of a transformative classroom, students are enabled to explore issues of

a.) Discourse: language that when used in a certain context, has specific implications, contain subtle but powerful messages and can effectively empower or disenfranchise people. Critical pedagogy intends to help students to realize the power of loaded words and the social practices that surround them (Wink 2000);

b.) Hegemony: "… the domination of one group over another with the partial consent of the dominated group." Hegemony is the control of knowledge and literacy by the dominant group. Critical pedagogy questions the notion of consent and why it was given (Wink 2000);

c.) Hidden Curriculum: "the unexpressed perpetuation of dominant culture through institutional processes." Education has the tendency to co-opt students in participating in this culture and critical pedagogy seeks to define what this culture is comprised of, who benefits and who it harms (Wink 2000). Students are asked to assume particular cultural models rather than unpack the cultural model that is at work in society as well as in their own textbooks.

Wink lists 'literacies' as the fourth issue that critical pedagogy addresses. For the purpose of this study, the focus will rest with *critical literacy.* From Rowan, Knobel, Bigum and Lankshear, we learn that critical literacy is "… the process of reading and writing the world such that relationships between power, social practice, and language are explored and evaluated." (Rowan *et. al.*, 2000, p. 88) Wink defines critical literacy as the ability to read the world and an understanding of "how and why knowledge and power are constructed and by whom and for whom." (Wink 2000, p. 56) She compares how we read the *world* to how we read the *word*:

Reading the Word means:	**Reading the World means:**
-to decode/encode those words;	-to decode/encode the people around us;
-to bring ourselves to those pages;	-to decode/encode the community that surrounds us;
-to make meaning of those pages as they relate to our experiences, our possibilities; our cultures; and our knowledges.	-to decode/encode the visible and invisible messages of the world.

Critical literacy helps to discern power structures and the role that we play in those power structures. For instance, if *Canada: Face of a Nation* and *Canada, Continuity and Change* were being used in a critical literacy classroom, the fact that women's history is undervalued would be very apparent to students. They may draw parallels between the fight for the right to vote to the struggle for proper representation of women's history in

government-approved texts. Students would question who gets to decide what they should learn and wonder why no one asked them. Students would seek out who else is underrepresented in their textbooks and attempt to learn more about them. In asking these questions and seeking answers, students, in a sense, enfranchise themselves in their learning.

The transformative model is consistent with the notion of 'curriculum as conversation' put forth by Manning (1993). "It assumes that meanings are created in the conversation. That what is being talked about is a co-construction of the participants." (p. 4) Talking about all of the aforementioned creates a dialogue much more conducive to considering issues of race, gender, and class, and 'knowable facts' can be effectively interrogated and/or expanded. Ultimately, this mode of learning does not require students to learn more, but it takes what students already know and critically analyzes it to acquire new understanding (Manning 1993). Reynolds insists that it is not enough for students and teachers to be able to simply recognize issues like sexism in the daily practices of schooling, and that a need exists to re-examine epistemology – knowledge itself. (Reynolds 2001) "We have to question what is worth knowing and how we have come to know" in an anti-sexist way that "breaks historical silences"(Reynolds 2001, pp. 248-249). This is where feminist pedagogy asserts itself.

2. Feminist Pedagogy

There can be no question that education is a vehicle of social change if it is allowed. According to Villaverde, pedagogy is supposed to be an "emancipatory process" that forms and develops identity, "critical consciousness and political awareness" (Villaverde 2008, p. 120). Any kind of critical pedagogy, "where race, gender, ethnicity,

class, culture, sexuality, language and other social categories detour theory and praxis for poignant meaning-making experiences", contribute to this sense of identity (Villaverde, 2008). In order to foster change and awareness, educational aims need to be re-evaluated. Feminist pedagogy encourages such change from within and without of institutional norms (Villaverde 2008).

Fisher asserts that feminist pedagogy is "teaching that engages students in a political discussion of gender injustices" (Fisher in Villaverde 2008, p. 121). This is not about "Girl Power", but rather a dialogue and a critical analysis of the following:

> -women's experiences, feelings, ideas and actions;
> -power relations;
> -generating "political agency" for women's issues;
> -"differently-situated women of oppression and liberation"; and
> -political activism as a response to injustice that is non-judgmental (Villaverde, p.122).

Common strategies associated with these topics include conversation, reflection and problem-solving. These strategies are often an invitation for personal story-telling, which can sometimes lead to oversimplification of issues and can be seen as anti-intellectual, however, these stories highlight "the rich nuances of power and politics in everyday life." (Villaverde 2008, p.122) This sharing allows students to claim their voice in the classroom and contribute to collective knowledge, which is key in feminist pedagogy:

> The pedagogical space is a contested terrain, or at least it should be as learners in all roles come together to produce more insight and possibility in the continued support for diverse identities and experiences. The art of feminist pedagogy rests on the ability of both students and teacher to excavate the recurrent patterns of inequality and oppression, as well as the acts of transformation and activism (Villaverde 2008, pp. 122-123).

In this on-going dialogue, discussion about how power is exercised and experienced is vital, and this includes recognition that education is not neutral. Students are encouraged

to question the democratic appearance of education since it is guided by certain ideologies and the government controls its framework (Villaverde 2008). Essentially, feminist pedagogy is about learning that speaks to freedom, social justice and community participation (Villaverde 2008). That is why this approach to teaching is beneficial to all students, not just girls.

Feminist Pedagogy in the Classroom

There is no set standard for what feminist pedagogy looks like in action. Villaverde is clear however, that evaluative experiences should be differentiated to respect the diversity of learners in the classroom. Teachers are advised to employ the use of creative projects that encourage different ways of knowing and that involve the use of symbolism. Student work can include photo essays, zines and political posters (Villaverde 2008). Teachers should also introduce a variety of readings and students should help select some of the formats. For instance, using song lyrics, music videos, magazines, movies and websites are quite a step away from traditional textbooks but they are significant to the lives of students since they spend far more time engaging with these things than their school books. Why not try to bring them into classroom discussion using formats they are familiar with, rather than those resources which alienate and exclude them?

Every teacher who embraces feminist pedagogy implements “service learning”. Service learning requires active community involvement in social justice issues, and it forces students to put aside their assumptions and experiences as they question notions of power, privilege, justice and democracy around issues of race, gender, class, sexual orientation, ability and language (Villaverde 2008). For example, one activity I had my

students do was brainstorm a list of ways that women have been traditionally oppressed in society. One of the thoughts was that women who had children out of wedlock were often ostracized. I arranged for some guest speakers from a local agency who assist young women who are pregnant and unmarried to visit my class. This agency provides women with counseling, education programs so that the young mothers can graduate from high school, as well as helping to provide basic necessities such as food and clothing. Two young girls, aged 16 and 18, shared their stories with my students, and what became apparent as the presentation progressed is that the oppression that my students had previously brainstormed as something that happened in the past was still happening today. The following day, I was approached by a handful of students with a proposal that involved raising funds and collecting new and gently used clothing and toys, as well as non-perishable food, that could be donated to the organization. My students – male and female – saw themselves in the guest speakers and believed that it could have been any one of them giving the exact same presentation had circumstances been slightly different. Students organized an advertising campaign and collected items from each class in the school. I arranged for my students to deliver the donations to the centre, where they got to see first-hand who would benefit from their work. By engaging service learning and involving community agencies, students can participate in and design their own initiatives. What is clear, is that this ideal is not about making girls feel better about themselves but rather, acknowledging that historically, women suffered a great deal of oppression for a number of reasons and **no one** should have to endure the same, regardless of their gender, race, class, sexual orientation, etc. Really, the goal of feminist pedagogy is to arouse consciousness, change and <u>activism</u> – "… an intentional

action with specific goals or objectives towards accomplishing social or political change work" (Walker in Villaverde 2008, p. 141). It is hard to know if any pedagogy can really teach this, but what a teacher can do is instill a sense of connection, compassion, empowerment and creativity in students so that they are receptive to activism and feel a personal sense of responsibility.

Last Words…

Textbooks and curriculum document aside, I think that what is really important is simply good, effective and inclusive teaching. Teachers who know their students and appreciate from where they are learning can use their professional judgment to determine what and how they teach:

> Good teaching, whatever its form, will help more and more people learn to speak and listen in the community of truth, to understand that truth is not in the conclusions as much as in the process of conversation itself, that if you want to be in 'truth', you must be in conversation (Palmer 1990, p. 12).

I sincerely doubt that the average teacher, through method or resource, intentionally wishes to cause harm to their students. I would like to believe that the average educator realizes the very important role that teachers play in this society, despite the lack-luster appearance that the profession sometimes acquires. Teachers can be agents of social change. They do not have all the answers, but they are bound to teach an individual or two who may have some, and by embracing the pedagogies previously discussed, there lies a profound possibility that this potential can be recognized in students. I would like to believe that the students I teach can on some level contribute change to the world, and if it is to be for the better we need critically literate individuals who take responsibility for their learning. They should be able to leave our classrooms feeling like they can, thus

becoming better citizens who are more compassionate and empathetic to their fellow human beings, no matter who they are. Providing students with the awareness and open mind that is needed to live in this world is the greatest gift a teacher can give to his or her students. Our students never stop living in the world, despite whether or not they can read or write and we owe to them to be able to *read* the world in which they live. Until we really believe this to be true, Cambourne paints a bleak picture of what learning will continue to look like:

> Make sure that textbooks that are filled with obscure and foreign concepts are set, and inform the children that they must study and learn them, but never give them any demonstrations of how to study through reading, or how to note take or summarize. The most important thing in the secondary school for maintaining dependant aliteracy is to implement an assessment system based on one-draft writing under pressure and multiple choice tests (Cambourne, pp. 41-42).

In this world of which Cambourne speaks, there is no room for critical literacy, critical pedagogy or feminist pedagogy and I am not interested in living or working in this world. This is a world that takes agency away from teachers and students, something I am not prepared to forfeit.

Given what has been uncovered about the treatment of women's history in the Ministry of Education's curriculum document and textbooks, I have to wonder where else misinformation can be found and how else teachers can facilitate learning experiences that bring into the classroom all of the stories and experiences that have been omitted. I have limited this study to text and photographs, those things which can be easily accessed by teachers and students. What of the world outside the classroom? Where are the hidden stories of history that lay within the communities in which we teach? Teachers have a

wonderful opportunity to allow the lives of their students and their communities to enrich the prescribed curriculum.

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