

**The Making of *Our* Home and Native Land: Textbooks, Racialized Deictic Nationalism
and the Creation of the National *We***

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Abstract

This thesis project explores the ways that *we/us/our*, *they/them*, *you/your* and other grammars/pronouns position readers in relation to a nationalizing *we*. Building on the work of Michael Billig and his articulation of a theory of banal nationalism, I argue that curricular materials, authorized grade eight Ontario textbooks specifically, reflect and represent a national *we* that gets racialized—essentialized, arbitrarily defined and divided and continually reproduced—through the use of a grammar that permeates the representations of geography, language arts, science and mathematics discussions in curricular textbooks. Using a theory of racialized deictic nationalism, one that points to the representation of a racialized *us* that reproduces and reflects seemingly natural nationalized populations, I argue that the texts both actively operate to contain the imagined spaces of the nation and describe it as *our* space exclusive of a *them* through the subtlety of grammar. As a means of contesting the ease with which a racialized deictic nationalizing grammar is used, I analyze a Wikipedia article as an exploration of a potential space for re/writing notions of the racialized deictic national *we*. While the analysis of the Wikipedia article and the “behind the scenes” discussion highlights the difficulties of escaping the trappings of a racialized deictic national *us*, the analysis serves to show that individuals do hold differential conceptions about who *we* are and how seemingly static notions of *us* don’t accurately reflect *us*. I conclude with a discussion of the pedagogical implications of this project.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

[Nationalism is] the habit of identifying oneself with a single nation or other unit, placing it beyond good or evil and recognising no other duty than that of advancing its interests. (Orwell, 1945, p. 362)

In a piece entitled *Notes on Nationalism*, Orwell (1945) remarks on an ideological concept that would have been explicit in its presentation, mobilization and needed commitment in the previous six years leading up to the publication of Orwell's work. Indeed, nationalism was front and centre during the preceding years during the Second World War, called upon as a political tool to embolden the British people against an enemy of unimaginable hatred. While Orwell's observations here would have been couched within a post-war climate in which the scars of war would still be fresh on peoples minds, similar patterns of 'insulating' the Canadian nation exist today. Canadians specifically, as scholars note, often insulate the nation from critique, frequently bestowing upon it notions of benevolence (Gulliver, 2010; Schick & St. Denis, 2005). Yet, despite this national goodness, the national space continues to demand of its inhabitants a loyalty and a duty to protect the political, historical and social integrity of the nation state.

This allegiance to a national context is a learned process; one does not develop natural dispositions to defend the honour of something whose existence depends on social and political agreement (Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995; Gellner, 2006). As George Grant (1965/2005) reminds readers, nationalism involves articulation, "a process through which human beings form and re-form themselves into a society to act historically" (p. 13). This articulation, far from anomalous and infrequent, happens everyday within classrooms. This

project was undertaken to explore what nationalism means for students within these classrooms and more broadly to engage with possible ways to speak back against a demographic bifurcation central to nationalism; articulating an *us*¹ that gets privileged over a *them*. This project is thus concerned with understanding how the national *we* becomes unqualified and “pronounced” *we’s/us’es/our’s* in common language and how, if Canadian nationalism is, “an incomplete project at best, and perhaps ultimately something that requires different terms of understanding and possibility” (Smits, 2008, p. 99), *we* can reformulate it to make it wholly inclusive. To better understand how the *we* comes to be in *our* schools, I analyze a collection of officially sanctioned Ontario grade eight textbooks across four subject areas: geography, mathematics, language arts and science. The Ontario Ministry of Education defines a textbook as a, “comprehensive learning resource that is in print or electronic form [...] designed to support a substantial portion of the Ontario curriculum expectations for a specific grade and subject” (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 4). I look at these sanctioned textbooks for three reasons. First, given that nationalism is a product of print (Anderson, 2006; McLuhan, 1962), it is worth considering how nationalism gets reproduced through this medium. Secondly, textbooks in Canada, and Ontario more specifically, have been produced and ultimately wrapped up in nationalist discourse (Clark & Knights, 2011). Finally, and connected to the previous point, the Ontario government’s textbook guidelines explicitly assert that authorized textbooks must have a nationalist orientation (Ministry of Education, 2008), a proposition that positions textbooks as being explicitly involved in the nationalizing project in schools.

¹ Throughout this thesis, *us* and its grammatical cognates are italicized to disrupt their commonplace acceptance and to illustrate the ways that this language permeates the ways that I and others write and speak about people and places.

As I will argue, textbooks are pedagogical artefacts that, however much they purport to be inclusive, are unable to escape the grammar of what Michael Billig (1995) calls a “banal nationalism,” an operation of nationalism that often exist below conscious registration. Unlike previous textbook studies, I undertake a cross-curricular analysis, pushing back against the methodological siloing (the examination of disciplines in isolation from others) seemingly endemic to textbook analysis. Through this analysis, I demonstrate how textbooks (re-)create the national container, the bounded limits of the nation and consequently the realm of what is knowable and of value to an *us* while highlighting how this process is textured and defined across the curriculum. Following this, I explore possible ways to provide students with opportunities to speak back against banal *we-ness*. In so doing, I avoid the common scholarly approach that often critiques the operation of language with little discussion about the possibilities for directions forward.

As noted, this project has as a goal the theorization and exploration of the means to speak back against exclusions. In thinking about spaces to move beyond critique, I consider the continued growth of digital spaces as a potential site for responding to unassuming reproductions of an exclusive national *us*. A considerable amount of recent scholarship (Deepak & Biggs, 2011; Iseke-Barnes, 2002; Therwath, 2012; Tynes, Reynolds, & Greenfield, 2004; Tynes, 2007) explores nationalism and/or race as they are taken up in an increasingly digital context. As Kellner (2001) notes, digital technology has the potential of opening, “new terrains of political struggle for voices and groups excluded from the mainstream media and thus increases potential for intervention by oppositional groups, potentially expanding the scope of democratization” (p. 16). Digital technology, by no means a panacea, offers a way to re-conceptualize the ways in which students encounter

and, more importantly, respond to the taken-for-granted *we-ness* that is circulated with little resistance. These spaces, a new form of textual production that is open to the voices of those with an Internet connection, makes possible a polyphony of viewpoints, emotions and most importantly, narratives of what *we* are and are not.

In this project, then, I explore the interconnected articulations of racialized and national subjectivity across academic subject areas, (math, science, geography and language arts specifically), to highlight the operation of a racialized nationalism. Specifically, I explore the enactment of particular racialized national identifications linguistically in both textbooks—geography, language arts, science and mathematics (more on the choice of subject in the literature review)—and online digital spaces, considering the ways in which who *we* are is not only restricted but also inherently exclusive. In electing to forego the tendency to do research exclusively within one of the social studies disciplines (history, geography) and in exploring possible avenues for digital counternarratives (Rolón-Dow, 2011), I question not only the practice of a racialized nationalism but also the possibilities of the ever pervasive digital realm to unravel the potential for a better or more comprehensive representation of *us*. This questioning requires attentiveness to the mundane instantiation of a racialized nationalism, a conception of nationalism that comes to be racialized, or, essentialized through the use of arbitrary cultural criteria and continually reproduced (elaborated in greater detail in chapter 3), a requirement that calls me to focus on the deictic reproduction of the conditions of *us*. Deixis, “the way in which speakers orient both themselves and their listeners in relation to the context of a conversation” (O’Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs, 2011, p. 36), works to reintroduce the idea that *we* are an obvious and clearly delineated group, always evident and always present as a cohesive

social whole. This project begins to tear at the deictic banality, the rather uninspired thoughtless² and positioning of individuals and groups through deictic language that works through the thoughtless consumption of nationalizing language. Furthermore, I explore how this deixis frames *us* as a racialized national collective. I thus question the advancement of the country's interest in being represented as a benevolent and wholly inclusive cultural and political reality.

To ascertain how it is that the national *we* is not only reproduced in curricular materials but also contested in the digital spaces that are becoming increasingly important in pedagogical contexts, I ask the following questions as a means of developing a clearer understanding of how pervasive these banal representations of nationalism are in curricular materials and explore the possibilities *we* have for moving forward:

1. How do textbooks fix a national *we* and, in turn, how is this national *we* racialized?
2. Can digital spaces provide a way of deconstructing/opening up or challenging this *we*?

As will be discussed, I use the insights of critical discourse analysis, specifically the theoretical notions of access, dominance, and social cognition (discussed in detail in chapter 4) and apply them to textbooks and a collection of online collaborative spaces, to tease out the ways that people talk about *us*, how access to this type of language is controlled, how it enacts a pattern of dominance and its social consequences. With regards to the former, I concern myself with asking how the authoritative nature of textbooks present content as “obvious” and universal; with the latter, I question how individuals,

² Here, I use thoughtless as a reference to Arendt (1964) who argues that Adolf Eichmann, on trial at Nuremberg for his participation in the Holocaust, was thoughtlessly evil in that, “his was obviously also no case of insane hatred of Jews” (p. 26) because he demonstrated “utter ignorance of everything that was not directly, technically and bureaucratically, connected with his job” (p. 54).

having likely been educated within this discourse, speak about, through and against what Kumashiro (2009) rightly notes as the difficulties of encountering and teaching against “common sense.”

In Canada, the tenets (and ultimately the limits) of multiculturalism, state benevolence and liberal tropes of “equality for all,” are commonly used in discussions of *us* and *this* place. The very existence of a *we* that can live within this ideal, however, automatically implies the presence of a *them*. As Hall (1996a) correctly notes, “identities are constructed through, not outside difference” (p. 4). Indeed, scholars, in some form, have long sought to deconstruct the dichotomization of human populations along rather arbitrary political and geographic lines, troubling the ways this binary serves the interests of *us* at the exclusion of *them* (Hall, 1996b; Said, 2003). In this project, I seek not only to demonstrate the ways in which the grammar of this dichotomization works but also look to the possibilities of digital technologies and how this might serve as a pedagogical tool within the space of the classroom.

Such framing positions this project as unique in a variety of ways. First, I emphasize how *we* comes to be something rather implied and consequently, comes to be an identification that gets constructed through inference (i.e., how does nationalism make possible easy inferences about who *we* are and who *we* are not?). In other words, this project looks more to the assumptions made through the narratives put forth by the authors (both in textbooks and online) and how these texts come to be not only an uninspired but powerful means to talk about *us*. Often, language, as a social construct and “invented permanency” comes to be unproblematic in its regular use (Billig, 1995) much like how languages and the grammars of race (Hill, 2008; Rizvi, 1993) continue to haunt the ways in

which *we* talk about other people and ourselves. Li (2001), for example, in speaking about Canadian immigration discourse argues that, “the hiding of racial signification in a benign discourse and conveying it in coded language, represents a sophisticated way of articulating ‘race’ in a democratic society that makes such articulation socially acceptable” (pp. 77-78). This notion of sophistication, a suggestion that implies a refined sense of language use, is what is critiqued in this project, a point made all the more important given the formation of language and conception of the world that occurs in the elementary school years. To return to Orwell for a moment, what is necessary is a critique of the “habit” that both insulates and serves as a means of justifying duty to the repetition of a racialized nationalism.

This project also seeks to move beyond the exclusive critique of language by demonstrating not only its effect but also what avenues are available for students to respond to the representations of *us*. In part, this move requires looking at the operation of language across disciplines as language and its capacity to instantiate, validate and de-legitimate notions of who *we* are that is by no means exclusive to any one particular topic. As I will illustrate, often times the operation of language across disciplines is recognized but done so in a way that implicitly limits critique to one particular subject at a time. Given that students are immersed in different disciplines throughout the day, each with their own subtle nuanced differences, it is important to understand how they articulate with each other. In so doing, *we* can have a better understanding of not only how language works across the curriculum but also how to develop a better sense of how student and teacher notions of *us* are both complex and wrapped up in the relationship between these types of language. What is important here, then, is the enactment of these languages in relation to

each other and how this enactment becomes the common sense way of not just talking about geography, math, science and language arts but how *we* talk collectively about knowledge of the world *through* these disciplines. Just as crucial is an understanding of how it is that students speak about and create *their* own notions or ideas about what this means for them. “If,” as Grumet (2014) argues, “nations are our collective fantasies” (p. 84), *we* ought to ascertain not only how these fantasies are made to appear normative across the curriculum but also how these fantasies are worked with/through and the ways these workings might foster potentially counternarrative responses to what *we* are.

What follows is an examination of how language practices in textbooks frame an *us* and make it appear so natural as to be obvious and immune from critique. As a response, I highlight the difficulties of confronting this process of representation through digital tools, concluding that although the digital spaces in which users are asked to confront and question the meaning of national identity reproduce the patterns of the textbooks, cracks exist, to borrow from Grant & Stanley’s (2014) work, in the metaphorical wallpaper of dominance, or *we-ness*. I conclude by discussing what these findings mean for pedagogical practice with a specific emphasis on social studies (for reasons of familiarity, applicability and professional relevance as a social studies teacher educator), not as a means of suggesting that this is the only space to do this type of work but as a way of highlighting how *we* can talk about *our* historic, geographic and political selves differently.

Chapter 2: Literature Review: Situating The Project

In the introduction, I argued that there is an acute and salient concern to understand how the national *we* comes to be and how individuals understand it, particularly as a process through which the national *we* is racialized and done so largely through a grammar that, far from being selective and purposeful, utilizes taken-for-granted notions of *us* and *us'es them* to (re)establish troubling notions of *this* space. As Christianakis & Mora (2012) suggest with reference to California textbooks, textbooks weave narratives, “to promote a unified national identity and character (the one)” (p. 108). I argue that this unified national identity is a learned process for neither the categories of race nor nation exist outside of their articulation (Anderson, 2006; Banton, 1998; Billig, 1995; Gellner, 1996, 1997; Hannaford, 1996). The national *we* becomes possible amidst the use of these texts that create circumscribed bounds of inclusivity/exclusivity that are relationally fashioned and discursively maintained.

In some respects, this articulation of social categories along nationalist lines corresponds to Banton's (2005) definition of race as a means to, “identify population groups whose distinguishing characteristics are political and cultural, even if membership in them is signalled by physical features” (p. 52). While this corresponds to the theoretical work of others (Miles & Brown, 2003; Miles, 1989), what is of interest here are the ways racialized groups are distinguished politically and culturally. Particularly of interest are the ways in which the taken-for-granted racialization of *us* as an essentialized, continually reproduced category is arbitrarily defined along national lines and is presented as immutable (despite certain exceptions that I highlight later). The potential consequences of this process of racialization is to fix an essentialized (or static) conception/representation of

what counts as a performance of national identity, one that resorts to a culturally racialized social grouping that consequently produces *them-ness*. While such a construction has hardly eluded the critical eye of scholars, what has been absent is a cross-curricular assessment of how a racialized grammar is nationalized and *we'd*. In what follows, I highlight how textbook analyses often focus on single disciplines and are studied and done with little consideration of the racialized grammar, the use of grammar and elements of language to racialize people in different ways and consequently, position *them* in different ways with regards to a national identification. In this literature review, I argue that school textbooks play a significant role in this process. Indeed, as Gellner (2006) argues, education is wrapped up in the establishment of the idea of nation, an argument that makes the claim of an educationally supported reproduction of the nation plausible. Categories of race operate in similar fashions for they are politically and philosophically constituted, and (re-)learned through schools (Lewis, 2005; Pollock, 2008). Given these suggestions, one can't ignore the textbook, which serves as the conduit of much of this learning and is an often-critiqued resource in large part because of its pedagogical value and its capacity to represent what Michael Apple (1993, 2004) might call "official knowledge."

What follows is an exploration of research on textbooks, a survey that highlights two trends in scholarship that themselves point to the need for a different type of textbook analysis. Research projects analyzing these textual forms and their relationship to the constructions of nationalized identities often fail to appreciate two important notions: cross-disciplinary intertextuality and its respective microscopic grammar, or, the study of grammatical/linguistic parts as the central analytic focal point. Taken together, these notions suggest a need to not only to engage with textbooks in a different way

methodologically and conceptually but also as a means of contesting these representations at a very subtle level. In so doing, I critique the work of scholars who contest arbitrary delineations, essentialisms and reproductions (together, racializations) and their connections with nationalism to highlight how this project is situated within a wider discussion of difference and national reproduction. From here, I shift the discussion to include a conversation around the potential of digital tools as a space to contest the (re)imagining of a racialized national *we* that is made possible through the textbooks. Finally, I explore how new and connected digital tools might facilitate dialog and new ways of talking about and producing responses not necessarily possible in textbooks.

Cross-Disciplinary Intertextuality

In speaking to the ways that texts exist in relation to each other, Gee (1999) notes that, “any text (oral or written) is infected with the meanings (at least, as potential) of all the other texts in which its words have comported” (p. 55). The words on a page do not exist independent of the use of those words elsewhere. Rather, they share similar historical legacies and are used in similar ways (albeit in ways relevant to the context at hand). It is no surprise then that scholars of (critical) discourse analysis often cite intertextuality as an important feature of this type of analytic work (Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & O’Garro Joseph, 2005; Wodak & Meyer, 2009). Indeed, as Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000) argue, drawing on Norman Fairclough (1992), if *we* are to approach discourse as something produced and consumed, “attention should be given to speech acts, coherence, and intertextuality-three aspects that link a text to its context” (pp. 448-449). Textbook scholars quite often engage in intertextual analysis by exploring the articulations of

meanings across texts³. However, such intertextuality is often limited to texts within a discipline, a self-imposed limitation that frames the arguments, however implicitly, and exists only with regards to the discipline being read. Indeed, the majority of textbook research limits itself to the confines of one particular discipline to the exclusion of intertextual links with others.

A significant portion of textbook research is focused on history texts, both within Canada (Clark, 2005, 2007; Montgomery, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Smith, Ng-A-Fook, Berry, & Spence, 2011) and outside (Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1977; Hughes, 2007; Loewen, 1995; Wieder, 1996). Research projects such as these often explore the ways that representations frame the histories of particular groups and trace these patterns over a protracted period of time to establish an argument about historical (mis-) representations. Such disciplinary “siloeing,” a process of examining representations as they occur in one particular subject to the exclusion of intertextual or interdisciplinary connections, is not specific to history; writing in other subjects operates in a similar fashion with each studies working in isolation from other disciplinary contexts:

Table 1

Selected textbook studies	
Subject Area	Scholarship
Anthropology	(Lieberman, Corcoran, Kirk, & Watterson-O’Neil, 2005; Lieberman, Hampton, Littlefield, & Hallead, 1992)

³ This is not always so however. An example of how this is not the case can be seen in Rezai-Rashti and McCarthy’s (2008) work that only explores the absence of adequate language around race and anti-racism as it was taken up on in one social science textbook.

Art	(Lampela, 1994)
Economics	(Feiner & Morgan, 1987)
ESL/EFL	(Gulliver, 2010, 2011; Lee, 2009)
Foundations of Education	(Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008)
Geography	(Ben-Zvi, 2012; Gormley, 1993)
Health	(Cook, 2008; Whatley, 2008)
History	(Clark, 2005, 2007; Hughes, 2007; Loewen, 1995; Montgomery, 2005a, 2005b, 2006)
Language	(Liu, 2005; Weninger & Williams, 2005)
Mathematics	(McBride, 1994)
Science	(Levin & Lindbeck, 1979; Morning, 2008; Nannes, 2001)
Social Science/Studies	(Ali, Salem, Oueslati, Mc Andrew, & Quirke, 2011; Brown & Brown, 2010; McKean, 2002; Rezai-Rashti & McCarthy, 2008; Tupper, 2002)
Social Work	(Wachholz & Mullaly, 2000)
Sociology	(Clark & Nunes, 2008; Dennick-Brecht, 1993; Steckley, 2003)

The consequences of this siloing (see chart above for examples of “siloing”) becomes evident in the conclusions that are drawn from such research projects, conclusions that limit the efficacy of an argument about the ever present and all pervasive

representation to one particular discipline. For example, Lieberman, Corcoran, Kirk and Watterson-O'Neil (2005), in assessing the coverage of racism in anthropology textbooks, argue that, "scientific knowledge about race is generally attributed to anthropology" (p. 93). By emphasizing the ways in which physical anthropology textbooks represent race, the authors implicitly divorce the analysis from representations made in other domains that were (and remain) integral to the continued existence of racialized categories. In self-limiting the disciplinary focus, cross-curricular connections are ignored, a methodological choice that limits conclusions to the particular discipline at hand. While scholars recognize the cross-disciplinary consequences of hegemonic language and representation (see, for example, Willinsky (1998) and Sleeter & Grant (1991, 2011)), a preoccupation with the artificial bounds of one discipline continues to characterize the methodological preoccupations of textbook researchers.

The "silencing" of knowledge intrinsic to textbook research also creates conditions in which intertextuality gets framed as little more than an intradisciplinary consideration that itself precludes an analysis of the grammar across disciplines. For example, in her study of Aboriginal representations, Clark (2007) considers the ways that Aboriginal peoples are included in history textbooks, arguing that, "it is important to investigate the treatment of Aboriginals and Aboriginal issues in the officially authorized accounts found in school history textbooks and how these accounts have changed over time" (p. 82). However, this method of analysis fails to show how these representations exist elsewhere in different subjects. For example, Indigenous knowledges and peoples are represented in other Canadian textbooks and other subjects such as science (Ninnes, 2000) and indeed, given calls for a culturally attentive and decolonizing science practice in Canada (Aikenhead &

Elliott, 2010; Aikenhead & Ogawa, 2007; Aikenhead, 2001, 2002, 2006; Reis & Ng-A-Fook, 2010), it would be worth considering the representations in science texts. *We* can see this siloing in other subjects too; Steckley (2003) explores Indigenous representation in introductory sociology textbooks; Dunn (2013), in her thesis, examines the representations of Aboriginal peoples in children's literature and Brand (2010) engages with textual representations by looking exclusively at geography textbooks. Taken together, these texts highlight a cross-disciplinary articulation of representations of Aboriginal people but in failing to do so in one particular study, there is an implicit argument that one subject is the quintessential domain through which to study Indigenous representation.

Discussions of gender have also been limited to singular analytic and disciplinary areas. For example Clark (2005) argues that a selection of history texts do not sufficiently represent feminist scholarship, a lack of representation that succumbs to the overbearing work of bolstering nation-building as the dominant narrative thread. The preoccupation with individual subject areas and the construction or representation of feminist themes exists as well in studies of social work (Wachholz & Mullaly, 2000) and health related educational literature more broadly (Cook, 2008). While these areas of inquiry are all important avenues for exploring the representations of gender, the analyses fail to locate the patterns of representation beyond these disciplinary domains. Feminist themes and concerns over the representations of women exist across time and space and have been concerned and continue to be concerns in all facets of social and political life. This preoccupation with studies of single subject areas may very well be a product of the nature of schooling, given its organization around notions of education as consisting of discrete blocks (something reinforced in teacher education). In a different sense, methodologically,

cross-curricular projects require a particular breadth of scholarly work often not afforded those who wish to disseminate *their* work in journals or book chapters. Although the methodological concerns and those of the nature of schooling do excuse some “siloing,” the glut of research that remains comfortably critical within the confines of one particular discipline is something that ought to be addressed.

In a very different sense, literature exists on salient analytic themes across textbooks, but not in the same study. For example, a significant amount of literature on textbook looks at the representations of race and racism in a variety of subject areas but it fails to make connections across subjects. For example, analytic work has been done looking at constructions of racialized representations in anthropology (Lieberman et al., 2005, 1992), history (Montgomery, 2005a, 2005b, 2006), geography (Ben-Zvi, 2012; Brand, 2010; Gormley, 1993) and social studies/science (Ali et al., 2011; Rezai-Rashti & McCarthy, 2008), but little to no research exists that looks at the ways in which these constructions exist in relation to, contribute to and depend on the representations made in other textbooks.

In some cases, scholars voluntarily silo *their* work to particular sections of textbooks, further limiting the analysis of representations to areas deemed relevant. For example, Oueslati, Mc Andrew and Helly (2011) note the following about *their* analysis of the representation of Islam and Muslims in Québec textbooks:

We targeted the chapters that dealt directly with various aspects of our research object (Islam and the Crusades, for example). We then examined chapters which could deal with some aspects (the Renaissance in medieval Europe, for example) to determine the extent to which Muslim cultural, scientific, and philosophical

contributions are covered or ignored. Finally, chapters and units that bear no direct relationship to our research object were examined quickly. (p. 9)

Here, the authors have voluntarily circumscribed the textbook list to one that fits with the analytic pattern sought, to the possible exclusion of representations in unexpected locations. Others do the same as well. In Weninger and Williams's (2005) study, the authors focus on language arts texts to explore the representations of multiculturalism in Hungary and although the analysis was exclusive of an exploration of other subject areas, differential types of texts were consulted (spelling and thematic texts). However, the authors note that, methodologically,

We limited our analysis to colour images of human figures. We did not count any specific historical images or characters, nor did we count any anthropomorphized animal figures. Figures' faces had to be at least half visible to be counted; figures drawn from behind or with hair or clothing that concealed the face were excluded. Series of images such as a comic strip that focused on the same character(s) were only counted once. In the world books, we looked both at illustrated figures and at figures in photographs, but only those that were in colour (there were no photographs in the spelling books). Like the spelling books, we did not count any specific historical figures. Similarly, we did not count figures whose faces were concealed or not visible. (p. 166)

Like Oueslati et al. (2011), Weninger and Williams (2005) limit themselves methodologically to that which fits *their* analytic priorities, foreclosing on the potential surprises that might exist throughout the books.

While an imposed limit on the number of texts and objects of inquiry analyzed is important methodologically, establishing a limit on the types of texts fails to recognize how insights might exist elsewhere. For instance, however much mathematics and science are commonly perceived as areas divorced from the subjectivity of those who engage with it (Jahn & Dunne, 1997; Tutak, Bondy, & Adams, 2011), textbook analyses have shown that both subject areas are spaces in which an operation of moral and political imposition exists (Herbel-Eisenmann & Wagner, 2007; Levin & Lindbeck, 1979; McBride, 1994; Morning, 2008).

Exceptions to this “siloing” of analytic emphasis do exist but they are greatly outnumbered by research projects that fail to extend analysis beyond the “silos.” For example, Temple’s (2005) analysis of heterosexism in Quebec secondary textbooks included texts, “that directly discuss sexuality and/or relationships” which consisted of, “Personal and Social Education; Moral Education; Family Economics; Human Biology; and Catholic Moral and Religious Education” texts (p. 279). Temple’s work is an intertextual and cross-disciplinary exception that stands out as unique in a field engrossed within disciplinary siloes. Sleeter & Grant (1991, 2011) undertake a similar cross-curricular analysis, looking at language arts, social studies, science and math textbooks for representations of race, gender, class and disability. Here, the analysis results in a rather cursory look at each of the classifications and their representations (or lack thereof), which, although the work provides an argument for problematic inclusions, does not deeply probe the content. By providing brief analytic overviews, Sleeter & Grant (1991, 2011) offer an exaggerated example of a secondary trend in textbook analysis: assessment of content at a “macroscopic level.”

Macroscopic Analysis

The analysis of content, largely speaking, operates at an analytic level that could be called holistic. In this sense, those that conduct textbook analyses critically engage language for the purposes of drawing conclusions about general patterns, a process that largely neglects the elements of language itself. As scholars argue (Billig, 1995; Hill, 2008; Rizvi, 1993), language is central to the construction of racialized and nationalized knowledges and while the grammar of this language can “wander” back and forth between these categories and others (Petersoo, 2007), it importantly operates at what Billig (1995) calls the microscopic level. Indeed, for Billig (1995), the parts of language are “the crucial words of banal nationalism” (p. 94), an argument that also applies to racialized connotations and inclusions/exclusions (Hill, 2008; Rizvi, 1993). On the whole, texts preoccupy themselves with analyses external to this microscopic level of language, content to settle their focal points on macro language structures and the concomitant representations that come from this type of analysis.

For much of the literature, scholars follow a pattern of analysis that resembles Gee’s (2012) discussion of discourse analysis, a process that involves the examination of the ways in which words “hang together” and create notions of solidarity. While this approach is significant, Gee also argues that contextualization signals are important, emphasizing how context has to be made for readers. Specifically, he notes that,

Speakers must signal to hearers what they take the context to be, and how they want their hearers to construct that context in their minds. These contextualization signals essentially tell the hearer what sort of person the speaker takes (or wants) the hearer to be (for this particular communication), what sort of person the speaker takes

herself to be (for this communication), and what the speaker assumes the world (of things, ideas, and people) to be like (for this communication). (Gee, 2012, p. 121)

These contextualization signals are the means through, “which speakers and writers ‘cue’ listeners and readers into what they take the context to be” (p. 116), come to be ancillary or wholly neglected aspects of textual analyses. Critical discursive analyses of textbooks often fail to attend to the “cues” or signals that establish context and instead, emphasize more general representations in a textbook (see, for example, Liu, 2005; Montgomery, 2006; Ninnes, 2001; Tupper, 2002)

Examples of this abstraction from language can be seen across textual studies. Textbook critiques such as Apple and Christian-Smith’s (1991) seminal work and others such as Pinto (2007) leverage, in part, elements of critical pedagogy. Such theoretical framing preoccupies analysis with “macro” level issues, what van Dijk (2001) associates with concepts such as, “power, dominance, and social inequality between social groups,” a process that might preclude the micro level or what he notes as, “language use, discourse, verbal interaction, and communication” (p. 354). Although not problematic, as such analysis has value in pointing to critical political, social and historical issues, this theoretical lens fails to regard the grammatical and semantic elements within such discursive (re-)presentations.

The manifestation of such wilful exclusion of microscopic consideration pervades many recent studies as well. In studies of Islamic representations for example, various scholars critique representations with little to no emphasis on particular contextualizing elements (Ali et al., 2011; Oueslati et al., 2011). In one of these studies, the authors argue that, methodologically, they, “traced the relationship between the semiotic contents of the

texts and socio-cultural contexts in which they are read” (Ali et al., 2011, p. 28). Yet, the conclusions are drawn from excerpts that were quoted at length with little to no attention paid to the verbiage used and the context cues on which they depend.

The exclusion of this micro level analysis is troublesome especially in studies of race and racism. This exclusion is certainly not lost on scholars of critical discourse analysis who have taken an active role in exploring the linguistic operations and social consequences of this type of language in perpetuating racism (van Dijk, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2005, 2009a; Wodak & Reisigl, 1999, 2001). Scholars of nationalism and nations, such as Billig (1995), notice similar uses of linguistics to reproduce representations and ideologies (see also van Dijk, 1995). Yet, a focus on this type of linguistic nuance appears removed from consideration in textbook studies despite possibly nascent attempts to deal with this type of language. In his work with history textbooks, Montgomery (2005a, 2005b, 2006), for example, argues that racialized and nationalized representations of the Canadian space often reproduce normative and problematic discourses of race and nation. In one particular example, Montgomery (2006) appears to recognize the difficulties of nationalizing language but doesn’t work further to problematize it in further analysis. In discussing Canada’s role in the American Civil War, for example, Montgomery (2006) notes the following,

The consequences of the slavery institution for the future Canadian nation and the people living within its geographical borders were also unacknowledged as these textbooks would have it, the chief effect of ‘Canadian’ support for, and participation in, the American Civil War did not even directly pertain to slavery or its racialized objects. (p. 23)

While there are political and historical reasons for putting the name of the nation in quotation marks as a means of representing the difficulties with naming this space as Canadian prior to statehood, the quotation marks do offer a means of troubling the taken-for-grantedness of nation-ness. However, left unaddressed are issues of labeling the space as Canadian, its tenuousness and the consequences that this ideological framework has for inclusion or exclusion.

The consequences of this macro-style analysis can be seen in the ways in which identities are discussed. Identity groups and the elements of language used to describe *them* are left without critique and instead, broader analytic patterns serve as the means to construct arguments. Exceptions, as always, do exist but these examples are limited. For example, Gulliver (2011) alludes to routine deixis in the representations of nationalism in English as a Second Language textbooks, listing it as a technique of marking the national space. Here, an example of routine deixis is provided and then not addressed anytime after. Specifically, referencing Billig (1995, p. 106), Gulliver quotes a textbook in which the author talks about *your* national anthem shortly after discussing Canada's national anthem, which he argues, "is either redundant or reminds student readers that Canada is not 'your country'—an example of the routine deixis through which little words say a lot" (p. 129).

As suggested, the focus on the elements of language has become an ancillary object in textbook analyses and is rarely the central focal point. The glut of literature focusing on overemphasizing general trends persists across subject areas, suggesting that broad themes exclusive of language can be made across disciplines. This is not to suggest that textbook research has not contributed to understanding the ways we can understand the nation and/or racialized subjectivities. Indeed, textbook research has often focused on themes of

nationalism, racialization and their intersections as they get manifested in both Canadian textbooks (Ali et al., 2011; Gormley, 1993; Gulliver, 2010, 2011; Lupul, 1976; Montgomery, 2005a, 2005b, 2006; Oueslati et al., 2011; Rezai-Rashti & McCarthy, 2008; Stryker, 2010; Tupper, 2002) and textbooks used elsewhere in the world (Ben-Zvi, 2012; Brown & Brown, 2010; Fleming, 1981; Hughes, 2007; Joshi, 2010; Lee, 2009; Morning, 2008; Weninger & Williams, 2005; Wieder, 1996; Wigginton, 2005). Notably intrinsic to this work however is the largely macroscopic analysis of nationalisms and racializations, a process that neglects the subtle and linguistic operationalization of these classifications (Billig, 1995; Hill, 2008; Petersoo, 2007; Rizvi, 1993).

No study will ever be so methodologically comprehensive such that critique is either impossible or improbable and indefensible. While the limitations do contain the type of critical work being done, the aforementioned discussion points more to the possibilities of future research (including this project) than about intrinsic flaws or inescapable difficulties that characterizes textbook scholarship. In other words, while a microscopic (grammatical) and interdisciplinary analysis is needed, the previous discussion is not presented to suggest that “siloed” or macroscopic analyses are no longer required. Instead, the discussion thus far helps to illuminate the ways in which this research builds on the work of prior scholarship. While the work here contributes insights into the ways that textbooks frame understandings of identities for students, it also builds on this work by offering a new methodological approach to understanding these types of framings as they occur grammatically and across the curriculum, something largely absent thus far from scholarship on textbooks.

Beyond just indirectly calling for cross-disciplinary and microscopic attention, the research on textbooks implicitly argues for directions forward. Speaking to the racialized and ethnic coverage in sociology textbooks, Dennick-Brecht (1993) argues that, “we must move beyond textbook revision and separate courses and programs, and recognize that race, class, and gender intersect with all disciplines and must be integrated throughout the curriculum” (p. 168). Not only does this argument suggest a move beyond disciplinary siloing but it also points to the need to address issues across curricular avenues for learning. Along with pushing for more cross-disciplinary analysis, scholars need to look at different ways to disrupt problematic notions of *us* given that textbooks often serve a common narrative template of *we-ness*. Given that these textbooks largely reproduce distressing notions of cultural in/exclusion over time (Feiner & Morgan, 1987; Montgomery, 2005a, 2005b; Morning, 2008; Oueslati et al., 2011) and that attempts to disrupt problematic representations and limited discussions are often underwhelming (Rezai-Rashti & McCarthy, 2008; Wachholz & Mullaly, 2000), new spaces need to be explored for ways to complicate how texts speak of culture, nation-state and race. This need is especially salient when *we* consider the role of the textbook in relation to the curriculum, where the textbook is, in many respects *the* curriculum (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991; Apple, 2004; Macgillivray & Jennings, 2008; Ornstein, 1994). Indeed, Hickman and Porfilio (2012) use the term “curriculum textbooks” (p. vii), a casual yet purposive conflation that points to the indelible link between the curriculum and textbooks echoing Pinto (2007) who defines the textbook, “as a bundle of curriculum artifacts, designed for use by teachers to deliver a course” (p. 100).

Yet, despite the link between curriculum and textbook, digital repositories of knowledge have become increasingly important in teaching and scholarship, suggesting that the textbook can be complemented and unsettled as the unquestioned conveyor of curriculum expectation/outcomes. Currently, there is ministry support at both the policy (Ministry of Education, 2012a) and curricular (Ministry of Education, 2005, 2006b, 2007, 2013) levels, a support that has even come to shape the ways that textbooks are talked about. In 2006, for example, the Ministry of Education's (2006a) guidelines for textbook approval made no mention of digital contexts or objects except for CD-ROMs. However, in a revised version of the document published in 2008, the Ministry of Education (2008) sought to include references to the increasingly digitally mediated world within which students and teachers learn and teach within. For instance, the revised document includes a section entitled "Conformity to Ministry Policy on Placement of URLs" (p. 6). Here, it is worth noting that the nationalist requirements set forth in the requirements for Canadian publishing and authorship continue to affect the articulation of content and meanings in curricular materials. As the revised document notes, "If URLs are provided for student use in student textbooks, they must only be URLs for websites of the federal, provincial, and/or territorial governments of Canada" (p. 6). The reasons for this are made quite clear: "These URLs are permitted in order to allow for links in student textbooks to current information, while also ensuring content reliability" (p. 6). While this points to a privileging of national sources of information, it also signals an increasing recognition that digital landscapes are becoming important sources of information.

A response to the increase in digital content and availability is the proliferation of digital textbooks (Salpeter, 2009; Warlick, 2004). As Williams (2003) points out, digital

textbooks are, “professionally produced, high-quality, multimedia-enriched, interactive products available on a CD-ROM, via the Web or both” (p. 25). While places such as South Korea are seeing widespread use of digital textbooks (Kim & Jung, 2010), adoption has been relatively slow in Canada (Ertl, 2014). Yet, regardless of the adoption rate and the demands to digitize content, digital textbooks are not the solution to the unidirectional conveyance of narratives about *us* as they don’t disrupt the transmission of hegemonic representations of culture, place and time. The solution then cannot be found in the translation of content across forms and instead requires a transformation of the paradigm to include different ways of constructing knowledge. In this sense, content should not bank knowledge, to borrow Freire’s (1970) wording, but should facilitate conversations.

What might this mean for the (re-)production of knowledge(s)? Digital online spaces, those locations in which users of the Internet are able to critically engage the meanings and representations of others through their own creations, allow for the potential creation and use of knowledges normally limited by the nationalizing and racialized narratives of the text. Beyond the curricular control that textbooks exert, these spaces can open up sites of counternarratives or counterstories (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Delgado, 1989; Gillborn, 2006b; Smith, 2014a; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Indeed, as Ibrahim (2014) argues,

We need to historicize, contextualise and situate our social reality, only then will we be able to understand and talk either with or back to others’ stories. Through telling of our own stories, counterstories, revisionist histories and parables, moreover, we are able to preserve our psyche. (p. 10)

Making possible the creation of these spaces for students enables *them* to address the intertextuality of meaning, the complicated interrelationships between disciplines, the language use and its consequences for feelings of inclusion.

From Paper to Binary: The Digital Text as Pedagogical Space

Despite its lasting presence in Ontario education as a fixture of education, Ministry policy has increasingly begun to reflect a recognition that digital media are becoming important sources of information for student populations. The revised 2012 social studies curriculum notes that information and communications technology, “represents a natural extension of the learning expectations” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 53). In a recent memorandum sent to directors of education in the province, the Ministry of Education (2012a) reported that,

Educators across Ontario are actively engaged in changing classroom, school and board practices in order to respond to changing contexts for education, to better meet changing student needs and expectations and anticipate what will be required of this generation of citizens in a knowledge-intensive and increasingly connected society. (p. 1)

Reflected here is the expectation that students need to be prepared for the “increasingly connected society” that *they* are entering in and live within on a daily basis. This would suggest that learning will (or does) involve more digital sites and tools as locations for learning, a condition increasingly being addressed in scholarship (Aitken & Radford, 2012; Corrigan, Ng-A-Fook, Lévesque, & Smith, 2013; Lévesque, 2006; McLean, Rogers, Grant, Law, & Hunter, 2014; Ng-A-Fook, Radford, Yazdanian, & Norris, 2013; Rose, 2006;

Waring & Bentley, 2012). How though might this space be beneficial beyond simple preparation for the “increasingly connected society” and to facilitate engagement with more complicated ideas of who constitutes that society?

The digital context that students will be entering/live within already is highly complex, ambivalent and ambiguous. It is pervasive, all encompassing and so structurally integral that it has become a taken-for-granted fixture of everyday life in contemporary Canada. Many of *our* students have become or already are, to borrow Prensky’s (2001) verbiage, “digital natives,” fluent and natural speakers of the, “digital language of computers, video games and the Internet” (p. 1). Much like the textbook, which has become the natural means through which to deliver curriculum in many contexts, the digital context has become a common space in which to learn about and read the world. A significant amount of research in education implies a cognizance of this in turning its attention to the ways in which education is increasingly digitally mediated. For instance, scholars of history/history education are, to an increasing extent, turning to digital technologies as a tool to teach history (Chassanoff, 2013; Lévesque, 2006; Singleton & Giese, 1999; Waring & Bentley, 2012). A turn to digital contexts as repositories of knowledge reflects not only the high ownership of connected devices by prospective teachers (Corrigan et al., 2013) but the reality that, “computers have become an essential component in the adolescent cultural toolkit” (Tynes et al., 2004, p. 668).

None of this is to argue that all digitally connected tools are beneficial for everyone nor is it to imply that issues do not exist around access. Indeed, disparities such as the digital divide are hardly new phenomena (Bredin, 2001; Sciadas, 2002). Grandhi, Jones & Hiltz (2005) elsewhere put forth a different critique, noting that *we* have reached a point of

technology overload which *they* identify as, “device proliferation and/or information overload that causes cognitive and physical burdens on human beings due to the use of multiple gadgets with multiple functions to accomplish multiple tasks in everyday activities” (p. 2291). Despite the difficulties with divisions of access and overload, growth and interest in educational scholarship has expanded around digital spaces. Specifically, a significant portion of this scholarship involves the exploration of “web 2.0” sites (Alexander, 2006; Hew & Cheung, 2013; Jimoyiannis, Tsiotakis, Roussinos, & Siorenta, 2013; Mathew, 2012; McHaney, 2011; Morgan, 2012; Pan & Franklin, 2011; Park, 2013; Solomon & Schrum, 2007; Vance, 2012; Yu, Yuen, & Park, 2012). What are these web 2.0 spaces? As Tim O’Reilly (2007) has argued, “there’s still a huge amount of disagreement about just what Web 2.0 means, with some people decrying it as a meaningless marketing buzzword, and others accepting it as the new conventional wisdom” (p. 18). Despite the conceptual confusion, one widely shared characteristic is especially beneficial—that these spaces are ones which depend on collaboration—a paradigm that is particularly advantageous in constructing responses to texts.

Simply put, these web 2.0 spaces are inherently collaborative, dependent on the user, at least in part, for the creation, remixing and dissemination of content. These web 2.0 spaces centralize and privilege the idea of social interaction, one in which dialog and interaction are key. As Alexander (2006) argues, “social” is essential to what web 2.0 signifies as much as modification and remaking. This is a key reformulation of how *we* engage with the online digital space, one that customarily followed the ‘traditional’ model in which knowledge was bestowed upon the reader from a particular vantage point and unable to be altered even if there was a desire for reflexive exchange on the part of the

reader arose. In this way, unlike a more hierarchical web in which users simply consume knowledge (what might be called “web 1.0”), reminiscent in some ways of a banking model for the web (Freire, 1970), web 2.0 applications provide space for individuals to contest, work with and re/present ideas and histories. This is not to argue that people will automatically open themselves up to new ideas and/or make these available. Indeed, scholars more than 15 years ago were already cautioning others about the attractive yet flawed notion that technology can serve as a panacea (Cohen & Lippert, 1999; Kimmel & Deek, 1995), a warning that points to the difficulties in assuming that technology automatically transforms one’s encounter with the content that is shared digitally.

Thinking carefully about this digital growth however, *we* can see how textbooks share a similar set of traits with the more traditional model of web design and interaction, a condition that might possibly be addressed by the use of “2.0” digital technologies. While more traditional pre-web 2.0 models of web design and engagement were still conducive to self-publication and expression, modes of information conveyance were still done in a way that was contingent on the production of ‘static knowledge’ that, once published, was only subject to modification by the producer. Talking back to this sort of text, much like the textbook, was substantively impossible for engagements with the texts did not unsettle the preferred meanings (Hall, 1997) of the textbooks.

The lack of dialogic possibilities intrinsic to textbooks points to the import of digital space as a social and pedagogical location that lets students be the masters of control over knowledge and lets *them* formulate or consider different perspectives relative to the unidirectional conveyance of knowledge that both textbooks and “web 1.0” make possible. Beyond this, the increasingly anachronistic technologies and print based learning resources

believe the shift in knowledge consumption and authority over the relativity of “truth.” As Solomon & Schrum (2007) note about the ‘1.0 – 2.0’ shift:

With Web 1.0, students could find information online and use it (with proper attribution, of course) to write reports using a word processor or PowerPoint. They could show their work to peers in class and parents at home and store it in portfolios on the school server. [...] Now they can write directly online in a blog and get immediate feedback from peers and others who could be anywhere. They can collaborate with peers near and far—in a wiki, also directly online. They can post photos, videos, podcasts, and other items online. The difference is that they can do the posting. *They control the tools of production and publication. There are no more gatekeepers* [emphasis added]. (p. 2)⁴

The discussion here about “web 1.0” technologies could just as easily be replaced by a discussion of textbooks. A similar limit around textbooks subject them to the same criticisms inherent here just as the technologies of “web 2.0” might address these very same problems (might is the operative word here for a medium in and of itself can’t accomplish anything). This says little about what these tools might look like though; arguing that they make agentive engagement possible doesn’t tell *us* what these tools are.

What, then, do these technologies look like?

As technologies contingent on social interaction, “web 2.0” applications permeate the online digital space as sites of knowledge production. Organized broadly, “web 2.0” technologies generally include such applications as blogs, wikis, streaming video services

⁴ Although anyone can theoretically post content, one ought to consider the quality as well. In a study of Wikipedia, Willinsky (2007) argues that writers on the wiki platform often fail to leverage research when it is made available for open access. Beyond this, sites such as Wikipedia are also regulated by a bureaucracy (see Leitch, 2014) and it is overwhelmingly Anglocentric. While such issues don’t necessarily point to irreconcilable difficulties with “open” technologies, it does suggest some cautions.

and social bookmarking websites to name a few (Kamel Boulos & Wheeler, 2007; O'Reilly, 2007). One of the constituent spaces of the web 2.0 umbrella is Wikipedia, a wiki platform designed around the integral 2.0 axiom that content production be a collaborative enterprise. As an organization whose, “mission is to empower a global volunteer community to collect and develop the world's knowledge and to make it available to everyone for free, for any purpose” (Wikimedia Foundation, 2013), the foundation responsible for the preservation and maintenance of Wikipedia strives to create a wholly collaborative community. Contrary to textbooks, where the knowledge conveyance is unidirectional, individuals here are able to “write back” to the text in question, (re-)constituting it in a way that is inclusive of particular (acute) insights. This form of knowledge production and consumption would seem to be congruent with the new ways that youth are exploring and creating knowledge. As Williamson (2013) argues, “young people today are sophisticated cultural producers of digital media, actively creating, remixing, and circulating content online in complex ways that far outstrip anything demanded of them by the traditional subject curriculum” (p. 6). It is perhaps no surprise then that wikis have been used as a means of engaging students in the knowledge construction process, prompting *them* to question the conditions of this construction and the ways in which it is dynamic, dialogic and contingent on *their* own personal understandings of the topic. For example, Gasser (2008), Moy, Locke, Coppola, & McNeil (2010) and Sweeney (2012) all discuss how Wikipedia can be used pedagogically as means for students to construct knowledge and engage in dialogue. Complementing this increasing scholarship on wikis is a trend towards open access to content in education (Corrigan & Ng-A-Fook, 2012; Willinsky, 2006), a push that signals growing interest in

public consumption and displays of knowledge (of which the wiki is one example of a medium that allows for this).

Wikis are not the only web 2.0 technology that allow for socially shared production of knowledge. Another popular example is the web log, or, as it is commonly known, the blog. Like with the wiki, individuals using blogs have relatively unfettered access to a platform through which *they* can tell *their* story and/or demonstrate *their* perceptions of a particular topic. Unlike the wiki however, the construction process is unidirectional in that the author retains control over the production of knowledge, similar to the ‘traditional’ model of production. However, personal blogs are intrinsically different from more dominant outlets such as media conglomerates in that the ability to start a blog is not limited by any sort of gatekeeper who has exclusive jurisdiction over legitimate constructions of “truth.” Like the wiki, these sites have generated considerable pedagogical and scholarly interest, an intrigue that includes everything from understanding its pedagogical value in language teaching (Gerich, 2013; Lacina & Griffith, 2012; Zawilinski, 2009) to understanding how these spaces can be locations from which to perform whiteness (Grant & Stanley, 2014).

In many respects, these technologies highlight how the Internet is a place of “anything goes” (at least in the democratic world) and given its global breadth, this “anything goes” freedom sometimes manifests itself in everything from beneficial to deplorable articulations of peoples, cultures and places (Adams and Roscigno (2005), for example, highlight the ways in which white supremacist groups have made use of digital technologies). Everything from the facilitation of explicit and abhorrent white supremacy (see also Back, 2002) to the utilization of connected tools for the production of anti-racist

spaces and responses (Deepak & Biggs, 2011; Rolón-Dow, 2011) in online digital spaces reflect social patterns in the “unconnected” world, but do so in a way that increases levels of ease through the bridging of differences, both physical, emotional and political. Combined with the reality that the digital world has implored, as Prensky (2001) argues, “today’s students [to] *think and process information fundamentally differently* from their predecessors” (p. 1), the digital world that connects youth today has redefined where and when *they* learn about the world. It is for this reason that I am interested in the possibilities that inhere within such forms for generating new ideas about the non-digital world and its consequences in validating silenced and/or non-dominant notions of the national *we* while concurrently contesting normative notions of *they/them*. In this way, I ask the following: might the digital space offer students an opportunity to contest and confront the representational siloing and macroscopic analysis that scholars frequently undertake in textbook analyses?

The online digital space, one in which dominant and counternarratives exist in tension, is a space that includes various, “sites for representations and explorations of identity, community and culture [...] where people write to each other expressing opposing and more convergent viewpoints” (Iseke-Barnes, 2002, p. 171). Confronting these divergences and convergences leads to some interesting results. Scholarship on individuals presented with divergent and nuanced views of the world offer hope for the online digital spaces as locations from which to reformulate a grammar of taken-for-granted assumptions. While some scholars help to illuminate the possible benefits of these spaces for working through notions of race and racism (Deepak & Biggs, 2011; Rolón-Dow, 2011; Tynes, 2007) others caution that moderation is needed (Tynes et al., 2004). The argument that

moderation is required to temper the prevalence of problematic assumptions from taking root and dictating the representations would suggest that in-class and teacher led discussions would be best suited for contesting troublesome discourses. However, the online space offers something that in-class experiences either cannot or can, but with considerably more difficulty and less safety (anonymity online can be powerful): co-constructed narrations of the nation or *we-ness* that can be written, re-written, responded to and written in relation to others with some semblance of possible anonymity and security.

Positioning the Internet as a free space to talk back to representations made in the textbooks used in classroom is not done without recognition that the Internet can be a place of hurt. Scholars argue that the Internet can be used to support or reproduce limited, violent and damaging representations of the “Other” (Njubi, 2001; Smith, in-press; Todd, 2014), a reality that has potential consequences for the pedagogical use of these tools. That said, with the mediation of instructors and supportive community members, these sites could be safe spaces to pick apart the ceaseless operation of dominance. Indeed, through their facilitation of co-constructed narratives, these sites can be ways for students to work out ideas together and if done so in a way that ensures respect and consideration for others, students might be able to avoid some of the damaging potentials of online digital spaces.

Digital Co-Construction

It would seem somewhat ironic to begin a discussion of the possibilities of online spaces for co-constructions by detailing the successes that came with doing a collaborative textbook project. Yet, the work of Steinberg and Bar-On (2009) serves as a means of elucidating the possibilities of co-constructing a complicated discussion of place, history

and belonging. In *their* study, Steinberg and Bar-On present the results of a team that worked to collaboratively write a textbook that included the historical narratives of both Israelis and Palestinians side-by-side⁵. The authors note that,

The final products were the result of several steps. First, each unilingual group wrote its narrative, and then these texts were translated into Arabic or Hebrew and given to the other group for feedback. After the teachers read each other's narratives, they identified and discussed parts that sounded, to them, like propaganda or misinformation or that made them feel uncomfortable or angry. The two sides then negotiated a version acceptable to both groups. (p. 107)

This process of negotiation often resulted in expected tensions that occur when epistemological and ontological considerations of history that differ are placed in opposition. However, dialogue between the two groups that exist in near persistent tension sometime led to productive considerations of opposing views and thoughts. "For example, after a heated debate," Steinberg and Bar-On note, "both sides agreed to omit from their texts detailed descriptions of civilian murders that took place on both sides during the riots in Hebron in 1936" (p. 109). All topics were not open to negotiation and indeed, when speaking about other topics, deep differences remained. Israeli teachers, for example, "described the Zionist movement as a national movement that emerged out of a need to stop Jewish suffering in the Diaspora" whereas Palestinian teachers, "described the Zionist movement as a form of European colonialism" (p. 109). Instead of ignoring this tension and establishing obstinate orientations towards each respective narrative,

⁵ Deborah Ellis (2004) wrote a book entitled *Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak* that, like Steinberg and Bar-On's work, provides narratives from both Palestinian and Israeli children about their lived experiences. Interestingly, this book has been banned in some Ontario schools (Zeitoun, 2006).

Each side argued that its obligation was to represent its group's narrative, but the participants hoped that, with the help of the teachers who would teach the texts, students would realize the difference between the two points of view and acknowledge the difficulties in reaching reconciliation on these particular issues at this time. (p. 109)

Of most interest with this method of textbook development is the creation of a space for students to respond. As the authors note, "the final textbook presents the two narratives side by side on each page, with an empty place in the middle for students to write their reactions" (p. 107).

The work of Steinberg and Bar-On points not only to the difficulties with differing narratives in one text but also to an important characteristic of the online space (and a concomitant limitation to the textbook): narratives rarely exist in isolation from others. Online spaces are often ones wherein new ways of (re-)reading a particular narrative are possible. This condition is a reflection of the changing technical and inherently social nature of the World Wide Web. This shift reflects the growth of newer "web 2.0" sites, a growth that has become increasingly interesting to scholars for its pedagogical implications (Alexander, 2006; Kamel Boulos & Wheeler, 2007; Solomon & Schrum, 2007).

None of this is to argue that necessarily disruptive notions of social and political organizations will arise, be validated and shift ways of knowing. Take nationalism for example. Despite the proliferation of a "post-national" language (Gifford, 2004; Ramirez & Meyer, 2012; Sassen, 2002; Soysal, 2012; Tambini, 2001) and increasing interest in notions of global citizenship (Heilman, 2008; Martin, Smolen, Oswald, & Milam, 2012;

McLean, Cook, & Crowe, 2006, 2008; Schweisfurth, 2006), scholars point to the persistence of nationalism online (Eriksen, 2007; Therwath, 2012). Eriksen (2007) argues:

One of the most interesting findings in recent research on Internet use is that this technology often strengthens rather than weakens national identities, and that it can be exceptionally efficient in reproducing such identities across vast distances, uniting dispersed populations in virtual communities. (p. 7)

Indeed, in his exploration of ethnopolitics online, Saunders (2011) notes that elites in national minority communities, “are [commonly] using the Web to keep the nation alive and well without attempting to ‘re-tell’ the story of the nation in a way that differs greatly from generally accepted norms both within and outside of the community” (p. 8). A similar argument can also be made about majority communities who might have a vested interest in reproducing the powerful and privileged narratives of the nation-state. None of this though precludes the contestation of national boundaries or the re-articulation of, to borrow Lakoff & Johnson’s (2003) term, the ‘ontological metaphor’ of the nation (the inscribed metaphorical bounds on what constitutes an ontological reality). Indeed, digital sites can be spaces of both discursive reproduction and contestation, something Iseke-Barnes (2002) and Kopacz & Lawton (2011) both note occurs with regards to understandings of Indigenous peoples as *they* are engaged online.

Ideally, these technologies, beyond allowing individuals to consume differing narratives of space, time, and culture, also permit individuals to produce what critical race theorists call counternarratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Delgado, 1989; Gillborn, 2006b; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), something indirectly and implicitly vouched for by Steinberg & Bar-On who worked to facilitate the genesis of a

tension in the textbook. The production and use of these digital spaces can also produce rich counternarratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Milner, 2008; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), those stories that, “present intrinsically divergent views of racialized relations,” (Smith, 2014a, p. 27) that otherwise get excluded from discussions. Rolón-Dow (2011), exploring the counternarrative potential of digital spaces, argued that students came to represent themselves in ways that resisted normalized notions of race. The stories that the students produced in this study, “challenged normalized discourses about identity, opportunity and academic success” (p. 170). Using digital spaces afforded students the opportunity to use various modalities, which Rolón-Dow (2011) argues, “can be particularly helpful as students try to narrate and illustrate the sometimes covert and coded forms that racism takes in contemporary contexts” (p. 171). This potential for counternarrative resistance to dominant stories of the *us* and the *here* is what digital spaces can afford students, a potential not necessarily available in the one-way conversation that is central in a textbook/student relationship (one in which the text tells a story and then is shielded from criticism through their, quite literal, distance from censure).

None of the above is to argue that technology is a panacea for to do so would belie the various dimensions at work that preclude particular peoples from enjoying the same access (both narratively and technologically). As Njubi (2001) argues, the tools of technology have served to both oppress and make counter-oppressive projects possible. In this way, the digital space is a location similar to any other text in that normative and resistant narratives of history, culture and politics can become entangled as well as reproduce rather contentious or ambivalent narrations. In her study of Aboriginal spaces online, Iseke-Barnes (2002) argues that “colonial misunderstandings” persist online but

also suggests that resistance is possible. In a similar vein, Kopacz and Lawton (2011) note that viewers of user-generated videos about Indigenous people in the United States enjoyed conventional portrayals and yet, *they* concurrently enjoyed counter responses to stereotypical depictions (p. 251-252).

Tynes (2007) offers a similar argument, noting that students learned quite a bit from each other in interracial encounters online. Tynes, like Deepak & Biggs (2011), also points out that increased intimacy helped the students in the study, “engage their interlocutors on both cognitive and emotional levels” (p. 1318). However, she asserts that more research needs to be done to ascertain whether or not prejudice as it manifests itself in its racialized form has the same negative consequences that it does offline. Indeed, she maintains that, “more research is needed to determine whether experiencing racial prejudice online has the same deleterious effects on adolescent well-being” (p. 1319).

What underlies the research about the possibilities of the online space is the role of normative notions and the ways in which they play an active role in structuring discussions. In my discussion of online spaces (Smith, in-press), I suggest that even those spaces with generally “left-leaning” orientations to social and political issues can reproduce uncomplicated reproductions of racialized tropes. While contestation was evident in that study, prevalent and persistent languages around common sense notions of racialized difference and naturally following “facts” about essentialized groups persisted, a set of “facts” rooted in observations of the social and political milieu of each individual respondent. Despite this, I assert that potential cracks, to borrow Grant and Stanley’s (2014) metaphor, are possible with mediation.

This project exists in the nexus between each of the aforementioned concerns; it explores the ways in which microscopic representations exist and connect across the curriculum and the ways in which to move forward in an increasingly digital age. While digital spaces may reproduce particular ways of knowing, they also engender ambivalent and counternarrative responses that can serve a productive purpose in questioning the taken-for-grantedness of *us*. Although these new digital tools are by no means a panacea, they do offer a new way of engaging text(s) in ways that, free from the shackles of publication guidelines and gatekeepers, might allow for more people to (re-)write stories about *us*. One such popular space for this type of writing is Wikipedia, a collaborative encyclopaedia of knowledge, editable by anyone with an Internet connection. No longer simply the expensive collection of books heavily relied upon by students for research reports as the authoritative source *par excellence*, the encyclopaedia as imagined by Wikipedia's creators is positioned as a democratic means of generating and disseminating knowledge of any and all topics.

Wikipedia: open but regulated. As noted earlier, Wikipedia's purpose is premised on the idea that anyone can collect, construct and disseminate knowledge of any topic. This model makes use of what Bruns (2008) calls the "produser," the producer/user who takes on different roles at different times, a model of thinking that disrupts a more linear production/consumption model. Here, users can take on a role and offer differing narratives as producers, responding to the constructed knowledge as users. In this way, *they* can open themselves up to the possibilities of differing narratives that were largely successful in Steinberg & Bar-On's (2009) study. This is not to suggest that Wikipedia is absolutely egalitarian (see Leitch (2014) for a discussion around the complications of a bureaucracy

within Wikipedia's editorial and administrative team) but rather, I argue that the space provides, at a minimum, a metaphor for a space to re-imagine what it might be like to construct identities anew.

In his ethnography of Wikipedia, Jemielniak (2014) highlights how this space can be one in which protracted debates can occur, ones that filter over into discussions of seemingly inconsequential topics. Speaking to the ways in which the team behind Wikipedia manages conflict, Jemielniak outlines a dispute around an article about the city of Gdan'sk in Poland; specifically, the dispute centers on how to refer to Gdan'sk when the historical context might suggest that the German name, Danzig, could be more appropriate. This debate lasted four years, a length of engagement which seems to emphasize the very point that seemingly inconsequential notions can be explored in depth and become the basis for extended and critical collaborations around the meanings and historical connotations of semantics. If, as Corrigan and Ng-A-Fook (2012) argue, "the ways in which knowledge is constructed, referenced, and disseminated on open sites like Wikipedia has deep curricular and pedagogical implications for both teachers and students in terms of developing their digital critical literacy practices as civically engaged cybercitizens" (p. 62), *we* ought to take seriously the idea that disputes such as these and others can have implications and can be means through which to foster critical thinking around the language that *we* use.

The two aforementioned arguments, that spaces such as Wikipedia facilitates "produsage" and can allow for extended conversations, does have to contend with editorial control and bureaucracy. Leitch (2014), discussing the bureaucracy, calls it "anti-authoritarian authority," an authority defined by a set of relations that are bureaucratic and

hierarchical within a discourse of knowledge production that explicitly dismisses the idea of authoritarian relations. This extends to the ways that articles are chosen as exemplary or worthy of “featured article” status, which reflects a privileging of content as it is presented to the users. In other words, the articles that best conform to Wikipedia’s editorial and content standards become featured or privileged articles. Similar editorial control manifests itself in the regulation of discussions; in the example above of an extended discussions over nomenclature, Jemielniak (2014) notes that although the debate extended over a long temporal period, editorial staff did lock the article as a means of quelling argumentation.

Although the presence of an editorial board and a hierarchical management team might suggest that the space is problematic, I use Wikipedia as an example of a type of tool that one could use (indeed, the software platform that powers Wikipedia, MediaWiki, is free for anyone to use on *their* own website) to engage in nascent discussions about grammatically informed identifications. What follows is a discussion of how these digital spaces might offer some possibilities for recasting how the national *we* gets presented. I do this as a response to the ways in which this national *we* is discursively constructed in textbooks and in so doing, I highlight how pedagogical materials make possible the taken-for-grantedness of the *we* that requires attention. Before doing this though, I detail the theory of racialized deictic nationalism, a framework that outlines the ways in which racialization, nationalism and deictic language are all interlinked to create a taken-for-grantedness of the national *we* in everyday language.

Chapter 3: Theorizing Racialized Deictic Nationalism

In the last chapter, I suggested that textbook analysis largely explores the operation of particular discourses of dominance in specific disciplinary areas and does so, methodologically, at the “macroscopic” level. This approach limits how the operation of persistent (re-)imaginings of *us* are analyzed and critiqued. While no project can possibly explore all possible means of discursive work, there is a need to understand the microscopic operation of nationalizing and racialized language. In this chapter, I put forth a theory of racialized deictic nationalism, a theorization that points to ways in which deictic (microscopic) language serves to reinforce and (re-)inscribe national *us-ness* through a taken-for-granted notion of a cultural, or racialized, essence central to the national self. Applied across curricular areas, I contend that this theory helps to address the concerns outlined in the previous chapter.

A national *us*, as a means of political containment and exclusion, serves to limit possibilities and means of inclusion for entire populations of people while reaffirming a sense of *us* for others. In part, the success of this is made possible through the operation of a nationalizing discourse, one that inherits and is intimately linked with practices of race/racialization (Burleigh & Wiperman, 1999; Goldberg, 2002; Miles & Brown, 2003; Rattansi, 2007). This nexus of nation and race operates in Canada (Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Stanley, 2011) as a process that ultimately plays out pedagogically in locations such as textbooks (Montgomery, 2005a, 2005b). What follows is a theorization of how this articulation, “the production of identity on top of differences, of unities out of fragments” (Grossberg, 1992, p. 54), and its consequent exclusions operate in the textbooks in a deictic fashion, a theorization that requires a discussion of four distinct but ultimately connected

concepts: discourse, nationalization, deixis and racialization. Taken together, these concepts frame what I am calling *racialized deictic nationalism*, the operation and hailing into existence national identities, woven through racializations and enacted through the linguistic context. In so doing, I extend Michael Billig's (1995, 2009) theory of banal nationalism (see also Gulliver (2011), Montgomery (2005a), Hearn (2007), Law (2001), Petersoo (2007) and Skey (2009)) to include a discussion of not only the racialized dynamics but also the pedagogical operation of this process.

Identity/Identification

Before situating the central concepts and their intersections, a comment is required on the term identity, and more specifically identification, as a means of understanding how who *we* are is a process that requires constant reproduction. Given that the analysis emphasizes the (re-)presentation of a national *we/us/them* (and its cognates). and how pronouns position participants/readers in a discussion, it is worth considering what this means for identification, both as a something represented and framed in the text and as a process that shapes and is shaped by the grammar of a racialized deictic nationalism. For the purposes of this research project, identification is understood to be a process of "becoming," (Ibrahim, 2003, 2004) one that is more about exclusion than it is unity (Hall, 1996a, p. 4). Identity differs in its fixity; whereas identification is a process, identity is a momentary snapshot of this becoming, similar to what Ibrahim (2003) describes as "being": "an accumulative memory, an understanding, a conception and an experience upon which individuals interact with the world around them" (p. 55). Any sense of unity that arises comes with a particular form of identity (or being) that is constructed, not

natural (p. 5). Indeed, as Hall (1992) reminds us, “national cultures *construct* [emphasis added] identities by producing meanings about ‘the nation’ with which we can identify” (p. 613), an argument pointing to the ways in which *we* are made to have stable or concise articulations of identity. It is for this reason that the term “national identity” has considerably greater social purchase than “national identification” for to use the latter term would acknowledge the continual contingency of nationalism and fail to account for its tenuous existence as something “always becoming” what it is. Indeed, as a product of modernity, the nation has inherited the “modern problem of identity” which, according to Bauman (1996), preoccupies itself with “how to construct an identity and keep it solid and stable” (p. 18).

Like many scholars (Angus, 1997; Hearn, 2007; Hecht, 2001; King, 2000; Law, 2001), I use the term “national identity” not as a means of further reifying the national identification but instead, I use the term as a way of signifying how texts present the process of a nationalizing identification as an accomplished fact, one in which who *we* are can be summed up, racialized and made self-evident. Contrary to this however, national identity is not an objective and socio-culturally independent construct but instead, is a consequence of discourse. Once again, Hall (1992) has a particularly insightful argument, concisely noting that, “a national culture is a discourse—a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conceptions of ourselves” (p. 613). While speaking of culture, the discursive essence ascribed to culture can also be said to apply to identity. What though is a discourse?

Discourse

Discussions of racialized deictic nationalisms, at its heart, are a *Discursive* (capitalization is purposive) process. In this way, beyond simply connoting the existence of text and talk, *Discourse*, more importantly, needs to be understood as something that accomplishes and facilitates the establishment of social identities through the representations of language. As Gee (2012) argues, *Discourses*, signified by a purposive capitalization to distinguish *them* from discourses (as per Gee), create meanings about life and the world; *Discourses* serves as a productive method of meaning-making through language and representation. Gee (2012) argues that these *Discourses* cannot be the consequence of formal instruction; instead, “Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction but by enculturation (‘apprenticeship’)” (p. 167). It is this process of “apprenticing” someone into a nationalizing form of life that this project seeks to unravel.

This definition mirrors the poststructural conceptual uptake of discourse as an analytic term, where discourse is understood to be, “the constructor and constituter not just of ‘reality’ but also of our ‘selves’” (Strega, 2005, p. 217) beyond more common notions of discourse as simply ‘text and talk.’ What is essential is the constitution of subjectivities outlined here, an argument that illuminates how *we* do not exist beyond *Discourse*. For this reason, I turn to Gee’s (2008, 2012) conception of Discourse as a starting point for understanding the Discourse of Canadian identification with a particular focus on the articulation of Discourse with what he calls a “form of life.”

For Gee (2008, 2012), Discourses extend beyond text and talk (lower case d discourse) and include the patterns of life that are constituted and lived as a consequence of particular ways of talking and representing the world. As he argues, “Discourses are ways

of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities” (2008, p. 3, 2012, p. 3).

Gee asserts that Discourses are “forms of life” and consequently, they become “socially situated identities” (Gee, 2008, p. 3, 2012, p. 3). Being a student, for example, is a Discursive “form of life” – there is a particular expectation of behaviour, interaction, thinking, speaking and use of language that comes with identification as a student.

Discourses, here, are intimately tied to social contexts (and indeed, are constitutive of how *we* are in these contexts) and in so being, they frame the ways in which people act and are expected to act. Consequently, the ways *we* behave, think, and ascribe value to identities and ideologies are the result of Discourse. The patterns of language then shape social identities; how I talk, act and interact with historic, political, geographic, scientific knowledge are all structured by Discourse. I like others, inherent a social identity, a form of life, and am given a particular relationship to a Discourse. National forms of life are no different – how Canadians behave, interact, believe and write about others as Canadians are rooted in a socially situated notion of what it means to be Canadian, which gets reproduced through its continual instantiation. This is not to argue that individuals inhabit a single Discursive location and indeed, *we* can and do occupy multiple Discourses. Rather, I argue that a nationalizing one is a central organizing and identifying Discourse in a modern world.

Important to note are the ways in which the identification as a social individual, one whose “form of life” is determined by the operation of Discourse, connotes epistemic involvements. In other words, the discursive regulation and creation of a particular “form of life” imbues in an individual within that Discourse particular epistemological

dispositions and expectations that *they* follow particular patterns normal to that form of life. As Gee (2008) argues, the instantiation of identities allows *us* to be social creatures of a particular sort; they, “are ways of being ‘people like us’” (p. 3). To be “one of *us*” is to follow a similar discursive pattern, a condition that ultimately frames how it is that *I/we/us/them/they* think and act. This assertion is easily observable in common social practice, visible with a moment of consideration. Take, for example, watching an ice hockey game in a pub with others who have some association with ice hockey. In this context, one talks, acts, is a heightened ice hockey fan “form of life” and can converse, engage and socialize with relative ease. The knowledge and language practices of the ice hockey fan are also framed by *their* understanding of the game, the social practices that come with watching a game, how one interacts with other like-minded (or not so like minded) fans and ultimately, as Adams (2006) notes, by gendered and racialized assumptions about the sport. Whereas “hockey fan” is a Discourse inherently learned through one’s engagement with sports and other social institutions, I argue that the national Discourse is a foundational “form of life” that becomes an oft used means of defining an *us*. It does so within a social, political and cultural context that partakes in a repetition of nationalism, a concept to which I now turn.

Nationalization

In a CBC article written shortly after the Ontario provincial election campaign began in 2014, Robert Fisher argued that Kathleen Wynne oriented herself combatively towards the Canadian government. Near the conclusion of his piece, Fisher wrote the following:

Wynne's challenge then will be to wrap the three — Horwath, Hudak and, Harper — into one package of, if you will, neglect for the province's plight. But not to — as she herself puts it — get 'bogged down' in a campaign fight with the federal government. But that should not be seen as her backing away from a fight. That would not be Wynne's style, especially when it comes to her desire to create an Ontario Retirement Pension Plan — aware that Ontarians often consider themselves Canadians first and Ontarians second. (Fisher, 2014, n.p.)

In an unrelated article speculating on the roots of the hit television series *Doctor Who*, Spacing Magazine published a piece entitled, "The Torontonians roots of Doctor Who — the Canadian behind the legendary TV show" (Bunch, 2013). At first glance, these two media excerpts have little in common. However, they both rely on what I argue is a commonly shared Discourse, a widely assumed collective "form of life" that is intelligible and knowable by many however difficult it might be for many to define (Sumara, Davis, & Laidlaw, 2001). Primarily, both defer to the national identification as quintessentially important in identifying the individual. In the Fisher piece, residents of Ontario are unabashedly positioned as Canadians first, Ontarians second, a positioning that, through the capacity for representation to articulate with and manifest reality, contributes to the process of making it so. In the second example, the text has situated the roots of a popular television show in Toronto, a development undertaken by a Canadian (and not a resident of Toronto). Here, the individual is identified as a Canadian who gave the show roots in Toronto, an identification that likely has little consequence for the characters or content of

the show itself. In each case, the national space occupies a spot as a Discourse of interest, one whose explanatory power exists without question.

In each of these examples, the text has undertaken a particular discursive technique, wherein a “form of life” is given to people who inhabit a particular space. This “form of life” is the national variety, a version that entails the idea of a shared culture and behaviour along with a collective recognition of shared membership (Gellner, 2006) that gets re(made) into a process of nationalizing, or making people/groups into nationals. These examples illustrate a particularly uninspired form of nationalizing, or making into nationals, one that goes unquestioned as an identification that can “be so” without any contestation. In other words, the texts produce classes of people who will respond (however passively and inwardly) with “of course I’m Canadian,” a process made possible in part by the continual operation of nationalizing discourses or what Michael Billig (1995) calls “banal nationalism.” For Billig (1995), banal nationalism is signalled and made possible by, “the ideological habits which enable the established nations of the West to be reproduced,” a process that, “far from being an intermittent mood in established nations, is the endemic condition” (p. 6). The endemic nature of nationalism as *we* know it is possible through the reproduction of the nation and its articulation in rather subtle and uninspired ways. Indeed, Billig (1995) argues that, “nationalism has seeped into the corners of our consciousness; it is present in the very words which we might try to use for analysis” (p. 12). For this reason, Billig argues that the use of language needs to be assessed especially in light of his suggestion that nationalism makes language a taken-for-granted aspect of life. This taken for grantedness is what makes nationalism so successful – it becomes the obvious means through which to organize understandings of the world. Nationalism’s

obviousness also demands of it subjects the imaginings of connection to those who do not appear to share any bond other than identification and ascription of particular national identities (Anderson, 2006).

The national context becomes obvious through its continual persistence in the language and visuals *we* use; the national condition is one that becomes a taken-for-granted state of being, a Discursive reality shared by all. It becomes the unexceptional reality for what *we* know, how *we* know and why *we* know what *we* do about the world and the forms of life that live within it. As Billig (1995) argues, “national identity in established nations is remembered because it is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind, or ‘flag’, nationhood” (p. 38). “The remembering,” Billig argues, “not being experienced as remembering, is, in effect, forgotten” (p. 38). The routinization of national existence is successful because it is not seen as routinely remembered, a process that he argues is established in the patterns of life or what might also be called the “forms of national life”.

In his theorization, Billig talks about one particular strategy of this routinization that is of particular interest. Speaking about the ways in which *we* talk about the nation, Billig (1995) reminds *us* that the national *we* needs to be constructed, something that depends on its imagination (Anderson, 2006). For this reason, the italicization of *we* is done purposively; the national *we* is an inherently fictional character, one continually reimagined and made real through the continual re-articulation of its existence. It exists only through its use, is relative to the context and it has no consequences outside of its use in discourse. For this reason, the grammar is marked off as separate stylistically to signal its near omnipresence and the ways that it creeps into conversations despite its necessary re-imagining.

When its reification is accomplished, and the national *we* becomes simply *we*, the national life has become the primary form of life, or, as Gee (2008, 2012) would call it, the primary Discourse. While the national “form of life” is an imagined category whose existence requires cognitive work, it becomes representative of an intelligibly understood group of people who *feel real*. They feel real in their connection to who *we* are for, “they or there are *ways of recognizing and getting recognized* as certain sorts of *whos* doing certain sorts of *whats*” (Gee, 2012, p. 153). Billig (1995) argues something similar, suggesting that, “to claim to be a nation is to imagine one's group to fit a common, universal pattern” (p. 85).

The certain sort of *who* or *whom* one is begins, at birth, in relation to the nation-state context – one’s citizenship as a national is established at birth – and continues throughout life until death at which time legal obligations to the nation-state (such as tax and estate law) continue to determine one’s existence in the world. One’s national identification becomes, to borrow the words of Berger & Luckmann (1966), “the reality *par excellence*” or “the reality of everyday life”, a “privileged position [which] entitles it to the designation of paramount reality” (p. 35). This processes of feeling real is largely forgotten primarily because the vocabulary of nationalism seeps into every corner of *our* language practices. What though does this language and vocabulary look like?

Deixis

Part of the, “psychology of the unnoticed” (Billig, 2009, p. 349) that is the existence and reproduction of the nation is the deictic reproduction of the national *us*. To explain the ways in which this is made possible, Billig (1995) introduces the idea of deixis, or what

others such as Nunberg (1993) might call indexicals, to the conversation on nationalism, a linguistic concept that highlights ways in which particular words derive their specific meaning from the context in which they are used. O’Keeffe, Clancy and Adolphs (2011) note that, “deixis is associated with context outside the text [...] and, therefore, the referent is generally located in the situational or background knowledge context” (p. 45). In speaking about the operation of this deixis, Billig (1995) argues that, “the crucial words of banal nationalism are often the smallest: 'we', 'this' and 'here',” or, the words of deixis (p. 94). These words are crucial for the very reason that they are often unnoticed but necessary, used with ease and largely uncontested in everyday speech because they exist in relation to the background knowledge outside of texts and serve a functional grammatical and linguistic purpose by positioning subjects in relation to ideas/statements. Indeed, as Law (2001) argues, “for valorization, nations depend on the force of deictic repetition and familiarity” (p. 301). Compounding this is the semantic and grammatical necessity of these crucial words, often used to point to various groups with very little consideration for what the implications of their use might be.

Understanding the operation of these deictic words and their role in the reproduction of the form of life that is the nationalizing discourse becomes the primary scholarly challenge for, “this deixis of little words makes the world of nations familiar, even homely” (Billig, 1995, p. 94). The necessity of this language in discourse helps make possible the “homely-ness,” a condition which connotes freedom from regular critique, an implication that suggests unrestrained and rather pervasive employment of deictic reproduction of the nation and its concomitant identification.

What makes this process of deictically reaffirmed nationalism possible is the ease with which it is uncontested and continually (re-)used to frame *our* form of life. Its use does not even have to be politically laden; as Hearn (2007) discovers in his study, “nationalism appears ‘banal’ when it is articulated outside the sphere of the formal politics of interest groups, parties and the state” (p. 662), suggesting that national language frequently exists outside of the “obvious” realm, permeating discourses thought not to be its *discourse par excellence*. Take something like the following, likely uttered (in some variant) after the Olympic gold medal ice hockey game at the 2014 Winter Olympics: “we won the gold medal, *we* are the best in the world at hockey.” This statement is hardly political but it creates conditions necessary to understand both the existence of the nation and something essential to its existence. *We* exist, a country that is bounded and limited, to borrow Anderson’s (2006) terminology, and *we* are ostensibly better than other locations, that are equally bounded and limited, at hockey. The national *we* has become an ontological metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003), a metaphor for a particular space and idea that has become ontologically real. Any contestation of this statement may involve confronting the “bestness” of Canada in hockey or how much *we* deserved the gold medal but little is likely to be said about the passive use of the word *we* to communalize and characterize a group of people who share an ostensibly common form of life. In other words, the “bestness” of *us* at hockey might be contested but the fact that it is an *us* that exists in relation to this “bestness” itself is not. This connection is made possible through the continual and universalizing capacity of nationalizing discourses (Billig, 1995), ones that reach into *our* perceptions of life to encourage imagined connections with other nationals (Anderson, 2006), the consequence of which is the creation of nationally shared

forms of life that create conditions in which it becomes obvious that *we* exist and are good (or not) at ice hockey.

The operation of deixis as a technique of banal nationalizing occurs in a variety of ways. O’Keeffe et al. (2011) point to a number of deictic categories that serve to create meanings from context. For O’Keeffe et al. (2011), the three most common types of deictic language are person, place and time (p. 44), the first studied at length here, the last two are the focus of an analysis chapter. Person deixis (eg. *I, you/your, they/them, we/us/our* and possibly *the*) points to individuals, a referent that O’Keeffe et al. (2011) note is extraordinarily common in language. These words point to specific people, potentially framing characterizations, discussions, arguments or even ideological presumptions or ascriptions about particular individuals or people by *their* presence in the context. Thinking about nationalizing, for example saying that “O Canada, we stand on guard for thee,” a *we* whose presence in the context of the national anthem is the nationalizing variant (as made so by the “O Canada”), implies that many of *us* are about to do something that, as the rest of the statement suggests, involves guarding the nation. Indeed, to speak of oneself or others is likely to include personal deictic language. However, the prominence of such language in commonly circulated discourses suggests that nationalizing language, when used, will commonly draw in personally deictic phrasing. Indeed, O’Keeffe et al. (2011), citing the *Limerick Corpus of Irish English*, suggest that five of the twenty most common words are person deictic words (p. 44), a condition of linguistic prominence that points to its likely common presence in nationalizing language.

The second type of deictic word is the place deictic (eg. *here, there* and possibly *the*). Place deixis concerns the arrangement of objects and spaces in relation to people.

With reference to the deictic centre, the individual at the centre of a phrase (commonly *I*) around which things are oriented, O’Keeffe et al. (2011) note that place based deictic language is often articulated in relation to the current or relevant location of the speaker. The individual does not have to be the centre however as place deixis can operate between two different objects independent of people (eg., “it is *above* the table”). Of interest however are the ways that people are positioned in relation to the nationalized context, and specifically, the ways in which particular representations position people in association with spaces such as a *here* or a *there*, a bifurcation that locates people either within or beyond the representation of an *our* form of life.

Finally, there is the time deictic (eg. *then*, *now* and possibly *the*). This form of deictic concerns the articulation of time in relation to objects and people, an articulation that, “needs to be considered in relation to the time at which the communicative act takes place” (O’Keeffe et al., 2011, p. 50). Time deixis, like place deixis, involves distance and specifically, a proximal and distal location. Proximal locations are those that are close to the current moment whereas distal forms are located in distant time periods. This form of deixis works to locate people and object in time periods, whether it be “later today” or “back then,” both of which necessitate sufficient context for the phrases to have effective and useful meaning. Given that nations are historic constructs with socially imagined beginnings (Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995; Gellner, 1983, 1996, 1997), the discourses articulated about the subjectivities that exist within it will be located temporally either in relation to its genesis, development or current existence.

Each of these forms—person, place and time—all frame the relationship between people and *their* locations. Since the nation is a social creation, one predicated on the

interrelationship between people and the spaces that *they* occupy discursively, spatially and temporally, these three forms of deixis are of particular interest. Given the pre-eminence of the words that form the basis of these three forms, person, place and time deixis shape frequently asserted assumptions about the who, where and when of nationalizing discourses.

A special consideration should be given to what is called social deixis though as a means of exploring just how powerful deictic language can be at establishing, creating and reinforcing socially imagined identifications. Social deixis, as O’Keeffe et al. (2011) argue, “can contain information about the conversational participants such as age, sex, kin relationship, social class or ethnic group” (p. 55). In *their* example, *they* discuss the social deictic “baby boy,” a phrase that has, encoded within it, a variety of meanings including the relatively youthful/infantile age of the child, the gender and the notion that it has a relationship with a parental figure. It may also point to assumptions of cognitive/intellectual capacities (likely assumed to be rather limited relatively), social interests (minimal beyond those with whom *they* have established a strong bond) and disposition towards certain activities (sleeping, eating, etc.). The total collection of possible assumptions in a social deictic occurs within nationalizing discourse as well and does so through the primary referent of this discourse. In this project, the social deictic of interest is the word “Canadian” itself, a word that manifests particular understandings and assumptions by its very presence in a sentence. In proclaiming “I am Canadian,” *I* draw upon, however involuntarily, an inventory of socially created tropes and understandings to describe my relationship with the context.

Taken together, this collection of words can manufacture orientations and shape discursive forms of life such that individuals within these forms are assumed to have particular temporal, spatial and personal dimensions. When uttered in relation to a nationalizing discourse, again what Billig (1995) notes as crucial to its rather uncontested reproduction in every corner of the common sense mentality of everyday life, these words serve to frame not only an *us/we/here*, etc. as relevant but commonly as nationally relevant. In other words, the pre-eminence of a national *us*, *we* and its cognates serves to, on a regular basis, circumscribe understandings of the national space and the orientations of people to it.

An important facet of deictic language is its intrinsically oppositional or binaried nature. This type of language necessarily calls into existence the dichotomization of populations, places and times by limiting the scope of representation. In saying *we*, a *them* comes into existence as the opposition; by articulating a *now*, *we* create a chronology inclusive of a *then* that isn't *now*; by speaking of a *here*, *we* implicate a *there* as part of a relationship with *here* that isn't *here*.

A language for this process—containers—can be found in Lakoff & Johnson's (2003) seminal linguistic work on metaphors. In *their* piece, Lakoff & Johnson discuss the idea of container metaphors, a language around understanding how things can be bounded through the use of particular language. *They* argue that what *we* see as 'containers,' various things that can be entered or left without, necessarily, real and concrete boundaries, are metaphorical. The delimitation of a park, for example, is metaphorical for nothing limits the bounds of the field beyond what *we* impose upon that field. Consequently, orientations to these are metaphorical in that the reality of *them* is not concrete, tangible or existent

beyond social or political convention; instead, the reality is ascribed and made real. Importantly, this theorization of the metaphorical existence of containers suggests imposed bounds, an assertion that points to the arbitrary delimitation of space and indeed time. Because of this, *we* create a language around orientation towards these containers, a language that, by consequence, involves orientations to spaces, times, discourses/Discourses, etc. beyond and within bounded areas. The national space can be thought of in this way as a space bounded and afforded an orientational language that can be used to position people in relation to the metaphor that is the national form of life. A consequence of this is the creation of groups within and beyond, a condition that requires a process of defining difference.

Racialization

Thus far, I have described the ways in which Discourses, as forms of life, shape how individuals act, think and “be” in the world of which the nationalizing variant forms a constituent part in a contemporary world. In part, this routinization of national forms of life is accomplished through the use of deictic language, subtle and often uncontested⁶ uses of language that reminds people of *their* various orientations to the metaphorical bounded space of the nation (see Lakoff & Johnson (2003) for a discussion of metaphor and its role in establishing spatial and orientational boundaries). What’s missing is a “theory of process,” one which explains how it is that the nationalizing form of life comes to take shape and how this then is used to define inclusion or exclusion from the deictically

⁶ I use uncontested here not to suggest that problematic language has remained, until this project, unquestioned in scholarship. For example, Trimble (1990) notes that feminists have been contesting representations of women “in earnest” in the media since at least the 1970s (p. 327). Similarly, Njubi (2001) notes that an “anti-slavery discourse” has existed since the 18th century. Rather, I use uncontested as a means of pointing to the ways that this language often goes unquestioned in curricular materials themselves.

defined national space. In this project, this “theory of process” is rooted in theories of racialization, a theoretical means of understanding how “linguistic performances” play a role in marking difference (Stanley, 2002, p. 146). As Stanley (2000) notes, this process doesn’t necessarily need to involve “races” and can include such “non-racial” classifications as those based on linguistic delineations such as English and French distinctions (pp. 95-96). Miles and Brown (2003) remind *us* of this somatically non-exclusive definition, arguing that racialization is about delineating ostensibly naturally occurring categories that, although frequently bodily in nature, requires only, “a process of categorisation [and] a representational process of defining an Other” (p. 101).

The connection between race and the nation(-state) has long been theorized as a symbiotic relationship, one in which one element has become essential in the reproduction of the other (Montgomery, 2005a; Omi & Winant, 1994; Schick & St. Denis, 2005). In Ontario specifically, discussions and experiences of race and difference are often fraught with ambivalences or difficulties that reproduce particular relations of dominance and conflict (Harper, 1997; Pinto, 2012; Van De Kleut, 2011). Ontario, as the most multicultural province in Canada (Government of Ontario, 2013), is a complex socio-cultural space wherein cultural diversity has become the essential feature of Ontario identity in common articulations of its cultural makeup. To be an Ontarian and Canadian is to be a member of this multicultural space. Such is the enigma of the national and provincial space – representations of diversity shroud deep-seeded discontent with difference. Such an argument implies that difference can be defined, operationalized and mobilized to limit inclusion within particular forms of life in Canada.

The means through which a connection between *us* and a national context is made possible is through a process of racialization (Stanley, 2014), one through which a *we* can be more stringently defined, creating a *them* that fits within limits and/or exists beyond intelligible limits. Theories of racialization differ in their nuances (see Barot & Bird, 2001) but agree in principle on various processes or conditions. Primarily, scholars agree that racialization involves the representation of groups as different on grounds that are rather arbitrary (Miles & Brown, 2003; Montgomery, 2005a). Although historically this has often been accomplished on somatic grounds, shifts since the scholarship on the “new racism” emerged as a term points to increasingly varied categories including cultural grounds upon which to delineate difference. Raby (2004) notes that this new racism has as its focus, “immutable cultural difference,” a process often tied to national contexts (pp. 376-377). Herein lies the first defining character of racialization as it is used here: delineation of difference along arbitrary lines (commonly cultural) that become immutable or, as Stanley (2012) elsewhere calls them, “inescapable ascriptions.” This inescapability manifests itself in categorizations that hold tremendous social currency, explanatory potential that seems to make sense despite the presence of evidence (however masked through ideology) that these ascriptions are just that, imposed labels defined using criteria that are no more explanatory than any other.

For the process of delineation to work, the categories need to appear not only immutable but obvious. Here, racialization operates through the creation of essentialist notions of what constitutes a naturally occurring category. Essentialism, “a presumption that such identities – such as those of gender, ethnicity or sexuality – are inherent and cannot change” (van Dijk, 2009b, p. 178), forms the basis for success of racialization as a

process through which arbitrary cultural differences become obvious. Although notions of strategic essentialism are argued as a potential benefit in work against racialization and racism (Dei, 1999), others reject the operation of essentialism (Kane, 2007). Regardless of its possibilities or limits in work against racialized difference, its existence as a process inherent to racialization is nevertheless present.

This work of essentialism acts in relation to cultural difference and is by no means exclusive to easily observable forms of difference. As Pascale (2008) reminds us,

People who would never talk about race as a biological phenomenon can be quite comfortable characterizing race as culture—something apparently quite different from biology. Yet it is the very way that older notions of biological races work through related discourses of nation that enables people to talk about race as culture.

Cultural essentialism comes to replace biological essentialism. (pp. 731-732)

Here, Pascale touches on the ways in which essentialist practice can operate in an ostensibly race blind space such as Canada. In the Canadian national space, racialized categories operate everywhere from immigration policy (Abu-Laban, 1998) to the media (Henry & Tator, 2002) and yet, Canadian scholars continually point to the ways in which blindness fails to recognize the salience of racialized essential difference (Daniel, 2009; Montgomery, 2013; Phelan & Luu, 2004; Schick & St. Denis, 2005). In this way, it is easy to justify unquestioned racialized existence for, if racialized differences are essential, why question or look critically at their existence (especially in an age of ostensible somatic blindness)?

Finally, racialization only becomes possible with constant reproduction. Without reminders of race, racialized categorizations of socially defined groups risk dissolving,

shifting or becoming untenable. As a historically constituted category of social existence (Banton, 1998; Hannaford, 1996), a language of racialization needs to be established, reinforced and made self-evident on a continual basis. As scholars have noted, this is possible in part through language practices (Hill, 2008; Rizvi, 1993) that facilitate and naturalize the language of race. The rather passive and uncontested use of *us* and *them* serves to (re-)create racialized boundaries between groupings, a process that supports the naturalizing and essentializing of racial categories, a process Hall (1997) notes as contingent on the reduction of cultures to Nature (p. 245). This naturalization serves to “*fix* ‘difference,’ and thus *secure it forever*” (Hall, 1997, p. 245). In this sense, the continual linguistic and discursive presence of racialized language reifies distances between groups, making a racialized “form of life” appear normative and necessary for social and political comprehension. The perfect example of this is the success of making normative a condition only possible through continual reimagining as such: the existence of “raceless” racialized whiteness. Scholars commonly point to the ways that racialized white students can mark themselves as without race (Rebollo-Gil & Moras, 2006; Winans, 2010), a condition only made possible through on-going reminders that such evidently incorrect assumptions are in fact defensible. It is no surprise then that critical discourse analysts have applied considerable efforts at evaluating the discursive manifestations of racial categories and its cognate racism (van Dijk, 1992, 2002, 2009a; Wodak & Reisigl, 1999, 2001).

This process of racialization is indelibly tied to the Discursive process outlined earlier. Since Discourse is a form of life that furnishes *our* social practices with a language with which to represent and talk about the ‘Other,’ racialization can be understood as a way of delineating and marking difference that creates, contains and shapes how *we* see other

“forms of life.” The language that *we* use to talk about a natural and essential *us* linguistically marks an *us* that has a particular cultural and social character that others don’t. Indeed, as Stanley (2011) argues, language doesn’t point to inherent differences but “it creates the idea of such difference” (p. 8).

Racialized Deictic Nationalism

The confluence of these theoretical concepts forms the basis of what is explored in this project. Together, the conceptual frame establishes a theory of racialized nationalism, one rooted in producing and defending a Discursive form of life, itself made possible with the essentialist categorization of people through the employment of deictic language. In saying that *we* are Canadian, *we* (being the speaker and the imagined group of Canadians) frame and make possible a representation of *us* as a form of life that depends on an inventory of understandings about the *us*, all made possible through rather uninspired yet essentialist and continually utilized deixis. By working in a manner that is not only taken-for-granted but easily argued to be necessary, racialized deictic nationalism reinforces *us-ness* with little resistance by resorting to essentialized, natural and continually reproducible conceptions of the *us*. Its capacity to assemble and bring forth notions of *us* makes possible a language of *us* that doesn’t need to be explicitly taught. What *we* are is accomplished without formalized education. While geographic, scientific, mathematical or language arts discourses are explicitly taught, the collection of meanings that make *us us* are amassed through everyday language, serving to quell large scale dissensus by making dissent appear special or not normal. In this sense, the national *we* is a product of a hidden curriculum (Apple & King, 1977; Apple, 2004). As Smith (1999) reminds us, “the organization of

school knowledge, the hidden curriculum and the representation of difference in texts and school practices all contain discourses which have serious implications for indigenous students as well as for other minority ethnic groups” (p. 11). In other words, making the *us* normal through a hidden curriculum of racialized deictic nationalism creates the non-normative *them*, a proposition with not insignificant consequences.

This racialized deictic nationalism that frames the discursive container known as “Canadian,” the form of life that structures much of what *we* know of each other/Other, informs how *we* conceive of the other/Other within the confines of an artificially (in its existence as an artifact of political will, not in its lived consequences) delimited national context. Nationalism articulated through the use of deictic language, comes to occupy cognitive processes when considering social, political and historical space. This is to say that categories of space are commonly and unavoidably national in nature, made possibly by the naturalization inherent to racialization (Montgomery, 2005a). It colonizes *our* minds and frames what *we* see as *our* world. What is needed methodologically then are two things. First, a methodological framework must attend to the language’s preferred meaning (Stuart Hall, 1997), providing tools and insights that take into consideration not just how language texts are organized but the socio-political consequences of such purposive organization. Second, the methodological framework must also attend to the idea that discursive patterns of racialized deictic nationalism are successful only because this model of social conception occupies *our* minds, striking from possibility the idea that there can be any other way of understanding *us* and *them*. The work of Teun van Dijk (1981, 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996, 2002, 2006a, 2006b, 2009a, 2009b), in particular, is of tremendous use

here, specifically in its articulation of a critical encounter with the cognitive consequences of the (re-)production of discourse.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Method

To analyze the representation of racialized deictic nationalism as a means of shaping the primary form of social life *here*, I undertake an analysis of textbooks and online digital spaces as a potential reserve for counternarratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Delgado, 1989; Gillborn, 2006a; Smith, 2014a). To better understand how the process of racialized deictic nationalism occurs, I looked at two sets of texts. I first examine textbooks authorized for use in Ontario to establish and elucidate patterns of enacted racialized deictic nationalism. Following this, I explore one particular online discussion space, Wikipedia, as a potential location from which to conceptualize a means for students to create digital counternarratives (Rolón-Dow, 2011) or to re-tell the deictically delimited *us*. The textbooks were chosen as representative artefacts of “official knowledge” (Apple, 1993, 2000; Rezai-Rashti & McCarthy, 2008) and as their unofficial but still de-facto existence as a guide for curriculum implementation. The digital site was chosen as a possible response to the language acts of the textbooks primarily because it operates beyond the purview of state control and because it affords students the opportunity to respond to claims made about nationalist constructions directly in relation to those who author commentaries or assertions about said condition. In effect, I suggest that Wikipedia serves as a possible site for ‘levelling the representational playing field.’

To analyze these texts, I explore some of the tenets of critical discourse analysis as a justification for choosing these sites as analytic objects. As Clough & Nutbrown (2007) note, “one of the tasks for a methodology is to explain and justify the particular methods used in a given study” (p. 28). For the purposes of this project, I suggest that critical discourse analysis serves as a powerful framework through which to tease out the nuances

and prompt questions around the instantiations of racialized deictic nationalism. By providing a set of questions and insights around the imposition and capacities of language for representing “reality,” critical discourse analysis helps to explain why and how it is that I chose and read the texts analyzed.

Critical Discourse Analysis Methodology: Access, Dominance and Cognition

Zeus Leonardo (2004), in arguing for the necessity of analyzing white supremacy, directs *us* to consider the need to explore modes of discourse: “the hidden curriculum of whiteness saturates everyday school life and one of the first steps to articulating its features is coming to terms with its specific modes of discourse” (p. 144). Although not the emphasis of his larger argument about the inherent need to assess enactments of white supremacy when considering privilege, Leonardo touches upon an important methodological point. The suggestion that “specific modes of discourse” are essential analytic points from which to contest supremacy applies here to understanding the operation of the banal form of life that is the racialized deictic Canadianness. Specifically, its contours require scrutiny so as to tease out the ways they evoke a particularly saturated hidden curriculum of national belonging and exclusion.

Analyzing the (re-)production of racialized deictic national forms of life, as noted earlier, requires a framework that privileges language in use and the cognitive possibilities of such language practices. These requirements suggest and point to the work of Teun van Dijk and his work on a sociocognitive formulation of critical discourse analysis. Specifically, I use his work to frame the sorts of questions that were asked during the reading of the respective texts.

The creation of national categories, first and foremost, requires a consideration of the ways that particular people have the means to situate themselves and others in relation to the national inventory of deictic framings. Here, *we* must firstly consider the notion of access to this discourse, a concept that van Dijk (1993, 1996) explicitly articulates with social power as a constituent component of its operation. While everyone has access to the vocabulary of racialized deictic nationalism, particular discourses and histories of *this* space have privileged access to these words, a privilege that allows these discourses and histories to define the meaning of these deictics and produce certain represented truths over other meanings. While all people can use the language of racialized deictic nationalism, particular meanings, histories, politics and representations have particular privileges to define what constitutes the “baseline” for other uses of the language. Van Dijk (1996) intimates this, arguing that access to particular discourses can be, “analysed in terms of the topics or referents of discourse, that is, who is written or spoken *about*” (p. 86). Certain topics and referents and about whom these topics and referents commonly speak take priority over others, or, they become the “baseline” from which taken-for-granted notions of the world arise.

Van Dijk (1996) details a schema for understanding patterns of access, a model that helps to understand how the resources of language can regulate the operation of racialized deictic nationalism. The first step is planning, wherein the minutiae of discourse is organized according to elements such as setting, agenda and willing participants. Thinking about textbooks, those who have the opportunity to write, regulate and dictate the use of content in the textbooks have particular privileges in this regard. Online spaces, while more democratic with regards to access and its foundational principles (Berners-Lee, 2010;

Smith, in-press), are still regulated by those who operate the domains and the collective imposition of dominant ideals of the editors. However, these sites can be organized more horizontally (everyone occupying a more or less equitable position) than the rather vertical relationship (top-down, dictating content from the centre outwards with no chance of responding back inwards by the reader) intrinsic to textbooks (see earlier recognition of the editorial control inherent in places such as Wikipedia).

Second, van Dijk argues the setting that a discourse occurs in regulates elements of access. Here, considerations such as participant roles and the inclusion of limited participants themselves structure the relationship individuals have to the resources of discourse. Once again, ministry officials (in *their* role as framers of curriculum and textbook policy) along with authors have particular privileges when it comes to dictating the setting by limiting everything from the topics for discussion to the very arrangement of text and visuals on a page. Teachers play a role in this regard as well, teaching in relation (if *they* so choose) to the textbooks. Online spaces, such as Wikipedia, allow for more equitable access to the establishment of settings. While Wikipedia entries follow and mandate particular templates, access to the capacity to dictate some elements of the setting is possible for a larger group of people. Beyond this, most people who have access to the World Wide Web have the possibility of creating *their* own settings, something very much limited by not only the gatekeeping intrinsic to publishing but also the regulatory ambitions and interests of educational policymakers. Once again, as noted by Leitch (2014) and Jemielniak (2014) earlier, this is not to present an idyllic conception of equitable access; rather, the online space offers greater opportunities for those normally excluded from textual production to voice a view or dissenting narrative.

Thirdly, van Dijk contends that *we* need to consider the control of communicative events. Here, *we* are asked to analyze the ways that texts and discourses themselves are regulated. What he calls “the crucial form of access” (p. 88), this dimension concerns itself with asking questions regarding the content and shape of the discourse. What media can be used? Whose language can be used? What particular forms of discourse are allowed? These questions are complicated and indeed are the crucial questions around access. Both textbooks (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991) and their digital complements (Smith, in-press) have conventions and means of circumscribing what counts as “valid.” Ontario textbooks, for example, are regulated through the *Trillium List* (Ministry of Education, 2014) and have been a controlled medium for an extended period of time (Clark & Knights, 2011; Clark, 2006). Given that the texts are regulated, the types of discourses allowed are those that are congruent with ministry policy. In this way, the publication and production of textbooks is subject to a set of criteria that regulates the content⁷.

Next, van Dijk maintains that scope and audience control play a role in regulating access to discursive resources. This part of the model asks *us* to assess how audiences and participants are regulated and who is given voice. While audience control is rather uniform for textbooks (students within a classroom), digital spaces are ostensibly open to everyone – no purchase is not required to go to many digital spaces (costs may, however, be required to access certain parts), something that affords users the opportunity to hear from and engage with a larger population of peoples, experiences and subjectivities. Scope is subject to similar limits and conditions for textbook scope is predetermined and rather set once

⁷ Internet based searches and keywords made on school computers can be filtered and blocked which, in effect, works to regulate what kinds of things students can use and read. However, students can access different digital content outside of school (assuming that a student has access to this technology). Although this itself doesn't solve the issue of filtering at school, it does point to the possibilities for students to engage content beyond any sort of content filtering while in the classroom.

written whereas digital sites are changeable and are, given the breadth of the population who can publish, theoretically infinite in scope.

The template outlined above elicits a particularly important set of questions about textbooks and digital spaces. Primarily, it brings into consideration questions of control over the discursive representations of the text and consequently, who has access to language and what this does for racializing the deictically defined *we*. Who controls the representations in the text and more importantly, how does this shape the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the representations being made available? Who gets access to the categories of *we* and how is this limited by racialized deictic nationalist identifications? Asking these questions of access points to the ways that particular interests are represented, reproduced and reinforced through discourse patterns. This points to an elaboration of access beyond physical or digital accessibility to include the means through which to determine and regulate the resources to make sense of particular discourses. In other words, access is not understood as simply who has physical access but also access to the means of voice and the capacity to represent or speak of oneself. Questions concerning access, then, elicit questions around the voice, the histories, the knowledges and the resources available to readers to understand, contest and work with particular language. Specifically, I consider how the text, as a consequence of limited authorship, reproduces circumscribed access to the totality of knowledges. By producing a coherent text that has pedagogical value, how do texts and curriculum officials limit what discourses are available to students in textbooks? How (are) these patterns of access disrupted and/or reinforced in the more accessible (discursively and physically) digital spaces? How have the nationalizing obligations (Ministry of Education, 2008) of the politically and socially

elite framed what is knowable to a subset of all possible knowledges and how is this confronted online?

Each of the answers to the aforementioned questions involves some regard for the notion of dominance. Speaking to this notion, van Dijk (1993) urges the questioning of social power, the “privileged *access* to socially valued resources, such as wealth, income, position, status, force, group membership, education or knowledge” (p. 254) that comes to dictate what forms of knowing are dominant. The process of questioning access and dominance should consider the ways that discourses can be framed as a project of manipulation, a means through which to dictate and construct patterns of dominance. Manipulation here is understood as a symbolic process, one rooted in “discursive influence” (van Dijk, 2006a), a process that can help to convince populaces of particular forms of knowing. As Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000) remind us, manipulation is a fixture of various discursive practices, further arguing that discourses are used in particular ways to achieve particular consequences even when such instantiations of dominance are consciously unintended. The existence of differential access to discourse, as noted earlier, will necessarily draw in manipulation as an intended by-product; controlling access to the resources of discourses are done with an intention to manipulate how it operates and validates particular forms of knowing.

Thinking about the nationalized context, limits to what is considered representative of national forms of life is itself a form of manipulation in validating what constitutes an “appropriate” nationalist discourse. This comes to frame the success of nationalism – what *we* are is determined by dominant trends through which *we* are made to appear distinct and natural. Brooks (2002) highlights the effects of this – “Canadians travelling abroad are

regularly irritated when they are mistaken for Americans” despite the fact that, “outside observers often fail to spot the difference” (p. 40). As Brooks (2002) notes, despite not conceding that Canadians in many ways are like Americans, “it is important that those who share the nationalist sentiment believe that these differences are real and important” (p. 40). Such a condition of unquestioned difference from within (since, after all, those external to the national space have no issue questioning the ostensibly rigid line of difference) is only possible if it becomes dominant which necessitates relations of dominance to secure the “imagined” (Anderson, 2006) difference.

Texts, in their various forms, are frequently crafted around this operation of manipulation. Representations of ideas are done for express purposes, often designed to sway or manipulate cognition into orienting its understanding in a particular way.

However, as van Dijk (2006a) reminds us,

Manipulation not only involves power, but specifically *abuse* of power, that is, *domination*. That is, manipulation implies the exercise of a form of *illegitimate* influence by means of discourse: manipulators make others believe or do things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interests of the manipulated. (p. 360)

For van Dijk, manipulation is a manifestation of not just power but an abuse, a contention that raises questions of intent. He argues that manipulation is exercised as illegitimate influence, provoking considerations of intention around the representations made available. The curriculum and its pedagogical cognate the textbooks are perfect examples of this process. Textbooks come to be *the* curriculum (Apple, 1989, 2004; Macintyre & Hamilton, 2010; Ornstein, 1994; Tupper, 2002), shaping the lived curriculum (Aoki, 1993) of

schooling. The authority ascribed to textbooks as the representation of official knowledge, a standing validated by the “official” nature of curricula guidelines, implicitly manipulates people into perceiving curricular and textbook knowledge as having a particular (unearned) legitimacy – students inherit messages from the text and *their* teacher’s privileging of particular notions in the text, these notions and messages themselves framed by the manipulation of teacher perceptions about what constitutes valuable knowledge in the text. Stakeholders, whether they be Ministry employees or authors, have vested interests in producing particular forms of knowledge (Pinto, 2012), a commitment that requires manipulation of knowledge into two groups: that which is valid/official, that which is not. This raises a particular set of questions during a reading of the texts: what kinds of knowledges are being validated and legitimated? How might readers be manipulated into believing in particular forms of knowledge? How might this act, to borrow van Dijk’s (2006a) wording, operate, “against the best interests of the manipulated” (p. 360)?

To think and read through a text in relation to these questions, I argue that one has to consider the role of social cognition. For van Dijk (2006a), social cognition has, as its basis, “socioculturally shared *knowledge*” (p. 371). This notion of shared knowledge, or a collective cognition around a particular form of knowledge, forms the basis of a socially cognitive approach, one that emphasizes the ways that knowledge and ideological practices, “shape the interpretation of social situations” (van Dijk, 2009b, p. 186). Ultimately, for van Dijk (2009b), these interpretations, “are involved in the production of text and talk” (p. 186). In this way, cognition is not neatly tied to individual psychological processes of cognition but is instead tied to socially shared understandings of a particular discourse and is involved in the ways that *we* write and talk about them. Social cognition as

a critical discourse analytic concept thus emphasizes learned and circulated understandings and the effect of these on socially accepted representations while focusing less on the individual understandings of a particular event. The value of this theory of social cognition can be discerned in deconstructing what Stuart Hall (1997) calls the preferred reading and less how the individual mind (re-)interprets the information itself. Racialized deictic nationalism, as a means of (re)constituting a taken-for-granted *we* whose existence is socially and historically determined, is made possible by shared knowledge about what is deemed common sense.

Framing the basis of this cognition is ideology, the socially shared and located belief systems that are axiomatic and gradually acquired, consequently becoming taken-for-granted ways of understanding the world (van Dijk, 2006b)⁸. Here, it is important to recognize that, “ideologies consist of social representations that define the social identity of a group, that is, its shared beliefs about its fundamental conditions and ways of existence and reproduction” (van Dijk, 2006b, p. 116). This point in particular is worth noting in relation to this project, particularly the recognition that ideology frames shared understandings that speak to “fundamental” realities. In this thesis, I suggest that the propensity of individuals to believe in ideological phenomena such as nationalism (Billig, 1995; Gellner, 2006) and race (Henry, Tator, Mattis, & Rees, 2009; Miles & Brown, 2003) is rather symptomatic of the axiomatic nature of ideology.

Taken together, these concepts from critical discourse analysis offer a template (see Figure 1) that I use as a lens for my reading and as a framework to explain how and why the texts chosen were done with a particular purpose in mind.

⁸ While concepts such as “social imaginary” might serve as a similarly useful conceptual tool here, I use ideology as a reflection of the wording used in the literature cited here.

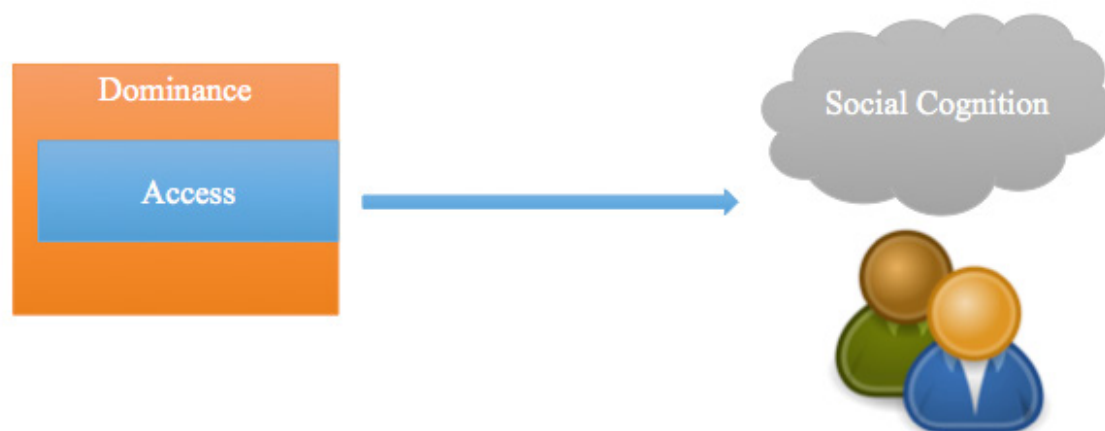


Figure 1. Methodological model. This diagram visually illustrates the methodological lens described above. Here, access to knowledge is subsumed and regulated within patterns of dominance. This knowledge is then translated and bestowed upon others who sociocognitively define knowledge based on this.

In sum, this model frames the questions of analysis particularly as they focus on the meanings and representations put forth in the texts. Access to discourses dictates and is made possible through relations of dominance, itself responsible for legitimizing and discrediting alternative means of learning/thinking. Taken together, these articulate to create a pattern of social cognition, one wherein knowledge becomes shared at a social level, circulated with a particular currency that in turn creates hegemonic taken-for-granted realities. This model is one where curriculum and textbooks fall without fail – access to the knowledges espoused and supported by the curriculum is heavily regulated, approved for official use by Ministry officials who publish and regulate texts that consequently come to frame dominant notions, quelling dissenting representations of different forms of social life. Consequently, patterns of social cognition are created, shaping how social, political and cultural context are understood. While this does not foreclose the existence of alternative realities—Steinberg and Bar-On (2009) highlight how separate realities can co-exist in curricular materials—the realities of curriculum in Ontario are such that patterns of

knowing get reproduced and/or dominant notions are left relatively uncontested (Pinto, 2012; Van De Kleut, 2011).⁹ Arising from these considerations is an exploration of a digital space online as a means of engendering and making possible resistances to the limits of access and imposition of dominance that might (re)frame particular notions of socio-cognitive understandings of an *us*.

Method

As noted, two different forms of text were consulted and analyzed through a critique of access, dominance and social cognition to ascertain the (re-)production of racialized deictic national identification. The following textbooks were used as the sites of inquiry:

Table 2

Textbooks analyzed (see Appendix for references)			
Author(s)	Subject	Year	Title
DesRivieres, D.	Geography	2008	<i>Pearson Human Geography 8</i>
Hannell, C., & Dunlop, S.	Geography	2000	<i>Discovering the Human World</i>
Hume, K., Ledgerwood, B., & MacKenzie, J.	Language Arts	2009	<i>Nelson Literacy 8</i>
Pearson, R., Chambers, D. J., & Junyk, M.	Language Arts	2008	<i>Language 8</i>
Beales, B. A., Bodiam, M., Duff, D., Foster, R., Hall, C., Hope, J., Kirkpatrick, C., Myhill, B. R., Suderman-Gladwell, G. & Tonner, J.	Mathematics	2006	<i>Nelson Mathematics 8</i>

⁹ This is not to deny individual agency on the part of readers (both students and teachers). Instead, I suggest that dominant stories about the topic of discussion in particular texts reproduce familiar stories of *us*.

Brown, T., Lenjosek, A., Heideman, C., Mennie, J., Konis-Chatzis, G., Keene, A. J., Sinclair, M., Featherstone, C., Johnston, J., Keyes, B., Wood, E., Milne, E., Jones, D. & Jeroski, S.	Mathematics	2006	<i>Addison Wesley Math Makes Sense</i>
Paré, D., Hayhow, D., Hammill, C., Gibb, T., & DiGiuseppe, M.	Science	2009	<i>Nelson Science & Technology Perspectives 8</i>
Sandner, L., Alexander, N., Carlin, M., Fatkin, G., Herridge, D., Lattner, M., Little, C., Walsh, J. & Wohl, S. M.	Science	2008	<i>Pearson Investigating Science & Technology 8</i>

The areas chosen for analysis were selected for a variety of reasons. Geography was chosen over history as a social studies subject because not only do I have a personal interest in geography but history has been studied in much greater depth. While the emphasis on history is not itself problematic, the glut of analyses looking at history textbooks makes the analysis of geography textbooks a more interesting and original endeavour. Math and science textbooks were chosen as sites of inquiry for the very reason that teachers and students often position these subjects as apolitical sites of learning despite the fact that both disciplines have been central to colonialism and racism (Appelbaum, 2008; Banton, 1998; Hannaford, 1996). Finally, language arts texts were chosen given their explicit focus on language use and development. Pragmatically however, these textbooks are the most accessible. As per the *Trillium List* (Ministry of Education, 2014), the list of government-approved textbooks for use in Ontario schools, there are eight subject areas for grade eight students. Three do not have textbooks approved for use (the arts, health and physical

education and native languages). French as a Second Language was not chosen for reasons of personal preference.

Eight textbooks were selected, the two most recently published textbooks from science, mathematics, language arts and geography. Two were used to ensure that any patterns noticed in one text were not localized and were indeed common across the types of discussions being had in that particular subject area. These textbooks were also chosen to reflect cross-curricular connections while attending to the emphasis on literacy and numeracy in Ontario education.

The textbooks are used as part of the eighth grade curriculum in Ontario¹⁰, a grade chosen for reasons of socialization and cognizance of racialized categories. While awareness of racial categories may prove to be well known before the eighth grade, “ethnic and racial socialization should be particularly relevant during the teenage years” (Fulgini, Hughes, & Way, 2009, p. 534). As grade eight students will be entering *their* teenage years, this is a crucial moment to address and work through the implications of passive expressions of who and what *we* are.

A secondary reason that the eighth grade was chosen was to address the privileging of the high school context in textbook analyses. Processes of racialized deictic nationalism are by no means unique or contained within the language practices of secondary students; its existence as an omnipresent reality of contemporary life suggests that its political and cultural work is unrestrained.

¹⁰ At the commencement of this project, the 2004 version of the social studies, history and geography curriculum for elementary grades was the current document (Ministry of Education, 2004). Towards the end of the analysis, a new version was released. As such, the project relies on the old curriculum as the means of explaining the textbook focal points as the textbooks were still published and determined by the 2004 guidelines. The new curriculum covers similar areas with an emphasis on patterns and sustainability & economic development and quality of life (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The textbooks were drawn from the Trillium List, a list of Ministry of Education approved textbooks for use in Ontario classrooms that, “have been subjected to a rigorous evaluation in accordance with the criteria specified in Section four of *Guidelines for Approval of Textbooks*” (Ministry of Education, 2012b). Section four of the *Guidelines for Approval of Textbooks* (Ministry of Education, 2008) stipulates that textbooks must be congruent with the curriculum but also dictates the nationalist orientation of the texts. Specifically, it notes the following about the use of URLs in the texts, a suggestion that connects reliability with the political apparatus of the nation:

If URLs are provided for student use in student textbooks, they must only be URLs for websites of the federal, provincial, and/or territorial governments of Canada.

These URLs are permitted in order to allow for links in student textbooks to current information, while also *ensuring content reliability* [emphasis added]. (p. 6)

The guide also speaks to the orientation of the content itself:

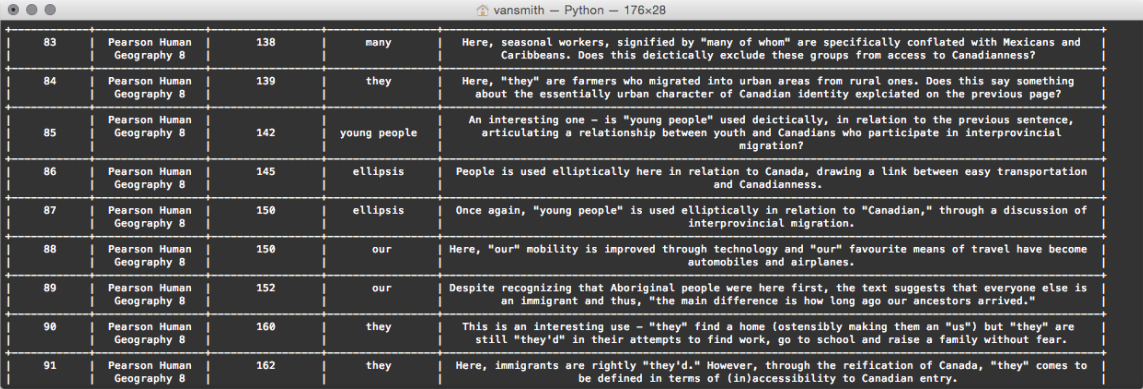
The content must have a Canadian orientation. It must acknowledge Canadian contributions and achievements and use Canadian examples and references wherever possible. It must use Canadian spelling conventions and SI units (units of measurement of the *Système international d’unités*, or International System of Units) for measurement references. The vocabulary and examples should be familiar to Canadians. (p. 6)

Finally, the document also notes the following about the production and writing of the texts themselves: “Textbooks must be manufactured in Canada and, wherever possible, are to be written, adapted, or translated by a Canadian citizen or citizens or by a permanent resident or residents of Canada” (p. 6). This last requirement reflects Clark and Knight’s (2011)

historical look at the interrelationship between nationalism and textbook production, arguing that this requirement is one that has persisted as part of publishing in Canada for quite some time. The consequences of this are of great importance for the nationalist orientation of the texts for it makes publication a political, economic and cultural process, one wrapped up in the explicit epistemological expectation that the text reflects an acute awareness of the Canadian context and consequently, some preconceived notion of the national *we*. The economic and political limits on textbook production also set further explicit limits on what textbook publishers can and do include as per the Ministry of Education requirements.

Looking beyond these textbooks for sites of resistance, those spaces where students can respond to and use personal experiences and narratives for the purposes of rearticulation, I explore a Wikipedia article on “Canadian Identity” as a possible location from where counternarratives (Delgado & Stefancic, 2012; Gillborn, 2006b; Smith, 2014a; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of *us* can be generated and (re)present differential conceptions of *we-ness*. The Wikipedia article on Canadian national identity was chosen as it serves as a quintessential example of digitally-mediated dialogue that can both reproduce and contend racialized deictic nationalism as it deals directly with the identification of people within the nationally bounded space and who *we* are. Here, I look at the “official” presentations of Canadian national identity (the article itself) and more importantly, the sometimes combative discussion that leads to the official Wikipedia representation in the behind the scenes dialogue. And while Wikipedia articles often leverage existing literature, and consequently is likely to be a space where popular notions of *us* get reflected, personal experiences can shape debate around the complexities of this type of identification.

Reading technique: decoding grammars. The textbooks were read over once initially, with interesting moments of deictic work recorded in a database, moments wherein deictic language positioned people grammatically in relation to a national context/identification. After the initial reading, preliminary analysis was done so as to ascertain any initial trends or patterns in the texts. Interesting notes, instantiations of deixis or relevant use of microscopic language in the textbooks were noted in a piece of custom-built software (RecordKeeper) that served as a database of notes. Specifically, uses of deictic pronouns including *we*, *they/them* and their semantic equivalents, were examined along with the context that surrounded *them* to assess what notions of national inclusion/exclusion were being supported. This involved both reading for who is part of *us* and who is part of *them*. This reading was done to determine how the national *we* was constructed and how the texts (re-)inscribe a *we* and a *them*.



Page	Source	Page	Deictic Pronoun	Notes
83	Pearson Human Geography 8	138	many	Here, seasonal workers, signified by "many of whom" are specifically conflated with Mexicans and Caribbeans. Does this deictically exclude these groups from access to Canadianness?
84	Pearson Human Geography 8	139	they	Here, "they" are farmers who migrated into urban areas from rural ones. Does this say something about the essentially urban character of Canadian identity explicated on the previous page?
85	Pearson Human Geography 8	142	young people	An interesting one - is "young people" used deictically, in relation to the previous sentence, articulating a relationship between youth and Canadians who participate in interprovincial migration?
86	Pearson Human Geography 8	145	ellipsis	People is used elliptically here in relation to Canada, drawing a link between easy transportation and Canadianness.
87	Pearson Human Geography 8	150	ellipsis	Once again, "young people" is used elliptically in relation to "Canadian," through a discussion of interprovincial migration.
88	Pearson Human Geography 8	150	our	Here, "our" mobility is improved through technology and "our" favourite means of travel have become automobiles and airplanes.
89	Pearson Human Geography 8	152	our	Despite recognizing that Aboriginal people were here first, the text suggests that everyone else is an immigrant and thus, "the main difference is how long ago our ancestors arrived."
90	Pearson Human Geography 8	160	they	This is an interesting use - "they" find a home (ostensibly making them an "us") but "they" are still "they'd" in their attempts to find work, go to school and raise a family without fear.
91	Pearson Human Geography 8	162	they	Here, immigrants are rightly "they'd." However, through the reification of Canada, "they" comes to be defined in terms of (in)accessibility to Canadian entry.

Figure 2. Screenshot of *RecordKeeper*. This piece of software, illustrated above, housed the notes, observations and relevant quotations gleaned from the reading.

Once this initial reading was complete, I went back over the texts again to see if the initial patterns were present across the subject areas. During the process, I continually read

over the texts, re-reading pages and content in light of new and interesting findings. This process follows Peräkylä's (2005) argument about analyzing text:

Qualitative researchers who use written texts as their materials do not try to follow any predefined protocol in executing their analysis. By reading and rereading their empirical materials, they try to pin down their key themes and, thereby, to draw a picture of the presuppositions and meanings that constitute the cultural world of which the textual material is a specimen. (p. 870)

Although no specific protocol was used for the readings, the content was analyzed in a methodical fashion; the texts were read sequentially by subject and then in relation to each other once initial themes had been generated. This process occurred throughout the writing stage.

The reading of textbooks generated the following themes:

Containment – how did the texts contain the national space (set its imagined bounds) and how did the language set limits on a grammatically defined *us*?

Description – how did deictic language and grammar frame an *us & them* and how does this serve to position *us* as having some essentialized subjective existence distinct from *them*?

The reading focused on how these two means of using deixis (discussed in greater detail in the forthcoming chapters) not only sets the limits of what *we* are but also what that *we* entails. In this way, the reading asked how the Discourse of *us* is not only established but also teaches *us* to, “learn a culturally distinctive way of being an ‘everyday person’” (Gee, 2012, p. 153).

The Wikipedia article was read more holistically. Here, I read the article and

discussion section with the textbook findings in mind, seeking to explore how users both reproduced and disrupted taken-for-granted narratives of the *here* and *now*. Specifically, I read the Wikipedia article and the “Talk” section (the behind the scenes discussion about what to include or exclude from the official article), looking to ascertain how (if at all) the *we* or *them* is reproduced and/or contested. Deconstructing this, I argue, requires a critical discursive analysis.

As van Dijk (1995) argues, critical discourse analysis, “deals with the discursively enacted or legitimated structures and strategies of dominance and resistance in social relationships” (p. 18), one of which is relationships of nationality. Van Dijk (1981, 1996, 2006a) is quick to note that education also plays an integral role in the production of meanings and discourses of dominance, an argument that would imply some sort of articulation between the two notions. Indeed, as the Ministry has made clear, this is an explicit goal. Consequently, questions around access to the representations of the national “form of life,” how these dominate and manipulate notions of reality and how these come to shape socially shared knowledges all serve to frame the reading of both the textbooks and the digital spaces. With this, I turn to the texts themselves, to explore how critical discourse analysis’ critical evaluation of relationships of nationality are enacted and produce exclusive meanings about what it means to be the racially deictic nationalist *us*.

In this chapter, I put forth a framework designed to address the need for a microscopic analysis of the ways that language (re-)creates notions of a racialized and nationalized *we*, one that is applicable across disciplinary areas. Studying this methodologically, I argue that this process of a racialized deictic nationalism ought to be explored through the tenets of critical discourse analysis, particularly a subset of the

cognitive notions outlined by Teun van Dijk. In the chapters that follow, I apply the theory of racialized deictic nationalism to a series of textbooks and digital sites, framing the analysis as it emerged from the considerations of critical discourse analysis.

Chapter 5: Textbooks and Deixis: Establishing the Context

The content must have a Canadian orientation. It must acknowledge Canadian contributions and achievements and use Canadian examples and references wherever possible. [...] The vocabulary and examples should be familiar to Canadians. (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 6)

The preceding epigraph, taken from the Ontario Ministry of Education's guidelines for textbook publishing in the province, highlights a particular preoccupation with establishing and maintaining nationalism in the curricular materials. The tensions between nationalism and textbook production, an articulation not unfamiliar in the Ontario context (Clark & Knights, 2011), reveal themselves unabashedly in Ministry policy. This relationship between national cultural reproduction and textbook production and dissemination, one made all the more complicated by the economic imperatives and value of such nexus (Apple, 1989; Clark, 2006), ultimately lends itself to a condition where textbooks are bought and sold as tools to teach about the national state to students and teachers. What happens in Ontario textbooks then is quite simple – Ministry requirements ensure some level of Canadianness in the textbooks, a process that effectively re(produces) the passive obviousness that Billig (1995) argues is essential to nationalism. In other words, in being explicit about the prioritization of Canadian national accomplishments and ideas, the Ministry has rather clearly asserted that curricular materials are obliged to unequivocally represent Canadian life. As a reflection of curricular requirements (Ministry of Education, 2008), textbooks, a pedagogical commodity that quite often becomes the

curriculum itself (Apple, 2004; Ornstein, 1994), come to further nationalize an already Canadian-focused curriculum.

While the Ministry has set the context in establishing the nationalist orientation of textbooks for Ontario use, the guide says little as to how this should be done and what this language should effectively constitute in relation to the “Canadian orientation.” What follows is an analysis of the eight textbooks, broken into two parts to highlight the bounding of the nation and the imposition of characteristics onto that very same bounded space. Effectively, the language, representations and work done in these texts erect, secure and bind the national space as *the* space with relative ease and regularity. They create the conditions for and implement a successful project of racialized deictic nationalism. They do this in one of two ways:

1. *Containment*: The texts preoccupy themselves with creating the national container, or the, “image of their communion” (Anderson, 2006, p. 6) by drawing their bounds grammatically, a preoccupation that either, with subtlety, assumes that *this* place is known and/or talks about Canadian locations with no questions about whether or not they are familiar. In this way, the texts reinforce naturalized and necessary (colonial) divides central to what Donald (2012a) calls the “pedagogy of the fort.”
2. *Description*: The texts preoccupy themselves with ascribing notions of identity to the assumed national container, a process that defines what it means to inhabit *this* place as an *us*.

The latter ascriptive group is the one largely responsible for the racialized deictic national *we*, depending as it does on the creation of the taken-for-granted *us* made possible by the texts that articulate the national container. While both strategies occur in each respective

subject area, mathematics and language predominantly contribute to a program of containment whereas geography and science texts primarily concern themselves with describing the contours of this container.

A Deictic Analysis Snapshot

Containment. The two types of deictic usage manifest themselves in slightly different ways. As noted, containment is preoccupied with reinforcing the discursive, geographic and historical bounds of *our* nation and in so doing, largely articulates *we-ness* irrespective of any sort of description; it establishes a *here* and an *us* but often doesn't say much about what those entail. What follows are some examples.

Example 1

“When you buy a Canada Savings Bond (CSB), you are lending the Canadian government money. The government pays you for borrowing your money” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 82). Here, two techniques are at work. First, the text positions *you* in relation to the Canadian government and Canada Savings Bonds, a savings program backed by the Canadian government. Second, it makes use of ellipsis, a technique of deixis where, as Billig (1995) notes, the referent is simply unnamed (p. 107). Here, “the government” is used, pointing to a government without qualifying it.

Example 2

“Liam asked students at Silver Lake Summer Camp, ‘Where are you from?’ He recorded these results: Ottawa 60, Toronto 90, Belleville 30, Hamilton 36, Kingston 45, Oshawa 20,

Burlington 24, Oakville 10, Napanee 30, St. Catharines 15” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 225).

The use of cities/towns located exclusively in Canada implicitly positions the nation as *the* space that is known and the one to know.

The technique of containment occurred on numerous occasions across the texts, acutely concentrated in the mathematics and language arts textbooks (relatively speaking):

Table 3

	Containment	Total Deictic Invocations	Percentage
Mathematics	37	67	55%
Language Arts	23	45	51%
Geography	29	105	28%
Science	11	153	7%

Instances of containment deixis. The number of containment related uses of deixis relative to the total deictic invocations. The total count includes any and all recorded instances of deixis, whereas the percentage column illustrates what percentage of the total were of the “containment” variety.

Descriptive. The descriptive method of racialized deictic nationalism, as noted, is primarily concerned with describing the contours of the national container, and in so doing, extends the practice of containment seen more often in mathematics and language arts textbooks. This technique shapes the taken-for-granted bounds of knowing and relevance implied through the practice of containment by defining its form. What follows are some examples.

Example 1

“Canada ranks ninth in world trade even though it ranks only 36th in population. Our country has been successful in global trade competition because of abundant natural

resources and a highly educated labour force” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 126). Here, ‘*our* country’ is positioned as successful, which implies that this success is shared equally by *us*, while *we* are positioned as having pervasive levels of ‘high’ education.

Example 2

“In contrast to our plentiful water supply in Ontario, over 1 billion people worldwide do not have access to clean water. Every 15 seconds, a child somewhere in the world dies from a lack of clean water. How can we tell when the water supply is under threat here in Canada?” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 259). Here, *our* plentiful supply of water is of little concern, an interest that juxtaposes *our* plentiful access with an implied *them* that doesn’t. Although the passage isn’t *them-ing* the entire non-Canadian population, it serves its purpose of defining *our* access and by extension, it tells *us* something about ourselves. The inclusion of *we* at the end re-affirms this connection along with the place deictic *here* to (re-) establish distance between *us* and *our* plentiful water and an implied *them* that doesn’t have this. Although seemingly non-racialized, it positions *us* as an essentialized, taken-for-granted group that is reproduced throughout the texts (see later discussion about the role of water as a means of defining *us*). Also of note here is the positioning of this utterance over top of a picture of people washing a car, an activity that is only possible when access to water is of little concern.

Example 3

In talking about issues relevant to “remote surgery” (surgery done remotely) and its relationship to Dr. Anvari (the first doctor in Canada to perform this type of operation) and

possible benefits for the Canadian military: “Society has to decide if this is an ethical and acceptable addition to our medical system. Part of our responsibility as citizens is to assess each system’s impact on society and on our environment” (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 91). In this example, society conflates with Canada given an utterance shortly before this one: “This was the first remote surgery (telesurgery) in Canada. The Canadian military may use remote surgery for injured soldiers in distant combat zones” (p. 91). In so positioning the Canadian context as the focal point, it would be reasonable to infer that it is the national *we* that is told of *our* obligations as citizens to consider the ethical dimensions of remote surgery.

This technique of deixis occurred, as noted, predominately in geography and science textbooks (relatively speaking) but does happen with considerable regularity in the language arts textbooks:

Table 4

	Descriptive	Total Deictic Invocations	Percentage
Mathematics	16	67	24%
Language Arts	21	45	47%
Geography	59	105	56%
Science	86	153	56%

Instances of descriptive deixis. The number of descriptive related uses of deixis relative to the total deictic invocations. The total count includes any and all recorded instances of deixis, even those that positioned the reader (broadly speaking) in innocuous ways or said little about the nation or any sort of racialized inclusion/exclusion.

While language arts is nearly, in terms of counts, as prevalent with respect to descriptive processes of racialized deictic nationalism as geography and science textbooks, I highlight

the latter two disciplines in the analysis of descriptive deixis given their overwhelming relative penchant for this type of linguistic work.

The counts above, provided as a snapshot, are not intended to be statistically rigorous. Instead, they serve to provide a quick look into how each textbook works deictically. Indeed, since the analysis involved returning to the texts over the course of the writing, the counts here are more indicative of trends than a quantitative presentation of data. That said, the data presented here helps to illuminate the preponderance of descriptive uses of deixis relative to the containment variety (see Table 5 below) in the geography and science textbooks and the strategy of containing the racialized deictic national space in Canada in language arts and mathematics texts.

Table 5

	Containment	Descriptive
Count	100	182

Total deictic counts across the texts.

A means of using deixis and subtle national signification common to both containment and descriptive techniques are flagging and ellipsis, the former pointing to the visual signification of space (such as a flag or a more implicit signification such as the presence of a Mountie or a maple leaf that signal the national space), the latter pointing to the use of language that signals the national space without expressly noting it (e.g. “the government” signalling the national government) (Billig, 1995). These were present across all the texts.

Table 6

	Count
Ellipsis	10
Flagging	12

Instances of flagging and ellipsis. Although rather minimal in relative terms to the numbers, these two techniques are supportive means of “pointing” to the national space (containment) and through implication, defining what is worth knowing about it (descriptive).

While these counts may seem rather small, they are not central fixtures of the process of racialized deictic nationalism and instead, serve an ancillary role to the processes of containment and descriptive deixis. Regardless of their limited role, they contribute to the larger project of representing a racialized deictic national *us*, a representation of *us* established through the use of containing and descriptive deixis. In other words, the texts, on numerous occasions, make use of deictic language to racialize *us/we/our* and a *them/they/their* that gets articulated with a national space.

Textbooks, Preoccupation and Structure

While the respective counts above present a picture as to how the deictic language works, it is worth considering how each subject is taken up so as to better understand how this deictic language is framed as well as how the topics discussed contribute to the use of particular forms of deixis. In other words, this discussion aims to answer the question of what kinds of topics are discussed and how this made the presence of the two types of deixis possible within the textbooks?

Curriculum documents. These curriculum documents tend to defer to national contexts but not to the same extent as the textbook approval guidelines. The previous iteration of the social studies, history and geography curriculum, the one in use at the

commencement of the project (Ministry of Education, 2004), has adequate coverage of the global context. For example, the curriculum document notes that, “by integrating various aspects of place, the study of geography provides students with a unique opportunity to learn about the world around them” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 3). However, the text dichotomizes places in such a way that represents Canada as unique in the global space: “in social studies, history, and geography, students learn about the past and present contributions of a variety of people to the development of Canada and the world” (Ministry of Education, 2004, p. 17). A similar dichotomization occurs in the overview of each of the three strands: “they also reflect and report on the various aspects of demographics in Canada and other countries, including developing countries” (Patterns in Human Geography) (p. 72), “they investigate Canada’s economic relationships from regional perspectives. They study processes of manufacturing and distribution, and compare aspects of economic development in different countries and communities” (Economic Systems) (p. 74) and, “they identify patterns of migration, and examine challenges and opportunities that migration presents to individuals and communities in Canada” (Migration) (p. 76). The “Patterns in Human Geography” and “Economic Systems” strands explicitly mention Canada and other countries and while Migration does not, it does position the knowledge to be learned as understandings that need to be known about Canada.

The new social studies curriculum document (Ministry of Education, 2013) emphasizes citizenship education, a concept often interwoven with social studies (Clark & Case, 2013; Tupper & Cappello, 2012). Here though, the curriculum tends to privilege the global citizen. As one such example, the document notes that, “it is important for students to understand that they belong to many communities and that, ultimately, they are all

citizens of the global community” (Ministry of Education, 2013, p. 9). Indeed, the document notes that the geography program provides students with the chance to “analyse how people and environments around the globe affect one another” (p. 12). Unlike the old curriculum, the expectations and overview are more global in scope and theme but they do commonly defer to nations as the comparative contexts. For example, students are expected to “assess the effectiveness of media in improving the quality of life in some countries/regions around the world” (p. 183) and “compare findings with respect to selected quality of life indicators in some developing and more developed countries” (p. 184). While Canada is not necessarily the primary method of understanding the global context, nations come up frequently as the method of measuring and representing global issues.

The science curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) begins by noting the goals of the curriculum as relevant to the lives of Canadians: “during the twentieth century, science and technology played an increasingly important role in the lives of all Canadians” (p. 3), an assertion that not only centres the nation-state as the space where science is done but fails to see how science was important before this time and beyond the national space. Indeed, the next statement uses deixis to position science and technology as important to the national *we*, reinforcing the idea that science is important for *us* Canadians:

Science and technology underpin much of what we take for granted, including clean water, the places in which we live and work, and the ways in which we communicate with others. The impact of science and technology on our lives will continue to grow. (p. 3)

At the end of this paragraph however, the global context is represented. As the document states, “consequently, science and technological literacy for all has become the overarching objective of science and technology education throughout the world” (p. 3), a statement that acknowledges the value of science for all people but fails to unsettle the privileging of science for *us* Canadians first.

The expectations themselves for grade eight students are positioned in such a way that is free from explicit reference to national spaces but examples frequently involve either national references or spaces within the nation. For instance, a sample issue for an expectation about “the impact of fluid spills on society and the environment” includes the following: “an oil tanker spills its load in B.C.’s inside coastal waters” (p. 147). Another expectation, one regarding the assessment of media sources for the ways that they address the impact of humans on water systems, uses “Canadian Geographic” as an example source and uses the following as a sample issue: “you are doing research on the implications of exporting water from Canada to other countries” (p. 150). A different sample issue for the same expectation does something similar: “a farmer wants to ensure that her nutrient management strategies are not adversely affecting the local water system. She consults the agriculture section of a local newspaper, a Canadian magazine with an environmental focus, and local farm reports” (p. 150). These example sources privilege either the local sources, those relevant to the immediate context, or a national source that may have little direct impact on the current issue at hand. Compounding this is the gratuitous including of a nationalized magazine, an inclusion that could just as easily be supplanted by a non-Canadian variant or even more inclusively, a non-nationalized variant altogether. This

rather simplistic example signals the ease with which the national space becomes *the* space that needs to frame how *we* understand environment.

The mathematics curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2005), like the science curriculum, makes use of examples and suggestions to frame the national focus. For example, in noting the importance of technology, the document states that, “students, working individually or in groups, can use computers, CD-ROM technology, and/or Internet websites to gain access to Statistics Canada, mathematics organizations, and other valuable sources of mathematical information around the world” (p. 15). In this specific example, the Canadian national statistics bureau is, without question, the means through which to collect data. The expectations operate in a similar fashion, using nationally oriented examples as the means through which to illustrate rather universal mathematics concepts. In asking students to solve problems in real-life contexts, the curriculum uses the following as a sample problem: “in Ontario, people often pay a provincial sales tax [PST] of 8% and a federal sales tax [GST] of 7% when they make a purchase. Does it matter which tax is calculated first? Explain your reasoning” (p. 112). Here, elliptical language (language that refers to an unnamed but assumed context) is used – the word federal comes to signify the nation-state, affirming the national context as that wherein the problem is couched. Other examples rely on simpler yet equally important flagging techniques to point to the national context: “the value of \$5 bills and toonies placed in an envelope for fund raising can be represented by the equation $v = 5f + 2t$ ” (p. 116). Phrasing, as with this example, points to the Canadian context by employing words exclusive to the national milieu, reminding students and teachers that this national context is the one to know.

The language curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2006b) represents important ideas as being of relevance to the global context but affirms the import of the Canadian one in relation to the more broadly understood universal setting. The document states that, “as students read and reflect on a rich variety of literary, informational, and media texts, they develop a deeper understanding of themselves and others and of the world around them” (p. 4). This statement is set in opposition to the principles of the language curriculum that state, “reading activities should expose students to materials that reflect the diversity of Canadian and world cultures, including those of Aboriginal peoples” (p. 5). This statement positions Canada in relation to the world as somehow unique or worthy of separate reference, something also seen in the old social studies curriculum. This positioning happens elsewhere as well when the document talks about the reading strand: “teachers routinely use materials that reflect the diversity of Canadian and world cultures, including the cultures of Aboriginal peoples, and make those resources available to students” (p. 11). What’s worth noting in this example, as with the last, is the separate mention of Aboriginal peoples that might signal the reaffirmation of the “separate realities” of Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal peoples (Donald, 2009, 2012a).

This dichotomy between Canadian and global references persists in curricular expectation examples. With reference to a reading expectation about reading increasingly difficult texts across types, the curriculum lists, as an example of an informational text, “*Canadian and global print and online sources*” (p. 141). Sometimes, however, the reference only points to a Canadian example. For instance, in discussing the need to write complex texts, an example given is, “*a memoir of a significant Canadian*” (p. 145).

Each of the curriculum documents, frames, albeit in rather subtle ways, the discourse of that particular subject area and the ways it should be taken up in relation to the national context. Whether it be in positioning Canada as a unique space in relation to the global context or in using examples that point exclusively to Canada or Canadian histories or peoples, the curriculum documents set up the types of nationalized knowledges that the textbook authorization document mandates.

Organization of the Textbooks

Geography. The two geography textbooks, *Pearson Human Geography 8*¹¹ (DesRivieres, 2008) and *Discovering the Human World*¹² (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000) present content in blocks (likely corresponding to units and curricular areas). These sections include discovering human patterns, discovering economic systems and discovering human movement in *Discovering* (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000), a layout similar to *Pearson Geography's* (DesRivieres, 2008) arrangement that focuses on world human patterns, world economic systems and mobility, migration and culture. The questions and activities that accompany the sections in the textbooks ask students to think about, work through the ideas and synthesize *their* own understandings of the ideas and topics discussed.

Through their arrangements, the texts ultimately discuss the ways that humans interact and live together, occupy space as economic peoples as well as how people and cultures move about the world. This narrative template serves to locate people in places, represent *them* through economic lenses and describe their movement across cultural and

¹¹ Hereafter referred to as *Pearson Geography*.

¹² Hereafter referred to as *Discovering*.

national bounds. This template works to remind the readers of the national space, what constitutes membership within that space and how the movement of people creates an *us* and a *them*.

Science. The scientific textbooks, *Nelson Science and Technology Perspectives 8*¹³ (Paré et al., 2009) and *Pearson Investigating Science and Technology 8*¹⁴ (Sandner et al., 2008) follow the structure of the curriculum, representing knowledge around cells, water systems, fluids and systems. Many of these topics are mechanical and involve the discussion of processes that are either beyond human control (buoyancy for example) or involve an investigation of a topic that is independent of nationalizing processes (cellular makeup). Although science has been utilized to enact the mobilization of particular knowledges around race and belonging in textbooks (Morning, 2008), the texts are absent of said implications here, focusing instead on empirical representations of biological phenomena.

Each of the texts, organized as they are by curricular areas, frames the conversation around the scientific concepts. The conversation itself centres more on presenting the “facts” of science and do so in a particularly abrupt or terse fashion relative to the geography textbooks. That said, the conversation can be personable in that it does not simply state scientific fact but instead, it works to be inclusive of the reader in the production of knowledge. In this way, the texts actively and without reservation talks to *you* the students about content that *we* should know, a format that is pedagogical in its presentation. For example, *Nelson Science* uses the following as a means of talking about graphic texts in relation to a cartoon about work:

¹³ Hereafter referred to as *Nelson Science*.

¹⁴ Hereafter referred to as *Pearson Science*.

Not all of what we read is in words. Information can be presented in pictures.

Graphic texts or cartoons are another way that ideas and stories are communicated.

As readers, we follow the story and gather information from a series of pictures. In a small group, identify as many systems as you can in the cartoon. Classify them as physical or social systems. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 29)

Mathematics. Like science, mathematics commonly gets represented as neutral, a subject of investigation and inquiry that deals with the wonderful indifference of numbers. However, much like science, the ways that the indifference of numbers is taken up and discussed is laden with cultural notions and, as Shulman (2002) argues, even takes on an ethical dimension. As Tutak, Bondy & Adams (2011) remind us, “mathematics and teaching mathematics are neither free of interpretation nor are they value-neutral” (p. 66). The textbooks in this project are no different, ultimately structured around the ostensibly neutral presentation of information. Yet, as will be discussed, there is an unabashed use of nationalized data exists within the texts that ultimately frames the context of the mathematics. For example, in working with bar graphs, students are asked to “construct a bar graph that compares the number of hours of television for all ages in Ontario and Canada,” a statement complemented by a chart listing the “average number of hours of television viewing per week” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 100).

Each of the two textbooks, *Nelson Mathematics 8¹⁵* (Beales et al., 2006) and *Addison Wesley Math Makes Sense 8¹⁶* (Brown et al., 2006) is broken down into sections corresponding to the curriculum document. The five strands, number sense and numeration, measurement, geometry and spatial sense, patterning and algebra and data management and

¹⁵ Hereafter referred to as *Nelson Math*.

¹⁶ Hereafter referred to as *Addison Wesley*.

probability are each covered in sections throughout the text. Unlike the others however, there is little flow to the mathematical narrative woven throughout the texts; the chapters are more discrete units than in the other texts.

Language. Unlike the mathematics textbooks, the language arts textbooks, *Language 8* (Pearson, Chambers, & Junyk, 2008) and *Nelson Literacy 8*¹⁷ (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c), are considerably more eclectic in the ways content is organized. In these language textbooks, content includes anecdotes or explorations of seemingly disparate topics. Some texts appear to have tenuous connections between parts as discussions of topics are often followed by completely different explorations. For example, *Nelson Literacy 8: Chasing a Dream and Reality Check* (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a) has a section on advertising and the practices of the industry, followed by a section entitled “Behind the Hype,” a section about representation and the work done to alter these advertisements for the public eye (pp. 6-17). Following these two similar topics, both concerned with the presentation of something to a larger audience for an intended purpose, the text shifts to a story about an interplanetary zoo. The *Language 8* (Pearson et al., 2008) text is more structured than the *Nelson Literacy 8* series as the chapters are organized thematically. For instance, there is a unit (what the book uses to label what would normally be called chapters) named “Imagination” that contains various texts dealing with issues and narratives normally categorized as imaginative including superheroes.

Themes. Taken together, the textbooks can be divided into two sub-groupings. Mathematics and language arts textbooks predominately engage in a process of national containment. Science and geography textbooks, conversely, preoccupy themselves with defining the national *we* in relation to the established national container, itself a product of

¹⁷ Hereafter referred to as *Nelson Literacy*.

the work done in the mathematics and language arts textbooks. In this way, each of the texts play different roles in securing and producing the racialized deictic national form of life. Through the application of each technique, the texts effectively set the national space as the knowable space, the space through where all knowledge should be filtered and where students come to either feel a part of (as a member of the *we*) or not. In this way, the textbooks try to limit knowledge of the world to that where what is relevant is Canada, a national context that is ostensibly in need of a manageable definition and character.

While neither set of texts performs its aforementioned containment or descriptive functions exclusive of the other, each subject area preoccupies itself with the categories that they fall into above – mathematics and language arts as preoccupied with containment; science and geography with descriptive deixis. In this way, the work done can be seen as a product of a relationship between the textbooks, one where the mathematics and language arts textbooks effectively proclaim the bounds of the nation while the science and geography textbooks, built on the established presence of this container, define it. Thought of metaphorically, the mathematics and language arts textbooks work to build the home whereas the science and geography textbooks are the interior decorators and security systems. What follows is an analysis of the ways that the two groupings of texts perform their functions in their respective categories.

Chapter 6: Textbooks, The National *We* and Its Containment

The textbooks, in conforming to the nationalist criteria mandated by the provincial government, partake in both its establishment (containment) and in developing its cultural features. This former happens primarily in the language and mathematics textbooks, the latter in the science and geography textbooks. What follows is a discussion of this process of representation and its consequences. In this chapter specifically, I focus on the process of containment, or, how the textbooks frame and define the imagined limits of the national *we*.

As narrated realities (to borrow verbiage of Bhabha (1990)) whose existence is only real in its consequences and produced allegiances (Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995), the nation's existence is contingent on its continued reproduction. In part, this requires a language about its outer bounds or what I call, adapting from Lakoff & Johnson's (2003) discussion of metaphors, its container. After all, as Anderson (2006) noted, the nation is not infinitely expansive nor does it encompass all peoples, a proposition that suggests a learned understanding of its bounds. The language and mathematics textbooks (not exclusively so) commonly establish this national container, framing the language in such a way that the national *we* is assumed to exist within limits. While the character of this nationally contained *we* is present at points, there is an abundance (relatively) of moments where the texts simply assume the national container as *the* space and in so doing, they reaffirm its genesis and maintenance.

Mathematics and Statistical Containment

In the mathematics textbooks, the national context is commonly contained through the use of statistical content that either always contains the nation (the inclusive approach) or is exclusive of information from beyond the nation (the exclusive approach). Both examples effectively remind the student that Canada is the focal point for knowledge production, framing the ways that learning is done in relation to the nation-state. Much of this is done with little reference to the social/national context, an indication that the texts, “reproduce philosophies of mathematics that presume the discipline’s inherent nonhuman truth” (Appelbaum, 1995, p. 14). For example, *Nelson Math* (Beales et al., 2006) asks students to, “construct a scatter plot to see if there is a relationship between the precipitation in January and the precipitation in April” (p. 115). Nothing in this question argues that the data has to be so in relation to a Canadian context but yet, the cities used are exclusively Canadian: Calgary, Charlottetown, Churchill, Dawson, Edmonton, Fredericton, Halifax, Hamilton, Iqaluit, Kitchener, Moncton and Montreal. Here, the space of knowledge worth considering becomes the national one – it is Canadian cities and these ones alone that get considered. This type of containment occurs throughout the text; the national space is present either as the sole space of consideration (as implied in examples such as the aforementioned one) or it is present in contexts that includes information on international contexts. I call these techniques exclusive and inclusive containment respectively.

The introduction to a lesson on integers works in a similar fashion, stating that *you* will be able to do a variety of things by the end of the chapter, a set of goals set against a backdrop of the nation and temperatures for major Canadian cities (Beales et al., 2006, p.

179). Statements such as these shape the bounds of what is worth knowing, the nation, and do so with no explicit recognition of this fact. As a consequence, mathematics remains the supposedly socially disinterested discipline all the while reinforcing the bounds of what space is home to legitimate or knowledge of “most worth.”

Exclusive statistical containment. The inherently nationalist nature of these questions is made all the more obvious when one considers the nature of the data and what the data is being used to teach, neither of which are wholly dependent on Canadian national data. For example, the text *Addison Wesley* (Brown et al., 2006) notes the following for some data: “the table lists Canadian provinces and territories. It shows the year each joined Confederation, and the approximate 2004 population” (p. 23). Here, as the question states, is a list of provinces and territories and the pertinent data. Population based problems do not depend on the Canadian national context – data from other national contexts could be used or better yet, non-nationally based populations could be used so as to break the deference to national categories for measuring populations. This example is hardly the only example of statistical data that is Canadian unnecessarily so. For instance, *Addison Wesley* asks of students the following:

Here are some data about voluntary organizations in 2003: Canadians took out 139 000 000 memberships in these organizations. Nineteen million Canadians contributed more than 2 000 000 000 h of voluntary time. These organizations had \$112 000 000 000 in revenues. Write a problem about these data. Solve your problem. Justify the strategy you used. (Brown et al., 2006, p. 42)

Despite the recognition of the international nature of volunteering, *your* problem involves only data from the Canadian national context, a constructed problem that privileges

Canadian data for no obvious or necessary reason. In this sense, *your* mathematics lesson/practice is articulated with the national container and in so doing, it becomes the important space against which mathematics problems can be framed.

The examples don't always include the national name for the questions can be framed around regions within the national container with no non-Canadian complements. As presented in *Nelson Math*, "surface water temperatures on the Atlantic side of Newfoundland range from 13°C in the summer to -1°C in the winter. What is the range?" (Beales et al., 2006, p. 196). Similar provincial/territorial based examples exist in *Addison Wesley* as well: "Norman Wells, Northwest Territories, is the fourth largest producing oil field in Canada. Its estimated reserves are 140 million barrels of oil. Write this number in scientific notation" (Brown et al., 2006, p. 20). In each of these examples, national spaces are chosen to create a context for a mathematical problem but, as with most nationally oriented mathematic questions, Canadian national referents are not crucial to the mathematical concept being assessed. Regardless, the directive, evidenced through the use of the phrase "write this," asks students to work with a mathematics problem using the unquestioned presence of Canadian referents.

Such a trend in using subnational (sub-Canadian) examples is a favourite of the *Addison Wesley* text. In that text, students are asked to think about things such as the following: "suppose you are in charge of planning a four-day Grade 8 ski trip. You decide to ski in Mont Tremblant, Quebec" (Brown et al., 2006, p. 46) and "we can use the scale on a map to calculate the distance between two towns on a map. On a map of Ontario, the straight-line distance between Windsor and Toronto is 3.6 cm" (Brown et al., 2006, p. 58). In each case, spaces within the national container are used to frame inherently non-

nationalist problems to the exclusion of spaces beyond the national space and in both cases, the deictic words *you* and *we* are used to include the reader and set bounds within the unnecessarily present national space.

The exclusive containment also takes the form of nationalizing statistics through the use of Canadian data from official nation-state agencies. For example, *Addison Wesley*, in prefacing a section on data collection, notes the following: “every five years, Statistics Canada (Stats Can) collects data from one in five households in Canada. It uses these data to help *us* better understand our country, including its people, natural resources, educational needs, society and cultures” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 187). Here, the articulation of an *us* with the Canadian national container is rather explicit – *us* are Canadians who can be quantified by the national-state apparatus; *we* become its people and members of the society and cultures. This statement exists in relation to others that mention the statistics agency that, as a consequence, creates a larger conversation wherein Statistics Canada becomes the ultimate measure of data for *us*. For example, *Addison Wesley* reminds *us* that, “Statistics Canada is the federal government department that collects data from every household in Canada. Private companies conduct surveys and publish the results. You need to understand how to interpret that data you read” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 182). Are *we* to assume here that the federally collected data is the important data that needs to be interpreted and understood? The presence of a Mountie (more on the visual flagging coming) on the opposite page would suggest that the national context and its statistical agency are indeed the important source of knowledge or what Billig (1995) might call the “endemic condition.” Indeed, frequent references to Statistics Canada as the source of data

for the text implies a greater level of import relative to other sources (eg. Brown et al., 2006, pp. 192, 197, 199, 201).

Not all examples of this process of containment depend on Canadian data however. *Addison Wesley*, in representing statistical data, makes use of and encourages students to use data from the United Kingdom. Here though, two issues arise. First, the language in *Addison Wesley* around the question reminds students that the United Kingdom is another national container: “to find data from students in other countries, follow these steps” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 193). Given that the preceding page makes use of Canadian data, one can reasonably assume that “other” here implies non-Canadianness and specifically, the British context. Second, the same page encourages students, “to use the Random data selector to obtain data from the United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand, and parts of Australia” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 193). This list of nations is exclusively Anglophone (at least partially) and comprised of nations in the semantically contested Anglosphere, a region that Bennett (2002) argues has “necessarily imprecise borders” but is still inclusive of Canada, which, with South Africa, “are powerful and populous outliers” (p. 2).

Finally, this form includes personalized notions of nationalized statistical inclusion wherein individuals in the text begin exploring Statistics Canada data, effectively putting a personal face on the import of national understandings. For example, *Nelson Math* creates a short narrative around the uses of nationalized data:

Rowyn and Stefan read that Canada’s population in 1930 was about 10 million people. They wondered what the population would be 100 years later, in 2030. [...] I used my web browser to go to the Statistics Canada Web site, www.statscan.ca. I found a Web page with Canadian population growth data by following the steps

below. [...] I found the data I needed. I can see a trend. I will be able to use the data to predict the population in 2030. (Beales et al., 2006, p. 98)

Here, *we* are told of one student's explorations of Canadian data and its use. Implicitly, this exploration highlights the ways that students should model *their* thinking, both mathematically and as a person within a national container. Stefan, the student referred to by the pronoun *I*, makes the national space seem self-evident as the source of knowledge.

In privileging the national bounds as the metaphorical conceptual and geographic limit for what constitutes relevant place, the texts (re)produce the imagined bounds of the nation and point to a *here* that is *ours*. Indirectly then, the texts deictically nationalize mathematics knowledge, fostering a particular orientation to a national *here* and *us*.

Inclusive statistical containment. Statistical containment is not exclusively restricted to the national space. In a more indirect fashion, statistics can be used to structure the known context for students by persistently reminding *them* that Canada is not only important but always worth considering even when global examples are used and/or the Canadian context is not specifically relevant. For example, *Nelson Math* uses the national container as a valuable metric that students can use to glean or compare data in relation to other nations: “the countries that won medals in the winter Olympics from 1924 to 2002 are listed in the table” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 114). The list includes nine countries that won medals in the Winter Olympics during that period, one of which is Canada. On its own, this is not all that intriguing since, during that period, athletes from Canada did indeed win medals. This question however reflects the nature of a familiar template in the texts wherein the national container always injects itself into contexts where inclusion is not necessary for the purposes of clarity or mathematical pondering. In this way, the

disinterested essence of numbers becomes interesting by positioning the national context as (at a minimum) partially necessary. Consequently, the reader is reminded that although an international world exists, there is a Canadian national container that needs to be known in relation to it.

This inclusive approach, the “international plus Canada” template, manifests itself throughout both mathematics textbooks. For example, *Addison Wesley* asks the following of students:

We use numbers to describe situations, to compare quantities, to make decisions, and to support points of view. In the media, the numbers indicate that Canada is a good place to live. How can we use the data to justify Canada’s high ranking as a place to live? (Brown et al., 2006, p. 9)

Subsequent to this is a list of countries and their incomes, literacy rates, infant mortality rates, physicians per 100,000 people and estimated populations. The students are asked to devise four different problems that can be solved using a variety of techniques (such as estimation). In no way is Canada necessary to the data context being presented and used for this exercise, nor are the fake newspaper clippings around the side that laud the social prosperity within Canada (literacy rates, high school graduation, life expectancy and overall quality). Yet, *we* are asked to use this data to justify something about the Canadian national context. *Nelson Math* does something similar, asking students to use a table for review purposes:

The following database shows population characteristics for selected countries.

Compare the data to determine a relationship between life expectancy and income.

Construct a scatter plot to compare the number of people per motor vehicle and

income. Is there a relationship between these two factors? (Beales et al., 2006, p. 117)

In each case, the texts use the international context to display the relative success of *our* country. Such statements inclusive of the unnecessary national container permeate discussions that places are used as supporting data. The simplicity of this can be seen in texts such as *Nelson Math* wherein readers are presented the following: “this chart shows the estimated dog and cat populations in several countries in 2002” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 94). Once again, the text asks a series of questions about this data that includes a list of eight countries, one of which is Canada. The inclusion of Canada is entirely unnecessary as the presentation of such data can be done with any number and arrangement of nations. However, with the arrangement of nations as it is presented, Canada comes to be a type of benchmark. Its presence at the bottom of the list positions the national space as a metric against which other nations can and should be measured and understood. In a different but equally effective sense, this could be read as signifying Canada’s rather small population in relation to the other nations while concurrently signalling its importance in being included.

The inclusion of the national space is not always directly apparent in the questions at first glance but the national container makes its presence known in follow up questions. For example, *Nelson Math* provides statistical data in a question that is initially exclusive of the Canadian national container. In the first part of the question, students are asked, “how would you reorganize the following two databases to create one database” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 101), an exercise that contains data about area, imports to Canada, continent, population and exports from Canada for five countries. Here, even though Canada is not an

example piece of data, all of the countries are related to Canada. Compounding this is the persistent inclusion of Canada in each of the four follow up questions:

- b) How would you sort your database to find the European country with the greatest population that trades with Canada?
- c) How would you find the country in Asia whose exports to Canada and imports from Canada have the greatest total?
- d) Which country comes closest to breaking even in trade with Canada (that is, whose imports to Canada are almost equal to Canada's exports)?
- e) To which country does Canada export the most? To which country does Canada export the least? (Beales et al., 2006, p. 101)

In this case, while not the focal point of the data itself, Canada becomes the frame through which much of the data is presented and then consequently understood.

The nation, as seen above, does not always have to be obviously present as the framing factor (at least initially). In one particular instance, *Addison Wesley* neglects the larger social context, indirectly securing the national container as an important part of a region without being specific about the national space. For example, the text asks the reader to look at, "some data about countries in North America" (Brown et al., 2006, p. 77). This example is particularly interesting since the question presents data for only Canada, the United States and Mexico, a collection of countries that is but a fraction of the countries in North America. However, as with most representations, there is an element of uncertainty about whether or not the Canadian national context is the intended focal point. Take for instance a question in *Addison Wesley* about the largest lakes in the world. Here, a chart is provided that presents the area of the ten largest lakes in the world (Brown et al.,

2006, p. 43). Although four of these lakes are explicitly noted as being within North America, none of the data or follow up questions are explicit about the national context (despite the fact that three are Great Lakes, Huron, Michigan and Superior, and one is wholly “Canadian,” Great Bear Lake). While it is possible that the question was included because of the strong implicit connection to the Canadian national container, insufficient discussion around this possibility precludes a claim from being made. Consequently, while the texts may very well articulate problems exclusive of the national context when using places, inferences may be drawn about the importance of Canada¹⁸.

Visual containment: flagging. Although effectively containing what counts as worthy knowledge to the Canadian context through language, the mathematics textbooks also assist in flagging, or symbolically representing, the national context visually. Billig (1995) reminds *us* that, “flags are [mostly] ignored” and that the process of flagging, the marking of the nation with visual signifiers emblematic of the national context, “are habitually overlooked” (p. 43). These flags, visual signifiers of the national space and its existence in a world of other nations, point to the contained space and particular contours of its existence. Billig (1995) argues that, “daily, the nation is indicated, or 'flagged', in the lives of its citizenry” (p. 6), a process that depends on the passive consumption of visual representations to remind individuals of the inhabited national space. The textbooks, as visual pedagogical artifacts, has visual cues located throughout that point to and reaffirm the socio-political context that the reader is situated.

This process of demarcating the knowable bounds of national life through visual representations manifests itself regularly in the mathematics textbooks in the form of

¹⁸ Given that I do not interview students about their reading of statements such as these, I offer this only as a possibility and not as an empirical finding.

representations of currency. For example, in *Nelson Math*, a problem is posed to the students concerning probability (Beales et al., 2006, p. 415). The problem uses currency as the object that students use to calculate the probability involved in a purchase. Currency, as largely tied to nations exclusively (exception do exist like Canadian Tire money, that itself is still nationally marked), represent the existence of nations and are replete with national accomplishments, figures and symbols. In Canada, the currency is no different – the bills prominently feature important historic figures who themselves reflect the racialized and nationalist historical accomplishments of Canada. The coins all feature the monarch, the word “Canada” and a symbol of national identity (including such animals as the caribou on the quarter and a loon on the loonie), consequently flagging ties to the monarch and a set of rather arbitrary tropes whose sole purpose is to represent nationalism, a flagging that “remain[s] unnoticed in daily financial transactions” (Billig, 1995, p. 41) and transactions of knowledge about mathematics in the national context. In this mathematics question, a picture of two loonies, a dime and two quarters prominently mark the page, for example, signalling the bounds of important knowledge about economics. A similar use of (unnecessarily so) national currency appears elsewhere, in a question asking students about the mass of a coin, specifically a toonie (Beales et al., 2006, p. 3).

In each case of represented currency, only that of the Canadian national variety appears. Compounding this nationalization of mathematics through the use of currency is the use of it in contexts where the currency doesn’t serve a direct pedagogical purpose, simply visually complementing a question that, for example, asks students, “how are multiplication and division calculations with decimals the same as multiplications and division calculations with whole numbers that have the same digits? How are these

calculations different?” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 53). This makes the national currency the standard for understanding not just money but it also suggests that Canadian economics are important to know, a standard exacerbated by the persistence of the Canadian currency as the only currency used for mathematics learning.

In most cases however, the presence of the currency articulates either with the inhabited context or *you*. For instance, *Nelson Math* asks the students the following: “suppose that you have some \$2 coins and \$5 bills. The total value of the coins and bills in \$100” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 256). The dollar, signified through the use of its symbol (\$), limits the realm of national currencies to a select few (Canada, the United States and Australia for example) or, at most, countries that use the dollar sign to signify their non-dollar based currencies (for example, the Brazilian Real). However, the unassuming and unquestioned connection to the Canadian dollar, is made possible here through the omnipresence of only Canadian currency, a presence that is manifested here through the prominent display of an assortment of five-dollar bills and toonies (see Beales et al., 2006, p. 256). A mere four pages after this, students are asked again to understand mathematics in relation to the national currency in being asked to, “evaluate the expression if there are 21 dimes, 23 nickels, and 25 quarters” (Beales et al., 2006, p. 260). A similar use of currency as relevant to *your* context also occurs in the *Discovering* textbook when it asks the students to consider, “how your federal tax dollar was spent 1998-1999” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 148), a request that illustrates spending using a loonie as the backdrop for a pie graph (see Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 148).

In each instance above, the texts use subtle significations to demarcate the realm of knowledge for student readings. By continually foregrounding the national context and/or

reaffirming its import within discussions of multinational contexts, students are continually subject to a nationalizing representation of knowledge. In this sense, the mathematics textbooks are active texts in the production of the national container, reinforcing the bounds of the national space. As Anderson (2006) reminds us, nations are limited in that, “even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations” (p. 7). Here, the mathematics textbooks frame this finite limit through continual reminders that the realm of understanding is limited to that which is Canadian. Mathematics, however, is far from the only subject to engage in such a practice for language arts textbooks engage in similar forms of national demarcation and containment.

Language Arts and Containment

Much like the mathematics textbooks, the language textbooks undertake a similar project of containment. Take for example a vignette in *Nelson Literacy 8: Chasing a Dream and Reality Check*¹⁹ (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a) about a magician from China who came to Canada and has since experienced success. As the text notes, “her success is no illusion: Chinese-born magician Juliana Chen travels Canada and the globe, amazing audiences with her sleight of hand” (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a, p. 70). Here, the reader is reminded that there is a Canada and a global context (a different manifestation of inclusive containment), one inseparable from the other. This dichotomization of Canada and the world suggests a relationship where one is independent of the other. The dichotomy presents itself later wherein the text tells *us* that, “today, she happily tours Canada and the world, with regularly scheduled stints in Las Vegas and Germany, but her first home

¹⁹ Hereafter referred to as *Chasing a Dream*.

continues to be Canada” (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a, p. 70). Once again, the reader is reminded of the division of contexts – there is a Canada that is describable independently of the world or global context. Additionally, *we* are reminded that although success can propel people to explore and travel the world, the national context is the one that remains *home*, not a neighbourhood, city, province or any other sort of space.

Assumptions of national presence. One of the primary techniques for defining the national container and one’s relationship to it is through the use of *you*. In creating a relationship between something that is shared and *you*, the text concurrently contains the national space and *your* relationship to it. For example, in *Nelson Literacy 8: No Limits & Secrets*²⁰ (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008c), the text presents a discussion on television. Here, the texts put forward the subsequent statement about television: “the following show was pitched to Canadian networks in April 2008. Does this TV show concept have what it takes to make it onto your local station” (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008c, p. 100). The text here describes a show being pitched to Canadian networks, a set of networks that have a relationship with *your* local station. The chain here implicates *you* in this relationship between the national networks and local networks that are identified as being of relevance to *you*. What follows is a description of a show that is of interest (at least tangentially) to *you* and *your* local network. The description explores an opportunity for a show that relies heavily on an understanding of wilderness as being of some interest to Canadians:

Four teams compete to see who can conquer the Canadian wilderness, master the challenges, and find their way back to civilization, safety and comfort. Some players have never seen a tree before. Others eat grub for breakfast regularly! But

²⁰ Hereafter referred to as *No Limits*.

who has what it takes to bring the team home? Who will win the ultimate reality show experience and a MILLION dollars? (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008c, p. 100)

This narrative of the wilderness, hardly an unfamiliar trope in conceptions of the nation (Gulliver, 2011; Kaufmann & Zimmer, 1998), persists here in a rather unremarkable fashion through the implication that *you* might have an interest and a knowledge of the value of wilderness as a measure of good Canadian television. While this does imply a particular character of Canadianness, the efficacy of the excerpt lies with its articulation with the previous comment. There are the subtle reminders that this show is about Canada, an argument that is ostensibly important and relevant to *your* local context. The positioning of “your local station” between two utterances that make exclusive use of the title Canadian provides an implied context for where the *you/your* is situated.

You are also someone who is concerned with the national space, a concern that is much more direct than the last implication about reality television that depends much more on implied relationships to the national container. As offered up in *Language 8*:

What is your personal view of Canada? What do you appreciate most about Canada? What makes you proud to be Canadian? When do you feel this pride the most? [...] What responsibilities do you have as a Canadian citizen? What values do Canadians have in common? (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 215)

The grammatical abundance of *you* in this excerpt implies that *you* have a view of Canada, that, by itself, is not necessarily indicative of a personal involvement with the national space (you don't have to be a Canadian to have a view of Canada). That said, *you* are asked about what makes *you* proud to *be* Canadian and what responsibilities *you* have as a citizen which does position *you* within the national context.

The use of first person pronouns is not the only way such a containment process works. For example, in *Chasing a Dream*, the text notes the following:

There are no Canadian laws stopping magazines from retouching whatever they want, but there are MANY standards and professional codes of ethics making sure that our journalists aren't lying to us. There's a whole different set of standards that journalists have to follow in order to ensure that we are getting the truth. And while we expect what we read in our local paper is fact, recently photojournalism has come under fire. (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a, p. 16)

Like the other texts, *Chasing a Dream* positions *us* within the national container, stating that Canadian laws stopping journalists from lying to *us*. By invoking the laws of the nation-state as applying to us, the text signals the national condition of *our* context.

Utterances such as this link Canadian laws with the national *we* that cares about the national space and *we* are subsumed within a concern about journalistic integrity. Indeed, the pronoun *we* repeats itself here, reflecting this pressing issue that is thankfully regulated by *our* laws, a set of laws defined in relation to the national space and not any sort of philosophical or moral traditions of honesty or integrity.

Flagging. Much like the math textbooks, the visual signifiers crucial to nationalism that Billig (1995) discusses operate within the confines of the texts to remind readers that *we* are *here* and that the *here* is national in nature. For example, the *Nelson Literacy 8: Global Citizens and Tech Then and Now*²¹ textbook depicts the cover of another book in a discussion of the “a we are what we do book” series (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008b, p. 39). By itself, the series name says little about who *we* are in light of the book title itself: “Change the World for Ten Bucks: 50 Ways to Make a Difference” (Hume & Ledgerwood,

²¹ Hereafter referred to as *Global Citizens*.

2008b, p. 39). Linguistically, there is nothing to suggest that *we* articulates with anything since, although the object of inquiry in the book is a set of ideas for world change, it does not say what *we* will be doing the change. The nationalist dimension appears visually in the rather innocuous presence of a maple leaf, one that signifies the “nation-ness” of the book. Simply put, it signifies that the book is targeted at Canadians and by extension, implies that the *we* in the series name is likely Canadian or is aware of the national space (thus (re-)articulating its existence). Even if the book is used in other nations, the maple leaf has served its banal purpose in marking off the national container, reminding students that the *we* in *their* context is Canadian.

The flag presents itself throughout as well. In a speech by the Governor General, the *Language 8* text remind *us* that this is the Canadian Governor General, simplistically flagging the space and the readers attention as belonging to this particular Canadian space (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 201). The flag also appears as well later in the text in an explanation of the Bosnian War (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 218). Aside from the story about a flight home to Canada and the dialog between a Canadian and someone who survived the war that this explanation prefaces, there is no scholastic benefit or purpose to the flag other than as a visual signifier of the national context. Even indirect flags of the national space potentially impress upon the reader the idea of the national space as important. For example, a story in *Chasing a Dream* entitled “Selling Canada” is accompanied by various visuals that remind students of *their* presence in Canada (Hume & Ledgerwood, 2008a, pp. 58–60). Posters and pictures containing imagery of the nation including the maple leaf and the western frontier are part of a story on selling the nation, a story in a text that

preoccupies itself with developing a narrative around the selling, marketing and consumption of media and goods.

Ellipsis. The reinforcement of the national container exists elliptically as well. As Billig (1995) reminds us, ellipsis is the deictic act wherein that being referred to is unmentioned, a moment where, “the country need not be named to be indicated as the ground on which the figures of speech appear” (p. 107). This process of ellipsis makes possible the containment of the nation without explicit mention of the country itself, a strategy that utilizes context and prior knowledge to create the idea that the nation is the referent even though it is not mentioned. The text *Language 8* (Pearson et al., 2008) does this wonderfully in an anecdote about a tennis court and the “federal government’s” role in its erection. Here, the text uses *federal government* elliptically, tying it to the Canadian national context. In a story about a young boy who plays tennis, the textbooks notes the following: “six months later a federal government employee happened to notice that the junior tennis champion of the entire province of Quebec had come from the town of Lac Vert, a place where the government had built a tennis court” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 137). This is preceded by the following: “after the mine closed in Lac Vert, Quebec, the federal government built a tennis court. The federal government built the tennis court in Lac Vert, Quebec, as part of a national fitness campaign” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 133). At first glance, nothing here represents a specifically Canadian nature to the national context. As with all elliptical texts however, the deictic language is contextualized and “made Canadian” at the beginning: “Marc Bouchard grew up in Lac Vert, a small town in Quebec. After the mine closed, the Canadian government built a tennis court in Lac Vert to encourage physical fitness in the community” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 133). Re-affirming

this is the inclusion of the province of Quebec on multiple occasions, an inclusion that provides a Canadian meaning to the word *federal*. While the operation of ellipsis here with regards to the word ‘national’ might point to the continued and shifting use of the term national as it is taken up in Quebec (Cook, 2005), the use of *federal* and the non-elliptical “Canadian government” situates this conversation within a discussion of the Canadian context.

The work of ellipsis and its effectiveness can be seen in the ways that it creates assumed understandings. Building on previous work to contain knowledge to the national space, elliptical text further reinforces this, as Billig (1995) reminds us, “without the vulgar business of pointing” (p. 108). In the aforementioned excerpt, the *federal government* comes to stand in for the Canadian government, an assumption made possible by the use of Quebec as a means from which to develop that inference. The ways that this work can be even subtler than this however. In a speech by the Governor General in *Language 8*, readers will note that Michaëlle Jean starts with addressing the *Prime Minister*, a salutation that begins a speech titled, “Governor General’s Installation Speech” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 200). In this context, the Governor General is given no national allegiance in a sidebar asking students to, “think about the main points the Governor General makes in her speech” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 200). Here, the national allegiance of both the prime minister and governor general, titles held by various politicians across the Commonwealth, point to no particular national group, but yet, the titles are used elliptically. As Billig (1995) argues, “the country need not be named to be indicated as the ground on which the figures of speech appear” (p. 107), something accomplished here through the presence of a Canadian flag (as mentioned earlier) on the opposing page along with a quick clarification

early in the speech: “I am proud of the confidence you have placed in me by choosing me as the 27th Governor General of Canada” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 200). Once again, the subtlety of containment wraps the reader within the national space.

Containment through deixis. Through the use of deictic language, flagging and other subtle techniques, the mathematics and language arts textbooks have proclaimed the existence of *our* nation and by implication, *our* involvement within its purview. While the texts, such as *Language 8*, do make claims such as, “I was born and raised in Canada, so our big sport was hockey” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 125), an assertion that qualifies national membership as connected to *our* sport of hockey, the texts preoccupy themselves with simply planting the metaphorical flag in the ground and staking *y/our* space as Canadian. These texts tend to presume knowledge of the space, leaving the definition of its contours to other texts. Thus, these texts, although not preoccupying themselves with defining the racialized deictic national *us* do establish the existence of the metaphorical frame that becomes the measure against the *we* is defined. Taken together, these texts establish the nation as *our* space and *the* space that should be known over others. They collectively make possible the national space and leave it open for definition. It is this process of defining its contours that I now turn.

In this chapter, I argue that a series of texts create the outline or bounds for racialized deictic nationalism; in pointing to a particular racialized deictic national context, the texts state that a nation exists while largely refraining from defining what this nation might look like. In the next chapter, I illustrate how other texts preoccupy themselves with defining the characteristics of these contours and in so doing, depend on the (re-)production of a taken-for-granted nationally contained *us* provided by these texts. In this way, the set

of texts discussed here work in tandem with the texts in the next chapter, serving different but important roles in the process of ensuring the success of racialized deictic nationalism.

To the illustration of this national character I now turn.

Chapter 7: Describing the Racialized Deictic National *Us*

The mathematics and language textbooks, however much they simply convey ideas, do so within a discourse that frames knowledge as something that needs to be known in relation to Canada. At the same time, the texts (re-)create the bounds of what should be knowable and do so in relation to the national space. While this says little about what is “Canadian” in terms of what defines it, the texts do active work and seek to remind students that the national space is *the* space through which knowledge is known and worth knowing. This is made possible by reifying the nation as either the sole place that knowledge is made or, by including it in global discussions, as a space that must be known in relation to others. Some of this work, more so in the language textbooks, include the reader within this space, informing the student that this continually (re-)made space is *y/ours* to know and understand the world through. In the next section, I look at how geography and science textbooks preoccupy themselves with ascribing characteristics to this national container and in so doing, create the racialized deictic national *us* and as a consequence, create a *them* that is naturally excluded (explored in greater detail in chapter 8).

Geography: Creating the National *We*

The curriculum stipulates that students in geography are to learn about human geography, economic systems and migration (Ministry of Education, 2004), a set of themes reflected, in part, in the 2013 edition of the curriculum that emphasizes settlement and global inequality (Ministry of Education, 2013). Each subject area is concerned, in some part, with the interactions between people and the movement of these people across lands and nations. Unsurprisingly then, these textbooks actively work to represent the nation and its role in the

movement and, more importantly, to label individuals in relation to these movements and lands.

The *we's/us'es/our's* created through the text operate in different ways. In one sense, there is the more implicit *we* that binds peoples together but not explicitly so with the national container. In a second sense, the texts more actively articulate *we* with the national space and do so by describing how it is that *we* are members of the national container, securing the racialization of an *us* that is essentialized, differentiated on arbitrary but reified lines and continually reproduced. The former are not always marked with deictic language that would be indicative of a national/*you* articulation, operating instead through the use of more implied *we's/us'es/our's* or second person language such as *you*. This form can be just as effective (if not more so) as the language makes its claims without being blatantly obvious to the readers. The other is the explicit *we*, the creation of a community of racialized deictic national *us* Canadians that is clearly marked.

Implicit *we*. The implicit *we*, however much the characterization may imply that *we* is not present, can exist in this circumstance and gets supported by deictics such as *you*. For example, as *Discovering* (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000) notes in relation to a chapter on economics, “in this chapter, we focus on how economics is a part of our lives. The information and activities will help you [...] compare how countries in the global community consume resources” (p. 104). A rather innocuous statement but one that sets up the relationship between a *you*, the reader, and an *our* that is yet to be clearly defined except for its relationship to some form of economics. While the meaning of the *we* isn't anchored to any particular referent, the statement sets up a context where shared understandings will be made available and consequently, ones that *you* will need to understand along with the

other members of the defined *we*. The same text presents a similar articulation between *you* and *we* earlier in the text in relation to population patterns, arguing the following: “in this chapter we focus on population patterns in Ontario, Canada and the world. The information and activities will help you [following this is a list of tasks]” (p. 20). Like the previous utterance, *you* are drawn into a relationship with a *we* that will have a particular interest in population patterns. Unlike the previous utterance however is a subtle hint as to what *we* and *you* articulate with. Here, Ontario, Canada and the global context are implicated as possible referents for how *we* and *you* might identify.

The *we* does not have to be present however and in moments such as this, the *we* can be reasonably inferred from the context. In a chapter preface, the *Discovering* (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000) text notes that, “we [will] focus on how cultural features spread” (p. 182). This discussion around cultural diffusion, a process not inseparable from any particular nation, includes: “information and activities will help you show an understanding of the effects that migration has had on Canadian culture and your sense of identity” (p. 182). Here, the *we* exists in a statement separate from the latter one but the context suggests that *we* will be looking at the national context, something that has clear implications for “your sense of identity.” *Your* identity is also assumed to articulate with a Canadian culture, one that will depend on some essentialized and (re)imagined notion of the cultural (and consequently racialized) *us*. This is made possible, in part, by the physical proximity of the words *you* and “Canadian culture,” making the articulation not only apparent through the use of the language in context but through the literal presence of *you* close to “Canadian culture.” What is intriguing here is how this culture gets taken up in the continental sense; the discussion

following this talks about “North American” culture that although not specific to any one national context, includes *us* (as those who live in North America).

The North American *Us*. The ways that the national *we* get defined, perhaps counter-intuitively, sometimes gets framed in relation to a North American *we*. In the Canadian context however, this is perhaps not all that novel an observation as Canadian national identity has commonly been defined against and understood in relation to an American one (see Seiler, 2002), a juxtaposition that situates “Canadianness” within a continental context. As von Heyking (2006) argues, the juxtaposition of the two different national contexts in early 20th century textbooks was used to augment and strengthen (English) Canadian notions of national identification. In these texts, this can occur in rather subtle fashions. For example, take the following from a speech in *Pearson Geography* from former U.S. president Bill Clinton: “in 1995, U.S. President Bill Clinton said, ‘Canada has stood for all of us as a model of how people of different cultures can live and work together in peace, prosperity and understandings’” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 172). Here, *us*, which includes Clinton himself, points to an *us* that isn’t exclusively Canadian but instead, it points to one that has benefitted from ostensible Canadian peace and tenacity in the face of cultural and social adversity (the discussion focused on the success of English/French relations). In so talking about an externally defined *us*, the national container gets strengthened and *we* come to be defined against a set of principles and characteristics.

The previous example, however much it may implicitly rely on a North American *we*, is further supported by explicit North American *we’s/us’es/our’s* that are culturally and socially defined. For instance, *Discovering* states that, “one way to understand **culture** is to look at examples of our own. See what features of North American culture you can identify

in the following description” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 182). In this excerpt, elements of a racializing grammar linger as the statement assumes an essentialized culture that can be used for comparison, a delineation of *our* culture that is necessarily contingent on particularly selective cultural tropes and artifacts. *We* are (re-)made here as a particular cultural people who have affinities towards specific cultural interests that are rather limited. Indeed, that list of qualities is rather myopic and exclusive of particular cultural and religious beliefs. Specifically, “North American” culture is defined, in part, by teenage interest in “popular music, blue jeans, and ‘hip’ clothing”, “the use of much electrical equipment and highly processed convenience foods”, “the use of makeup by teenage girls and women” and “dating by young people” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 184). More interestingly however, the national *we* gets expanded to the North American context, an expansion that could extend to include all of Central America along with the United States. In effect, this becomes the continental *we*, a *we* that is ultimately limited to a select economically defined *we*. Augmenting this list is a story about Angela’s day (a character in the textbook), a day that is characterized by some of the elements of a typical North American life listed above. This North American life though is one of wealth: “how can you tell from Angela’s story that a fair amount of wealth is typical in North American culture” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 184).

While the list of typical characteristics in the preceding paragraph is inclusive of Spanish speaking people, the concentration of wealth in North America for those who are English (and to an extent French) speakers implicitly excludes those outside of Canada and the United States. This extends the bounds of the national container for the purposes of describing it without letting the container crack (allowing it to maintain its coherence and

discursive integrity); here, it is possible that there is still a Canadian identity but one that shares similarities elsewhere. Indeed, the discussion around “a sense of identity” a few pages later falls back to a discussion of Canada, one where multiculturalism allows *us* to enjoy aspects of other cultures: “living in such a society allows us to enjoy many of the foods, traditions and other cultural features brought here from other parts of the world” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 188). Here, the grammatical *us* comes to be an essentialized grouping, one that exists *here* in a place that is able to enjoy a variety of foods. Ultimately, the list of aforementioned characteristics appears to shape a common *us* that is spread across various national containers but, as von Heyking (2006) notes, this likely assists in strengthening who *we* are as a country. Indeed, those list of characteristics are set in relation to a list of goals for the chapter, one of which is to “show an understanding of the effects that migration has had on Canadian culture and your sense of identity” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 182).

The juxtaposition of *us* with others for the sake of articulating *our* interests also happens when these continental associations (as with “North American”) encounter the rest of the world of nations. For example, the *Pearson Geography* text states that, “in 1994, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed between Canada, the United States, and Mexico. It created a trade bloc to rival the European Union—although the NAFTA countries do not share a common currency or a common political system” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 123). Once again, the combative verbiage appears when the excerpt states that the national containers constructed a “bloc” that was designed to “rival” that of the European Union. Whatever the politics that precipitated the creation of the trade bloc, the text includes excerpts from what one would assume are important business people and/or politicians. One of these is Maude Barlow, the chairperson for the Council of Canadians. She

argues that, “the outflow of business has been phenomenal... We need to abdicate [end] the agreement. Otherwise, we will ...become a nation of warehouses [and no factories]” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 123). Here, an insecurity about the national *we* makes an appearance in a discussion that is structured around both Canada’s role and the relation between NAFTA and the EU. *We* are not all that concerned about NAFTA’s success in relation to the EU and instead, *our* concerns in relation to other nations takes precedence. A concerned *us* in light of trade and economic relations with others when directly involving the national container appears to be something that persists in *our* fears.

The economic *we*. As implied by the last excerpt, trade and economics play a role in the narrative woven across the texts and does so through a reference to the nation-state, that in these discussions supplants the cultural characteristics as the means of containing *our* interests and knowledge. The consequences of this is the creation of an economic *us*, a group of people that comes to be defined by its consumption patterns and financial proclivities that are tied to presence in *our* nation-state in essentialized and frequently reproduced ways. The geography textbooks, particularly, present a collection of subdued statements of *we-ness* that existed in a scattered arrangement. When brought together, the collection paints an interesting tapestry that limits and reifies the national container around a set of economic characteristics and conditions.

The texts represent taken-for-granted notions of *we-ness* around simplistic notions that fail to capture the lives of a significant number of people. For example, the *Discovering* text states that *we* cannot be satisfied, always unable to meet all of *our* wants and needs:

Goods and services are important to us because they satisfy our needs and wants. In order to produce goods and services, we need *resources* such as land, labour, and

factories. Unfortunately, we can never have enough resources to provide for *all* our needs and wants. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 104)

It is important to note that much of what is said here is true of all people – goods and services are important to all people to serve *their* needs. Here, as well, nothing makes the *we* a national type, a conclusion that further supports the global potential of this statement (however much it may reflect a privileged position that *our* needs can be satisfied). A focus on Canadians though becomes clear a mere five pages later:

In many parts of the world, consumers are not able to buy as much as most Canadians. They may work as hard or harder than many Canadians, but their pay is often very much lower. As a result, they cannot buy the same kinds of goods and services that we do. (p. 109)

In providing a context for who *we* are and by concomitantly articulating a *their*, the text limits and ultimately furnishes *us* with a essentialized understanding of *us* and *them*, defining *our* economic proclivities as ones characterized by greed and/or consumption and *theirs* as necessary for survival. The *we* here comes to articulate with Canadian identification, an connection that represents *us*, by implication, as hard workers (*they*, after all, might work as hard as *we* do) and relatively speaking, reasonably wealthy. *We* are also told that *we* have access to goods and services, something that foregoes critical discussions of inequality in Canada and one that grammatically racializes *we-ness* by essentializing and repeating cultural notions of *us-ness*. Ultimately, this is a quintessentially arbitrary divide, one rooted in macroeconomic assumptions about wealth in Canada that fail to adequately reflect the lived realities of many of *us* who may or don't feel as if *we* don't have enough and those of the *their* who may very well live lives of excess and thus, may be privileged enough to buy

the same types of goods and services that *we* can. In so doing, the passage elides the possibilities of nuance, the realities of inequitable resource access in Canada and the ways that *our* needs and wants are interconnected with those of *theirs* and thus, not easily separable.

While this discussion describes the existence of economic systems as a whole and makes a claim true for all people, the *Discovering* chapter begins before this excerpt with the following: “in this chapter we focus on how economics is a part of our lives” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 104). The subsequent discussions being the process of making this *our* a Canadian one: “in many parts of the world, consumers are not able to buy as much as most Canadians” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 109), a statement that contributes to the necessary repetition occurring in the racialized *we* above that has access to various goods and services. In other words, the statement here contributes the racialization of *our-ness* by serving to support and reassert the articulation of Canadian with the aforementioned essentialized *we* who cannot get enough. *Our* lives take on an essential feature (the centrality of economics to *our* lives) and what defines *us* is done so along arbitrary lines (economic criteria being one of many possible means of defining an *us*). After all, “we can never have enough resources to provide for *all* our needs and wants” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 104) but *we* are much more economically than an ability to meet needs.

This insatiable desire manifests itself elsewhere as well. For example, the same text states that, “in Canada, we use money to pay for most of our needs and wants. In other countries, people grow their own crops to get their daily food requirements” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 86). The needs and wants that *we* have, a trope that persists, suggests that not only do *we* have them (and that they are important to *us*) but that *we* can pay to satisfy

them unlike a nebulously defined *their*, inferred as a *them* from the statement “in other countries.” This latter *their* also gets essentialized; no space is made for these other countries to get represented in any way other than as spaces where food has to be grown. Here, as well, *you* are a part of the national economic nation, a nation that unquestioningly meets most of its needs through the use of financial capital, an assumption that essentializes *our* practices of consumption along arbitrary lines (why does financial capital necessarily have to define *our* patterns and desires and why does this have to exclude those who might grow *their* own food?) and supports the reproduction of *us* as a culturally consumerist peoples.

In *Pearson Geography* (DesRivieres, 2008), the interconnection between *you* and the economic national container persists. In discussing economic patterns, the text notes the following in framing the context and content of the forthcoming chapter:

In Unit 1, you explored patterns of settlement, land use, and the living conditions of communities and countries around the world. Each of these societies has a type of economic system that produces, uses, and distributes goods and services. These systems vary depending on many factors, including resources, industries, traditions, government policies, and trade relationships. How are you a part of the Canadian economic system? Perhaps you provide a service when you help out at home or volunteer in the community. Or you get paid working for a neighbour or a family business. All of these activities reflect part of the Canadian economy. How would this be different if you lived in a society in another part of the world? (p. 67)

In this rather protracted excerpt, *we* can see the subtle construction of the economic Canadian, one that exists independent of other national contexts that once again gets grouped as a monolithic “other” that doesn’t partake in the “activities” that *you* do. In the first part,

the text acknowledges the existence of nationally based economic systems and follows this with explicitly locating *your* interests within the realm of the Canadian space. In this moment, the text reaffirms the implicit intention of the question below the title for this chapter: “how do economic systems influence industries across Canada and the world?” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 66). There is the economic Canadian and the economic other, and within the Canadian nation, it is presumed that *you* provide a service by working in the community or a family business.

Resources and objects. One of the more common ways to situate the economic realm as definitive of *us* is the discussion of resources in the country. Ultimately, the national *we* gets commoditized, represented as a people driven largely by *our* love/dependence on oil production and consumption that once again essentializes *us* along arbitrary lines. This process of defining who *we* are in relation to a particular commodity works to contain the identification process. For example, *Pearson Geography* states that, “you will find out how well our country has been faring in the intense competition for export sales” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 110), an *our* whose national referent is quite obviously Canada given the name of the chapter (Canada’s World Trade) and the preceding sentence which provides context: “in this chapter, you will evaluate Canada’s world trade connections” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 110). The *our* comes to articulate with “faring” and “well” here, implying that *we* are a people who fare well, a grammar that racializes the cultural *we* by essentializing *our-ness* in representing *us* as “well-faring” people who enjoy a cultural context of economic prosperity.

How well *our* economy performs is continually reproduced numerous times throughout as the texts remind *us* on numerous occasions that *we* are lucky to have such a

prosperous economy. For instance, *Pearson Geography* states that, “Canada has the world’s second-largest oil reserves. Our economy has benefitted directly from the price of oil” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 119). As *Discovering* reminds us, not only has the national *our* benefitted from oil prices fiscally but also *we* depend on it as a fuel (literally and figuratively) for *our* passion for automobiles:

People in developed nations such as Canada have the most choice when it comes to modes of transportation. [...] Many parts of our culture have been affected by our love for cars. Our highway landscapes, motels (*motor hotels*), drive-through restaurants and banks, and high suburban populations can all be linked to a huge dependence on cars. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 234)

We get represented as being a car crazed national people, essentialized as a people who have structured *their* entire lives around the automobile just as *we* depend on the economic value of the primary source of fuel for these devices. This excerpt, however, vacillates back and forth between the national and continental context. Statements such as, “in North America, the preferred method is clear: the distance people travel by car is *10 to 20 times* greater than the distance they travel by bus or train” and “stock car racing is the fastest growing spectator sport in the United States” (p. 234) complicate the articulation of the grammar and a national identification. However, there is one particularly subtle yet effective connection here. In the list of things that illustrate *our* dependence on cars is the example of a drive-through bank. To the left of this statement is a picture of a car at a drive through branch of “Canada Trust” with the caption, “A drive through bank, Toronto” (p. 234) a statement that not only explicitly marking the national space but also adds a Canadian national context to the grammatical *our* listed.

The *Pearson Geography* book reflects a similar pattern, stating that, “technology continues to improve our mobility. Automobiles and airplanes have become our favourite means of travel” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 150). The statements at the beginning of this paragraph set the national context:

Canada is a nation on the move. You learned that people often choose new communities by the quality of life they offer. Canadians move within their community, province, territory, or across the country to find better jobs, better health care, or better opportunities. Canada’s rural-to-urban shift has been happening for more than a century. (p. 150)

Such an assumption limits how *we* get represented as individuals who have particular transportation tendencies that itself effectively excludes the large contingent of people who live in urban centres and make heavy use of walking as a means of transportation along with those in northerly areas who may make use of ostensibly “non-conventional” modes of transport (to name a few contexts). Here, the racialized deictics operate to fashion an essentialized representation of *our-ness* that is technologically aware and arbitrarily defined by *our* penchant for automobile and airplane based travel.

Trade: imports and exports. The economic dimensions of *we-ness* becomes the central attribute around how Canadianness is defined in geography textbooks. Part of this process of definition is an emphasis on natural resources, a set of objects that are ultimately commodified. Specifically, *our* consumption patterns are defined through simplistic representations of global trade. For instance, *Discovering* states that,

A great deal of the products you use every day are likely to be **imports**. For example, the clothing you put on in the morning may have been made outside of Canada. So

might the radio you listen to as you dress. The orange juice you drink for breakfast came from a southern climate outside Canada, since Canada is too cold to grow oranges. Canada is also too cold to produce the ingredients of the chocolate bars and cola drinks you might have for a snack. Your parents' car may have been imported, as well as the computer you might use at school or home. One reason we buy products from foreign nations is because we do not make those products in Canada. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 153)

The use of *we* here is not entirely problematic for the geographic limits of the national container (in the political and physical sense) do preclude the growth of certain products; people in Canada cannot grow certain things including cocoa and oranges. However, the nationalist *we* as it is defined here does have consequences. In other words, in suggesting that *we* can't grow the ingredients of chocolate and cocoa and thus have to import snacks that *you* like in Canada, the text creates conditions against which *you* are to associate, namely, as an individual who likes chocolate and cocoa, a rather arbitrary means of defining what *we* like. *We* also comes to include the *you* and defines *you* along with the *we*, implicating *you* in the arbitrarily defined consumerist/food based criteria (while also reaffirming the importance of automobiles). In subtle ways, then, the text crafts a representation of *us* and implicates *you* in this representation of who *we* are.

In the excerpt above, the physical and climatic limits of the physical national container come to be used to define characteristics of *you* in Canada, ones that suggest certain consumption and economic choices. This has the consequences of "compressing" the *you* and *we*, a moment that can be seen in the subtle shift from focusing on *you* as the referent to *we* towards the end. The snacks that *you* might like and the clothing *you* might

wear become reflective of things that *we* need to buy from elsewhere, a process that not only defines characteristics of Canadians but also directly implicates *you* into that construction.

This compression can be seen elsewhere as illustrated in *Pearson Geography*:

You might be surprised to know that Canada is locked in a continual struggle with other global powers. It isn't a military battle—it is more like a constant strategic game [...] In this chapter, you will evaluate Canada's world trade connections.

(DesRivieres, 2008, p. 110)

This excerpt precedes the “our country is faring well” extract from earlier. Taken with this excerpt, the compression binds *you* to the national *we*, ascribing and assuming particular characteristics of *you* that correspond to the national *we*. Here, the text positions *you* as potentially surprised about something that becomes *ours* – a concern over national performance. *We*, and by extension *you*, become the concerned Canadian(s). At the same time, militaristic language is used to situate *our* country in relation to others, effectively employing a rhetorical strategy that plays on the emotive capacities of allegiance and combat. What this does is quite simple – it makes *us* interested in those relations of trade mentioned in a text like *Discovering* since it now becomes something integral to national unity and success.

Farming. Within these texts, there is also a particular representational collocation of an *us* and the need to farm. The farming narrative of *them* becomes something that doesn't exist *here* – *we* have money to get what *we* need/want, *they* farm and engage in that type of life. Essentialized, this negates farming as a characteristic of Canadian identification, locating it beyond the bounds of deictically defined identification and beyond the purview of an arbitrarily defined essential *us*. In part, this again resorts to economics as a means of

explaining the rationale behind such delineation. For example, an excerpt in *Discovering* reads as follows: “when we describe countries as ‘rich’ or ‘poor,’ we are influenced by differences in their populations’ average incomes” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 86). While the text recognizes that money is used in different ways around the world, implying that money may not be as central to the consumption of goods, it is the work of *we* here that is relevant aside from the potential space to contest notions of consumption. In this excerpt, the *we* articulates with the nation, something re-affirmed in a statement that *they*’s everyone else: “they can meet a great deal of their needs while making and spending less than US\$1 per day” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 86). Who *they* are is left without definition although the picture directly below this of a Sudanese farmer would suggest that Sudanese people are included as part of the *they/them*. There is also a marked essentialism here, one that generalizes the experiences of *them* and does so rather arbitrarily (why does the metric here have to be one American dollar?).

A similar practice of containing farming exists temporally as well in the *Pearson Geography* text. As the textbook states:

Do you live in the city, in the country, or somewhere in between? **Rural areas** usually have a population of fewer than 1000 people, and include farms and small communities. There are many countries with large rural populations, particularly in the **developing nations**, where many people farm or fish to feed themselves and their families. A century ago, more than half of Canada’s population was rural. The landscape was dotted with farms, and nearby villages provided basic services. Today, Canadian farms are much larger. Many hamlets and villages have simply

disappeared. Most rural people drive to the nearest town or city to buy what they need (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 6)

By itself, the excerpt does not preclude the possibility of farm life for the student reader. However, the language suggests that people are moving away from rural areas (and consequently areas with farms), a proposition that is reinforced by the assertion that, “you probably live in an **urban settlement**” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 7). Supporting this is the idea that the “many people” who live in developing nations are not an *us* for, after all, “in Canada, we have no shortage of land, and many opportunities to enjoy a good standard of living” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 3). The commentary on land is interesting as well for it implicitly conflates geographic space on a national scale with the demographics, denying any argumentation that accounts for the nuances of population densities. In other words, it denies the realities of those who might live in dense locations in Canada. Here, then, it essentializes *our* spatial experiences in relation to a conception of national space that is not only arbitrary itself (why does it matter whether or not *we* have a shortage of land) but reproduces the earlier notion that *we* have a lot of various things (whether this be consumer goods, financial capital or, in this case, claims to land).

The text also tersely states that, “Canada is a developed country” and asks us, “how does technology contribute to our standard of living?” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 3).

Interestingly, this last question and statement about the development of *our* nation serves as a caption for a picture of a farmer in a tractor. That said, this is juxtaposed with a picture of cattle helping to plough a field, a picture itself captioned with the following: “how could standard of living be improved in countries with less advanced technology?” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 3). Technology, being an expensive indulgence and luxury, implicitly serves to

suggest that the needs and wants that *we* do have with regards to *our* shrinking rural populations can be met with ease. It also suggests a uniform standard of living; the grammar here serving to make *our* standard of living just that, standard. In so doing, it grammatically racializes *our* quality of life – *we* are essentialized and arbitrarily so as a “space having” people free from the demands of farming.

Migration. The migration motif that structures social studies education at the grade eight level potentially serves as a means of troubling the banality of who *we* are by allowing for more complicated and multifaceted *we's/us'es/our's*. Indeed, the persistence of the “*we* are an immigrant nation” mantra in Canada would suggest that a plurality of *we's/us'es/our's* can co-exist within a land that was ostensibly barren beforehand. However, as Baldwin, Cameron & Kobayashi (2011) illustrates through *their* edited collection on whiteness in Canada, the geographic and social space of Canada is very much one predicated on the elision of others (Aboriginals) that makes this motif possible. Although conversations premised in re-presenting geographic and ecological space are not new (see, for example, Sumara et al., 2001), migration within the space still presents identities as being one of *we-ness* or *they-ness*. How then does this get taken up in the texts?

Thus far, the national container and the national “form of life” has been secured through economic and agricultural tropes that articulate a *we* with particular representations of said conditions. Through this, *we-ness* has been accomplished by making use of difference to differentiate an *us* from *them*. Augmenting this discussion is an emphasis on migration, a discussion that is ultimately contingent on defining who *we* are and who *they* are as migrants to *our* land.

The texts create a stark dichotomy between *us* and *them*. For example, the *Discovering* text states that, “the Canadian government encourages entrepreneurs to immigrate to this country. Upon arriving, they have two years to prove they are running a business that employs at least one Canadian who is not a member of their family” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 129). The statement sets up the essence of migration in relation to the representations being constructed throughout – *they* come *here* to *our* land and, in this particular instance, have to associate with a Canadian, something that *they* are excluded from identifying with. This also risks essentializing *us*, leaving unquestioned differing claims to *this* space and *our* land and in so doing, positioning this place as equally shared by all.

The primary method through which migration in relation to national identity gets articulated is through the immigrant as the unquestioned *them*, a group that is frequently racialized non-white. Take for instance the following discussion from *Discovering*. In relation to an anecdote about an Indian family in Toronto, the text notes the following about the wives in the family being discussed:

The family is economically successful and has adapted well to Canada. They keep some of their traditional culture. [...] Once the children went to school full-time, their mothers went to work outside the home as a secretary and a sales clerk. They wear the same style of clothing as other people at their workplaces. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 229)

While the text does afford the Indian family the possibility of filtering through the permeable national membrane and “adapting” to *us-ness*, the text re-inscribes the *they-ness* with some repetition. Here, *they* partake in similar fashion trends in relation to “other people,” a group of people that can be reasonably assumed to be those that *they* work with. Given the text’s

early statement that immigrants have to prove themselves by, in part, working with “Canadians,” one could infer that the “other” here is in fact *us* despite a positioning of this “other” that actually limits the inclusion of migrants into the collective *us*. However, this might also points to a process where *they* become *us*, a transcendence of *them-ness* that leads to incorporation within the deictic *us*. This would, at first glance, appear to disrupt the rigidity of the process of containment. Such a conclusion, though, neglects to recognize that national identifications, including those of the Canadian variety, are porous (Kymlicka, 2003, p. 383). Individuals may vacillate between *us’es* but what remains stable are the categories that define one’s *us-ness*. In this case, the Indian family becomes *us* but does so in a world where their Indian *them-ness* remains a complementary essentialized, and consequently reproduced cultural category. Concurrently though, the Indian family stands in as symbolic of the essentialized Other, a group that exists as working to escape the essentialist category of *them* the Indian to join the essentialized category of *us* Canadians. Thus, *they* might be able to become *us* but *they* and *us* still exist.

Migrants, however much *they* might attempt to blend in and work amongst *us* also get represented as having a penchant for staying close to *their* cultural roots. However much this might be true or may be a method of managing the culture and social shock that comes with moving between national spaces, the text does not provide room for dissenting views that resist this notion; *they* always want the safety of *their* culture and, consequently, *they* remain different. For instance, in relation to that previous anecdote, the following, in *Discovering*, talks about *their* desire to retain some semblance of a cultural connection to the “old country”:

The children are all teenagers now. Their grandparents are bothered about the fact that they refuse to wear Indian clothes anywhere and eat hamburgers when they go out with their friends (eating beef goes against Hindu traditions). The middle-generation parents are worried about their children losing their culture. They would much prefer them to follow the old traditions. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 229)

Of interest here is the use of the pronoun *they/them* and the ways that it signals how different groups are quickly becoming Canadian in character by disavowing *their* religious traditions (and does so through essentialist assumptions including, for example, the idea that all Hindus identify with a doctrine that espouses the unsuitability of eating beef). In this moment, migration to Canada becomes emblematic of an experience where *they/them* can become *us* by rejecting the traditions brought over to the national context which leaves an essentialized *us* lingering and without contestation. Although seemingly presenting a complication to the rigidity of a racialized *us*, this signals two important points of reinforcement of a racialized deictic national *us*. First, *we* still exist within this frame as does a *them*. While movement of individuals is possible across the grammar, the categories themselves get reaffirmed. Second, this fails to unsettle particular tropes of a national *us*. Despite the presence of a *them* that exists in tension with *our* culture (potentially disrupting it), it is *them* that adapts to *our* national culture, not the reverse. Finally, this excerpt also essentializes *their* Hindu traditions, presenting Hinduism as an “all-or-nothing” commitment, one that fails to attend to the different sorts of relationships that people may or may not have with spiritual systems of belief.

Interestingly, the ways that this can be problematized are framed in a way that elides *us* from culpability. For example, as *Pearson Geography* notes,

Despite our growing need for immigrants, though, Canada does not always offer a warm welcome to these newcomers [...] Given the increasing importance of immigration to the country's future, Canada must do more to welcome these needed immigrants or risk losing them to other countries. (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 170)

While *our* need for immigrants is emphasized from the outset, the language shifts to a reified Canada that is represented as a thing, not something defined by *us'es*. Here, the use of Canada articulates with the state; it is the nation-state apparatus that must do more to welcome *these* people, not *us*. Much like the racism that is temporally contained to a moment outside of the *now* in the texts studied by Montgomery (2005b), concerns over immigration are contained here to a location away from the national *us*. Instead of *us* not doing a good job or *us* needing to do more, Canada is the object that takes responsibility, implicitly displacing blame away from the *us* that are the people of Canada. This helps to offset any negatives that *we* the people might impose. Indeed, the restrictions on immigration use "Canada" without any sort of deictic language to imply that the national *we* (historic and contemporary manifestations) are in part culpable. *Discovering* states something similar:

Canada had few immigration offices in Asia, Africa and the West Indies, so it was difficult for people in these areas to apply to become immigrants. Laws regulated the number of American Blacks, Indians, and Japanese immigrants allowed into the country. Canada even turned back Jews fleeing Nazi persecution during World War II. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 221)

The *Pearson Geography* text mentions something similar in nature just before the previous *Pearson Geography* example: "A century ago, almost all of Canada's immigration came from the U.S., Britain, and Europe. Canadian policy at that time blocked most immigration

from Asia, Africa, and South and Central America” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 165). Such deference to “Canada” as the actor persists across time, suggesting that the process is one where people interact with a reified object (the nation-state), an implication that suggests that the ills and tribulations are attributable to a construct or political entity, not people. This persists through to the end of the chapter in *Discovering*: “you [will] have also seen that immigrants contribute to Canada although they face challenges finding work and maintaining their cultures” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 230). What this accomplishes is quite simple – *we* are removed from discussions of immigration that may implicate *us* in an issue rife with inequalities and racialized problems (Bauder, 2003; Danso, 2002). This has the indirect consequence of, “reaffirm[ing] Canadian benevolence and the choice to immigrate” (Gulliver, 2010, p. 741), a process made possible in part through the repetition of the idea that *we* are a multicultural *we* and that issues with immigration are those of “Canada,” not “Canadians.” At the same time, *we* are positioned as distinct from *them*; in the last excerpt specifically, immigrants are *them*’d however much most people in Canada owe *their* locatedness *here* to immigration. Consequently, immigration issues are due to “Canada’s” inability to accommodate *them*, a group of people that *we* aren’t.

The multicultural *we*. Both texts, unsurprisingly, play into the notion of multiculturalism as defining who *we* are (however much the texts, in the discussion of immigration, work to separate *us* from *them*). The multicultural country is one that gets imprinted onto notions of the nation but in so doing, the texts remind *us* that the multicultural condition is one rooted in differences, one wherein there is a *them* that exists in relation to an *us*. For instance, *Pearson Geography* states the following:

Having a multiculturalism policy means that Canada officially recognizes and supports all cultures living in Canada. The government gives financial support for parades, festivals and other events. The government also supports cultural exchanges between different groups, and actively fights racism. In Canada, immigrants become citizens without having to leave their own culture behind. (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 187)

In this moment, the deictic utterance in the last statement, and the continued use of elliptical language (“the government”), serves a purpose in reminding the reader that however much the migrants may become citizens in a nation that supports cultural pluralism, *their* culture exists in a relation of difference to ours. In this sense, new migrants are made to be a persistent *them* in suggesting that *their* culture is something brought *here* that also different from *ours*. This is not a wholly problematic assertion to make – cultural independence is something to be lauded. However, multiculturalism as a framework for explaining Canadian cultural congruity neglects the ways that it serves as a detriment to groups such as Aboriginal people (St. Denis, 2011) and more broadly, as a framework that doesn't disrupt the naturalness of *us-ness*

The condition set out here also makes possible something noted in the *Discovering* text:

In Canada, laws have been passed and institutions have been funded to help make sure people from all cultures are accepted. This makes Canada a **multicultural society**. Living in such a society allows us to enjoy many of the foods, traditions and other cultural features brought here from other parts of the world. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 188)

Here, multiculturalism comes to articulate with some sense of benefit for *us*, one defined by the collection and mixing that comes with *them* coming to Canada from “other” parts of the world. All people get accepted for *our* benefit as *we* explore, engage and delight in the features from “other” parts of the planet.

The group responsible for this multicultural framework is the deictically regulated “the government.” In his discussion of banal nationalism, Billig (1995) discusses the notion of ellipsis, the idea that objects and groups can be represented as national without actually being articulated as such. In the *Pearson Geography* text, it is “the government” that does the work. The surrounding context uses the reified notion of “Canada” as an actor, leading one to believe that “the government” is the Canadian government, not the provincial, municipal or even cultural system of government that does the work of regulating how *we* benefit or how *they* don’t have to leave anything behind when *they* encounter Canadian multiculturalism. Consequently, notion of multicultural *we-ness* gets articulated with the national container and its political cognates. After all, Canada is a place where the *we-ness* is one comparably better than other contexts where *we-ness* is much more homogeneous. As *Pearson Geography* states,

In Canada, immigrants become citizens without having to leave their own culture behind. In other words, a person can be Polish or Arab *and* Canadians. This is different from the **melting pot** of the United States, where newcomers are assimilated. In the U.S., there is no federal multicultural policy to support cultures. Instead, it is seen as a personal matter. People can call themselves Polish-American or Arab-American if they feel it is important. (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 187)

Not only does this reaffirm a positive image of *us* in relation to the United States but it also reminds students that there is a “Canadian” and a *them*, a proposition that potentially furthers an *us vs. them* mentality without shades of gray. Here, also, is the operation of ellipsis – it is a federal policy, not a Canadian one. This excerpt also denies censure of the state; immigration regulations and the exclusions that operate through state policy are elided in favour of discussions of national culture and the congruence of *their* culture with *ours*. It also denies non-hyphenated Canadianness, serving as part of the continual reproduction of a distinct *us*. Here, the United States is a space of hyphenated identifications whereas Canada is a space of perpetual *us/them* dichotomization – *you* can be *us* and *them* (ostensibly) but never some mixture that might complicate the contained bounds of a clearly delineated *us*. In other words, in denying hyphenation in Canada, the text states that individuals are an *us* and *them*, effectively reproducing the very existence of an *us/them* dichotomy. Much like the discussion of immigration, the racializing of *us* works here in relation to the idea that *we* does and does not include notions of otherness.

Science: The “Objective” Characterization

The science textbooks, contrary to perceptions that the content is removed from the subjective eye of the writer/reader, represents who *we* are and what *we* do through the texts much like the geography texts do. The four areas of discussion—cell biology, systems, water and fluids—are all active in presenting knowledge that *we* ostensibly need to know as readers. Some of these discussions, in particular, are more active in creating a deictic space, using scientific knowledge as a way of imposing notions of *we-ness* onto the readers views of science and *us*.

We the wasteful. As a subject area preoccupied in part with the relationship between the environment and human social systems, the texts make claims about *our* use of resources and the ways that *we* are wasteful. The ways that *we* are represented as wasteful fails to recognize that many people make concerted efforts to avoid wasteful lifestyles, a premise that is naturally non-national in that being environmentally conscious within the national container is not commonly associated with any particular national or racialized category of peoples (expect, perhaps, through perceptions that Aboriginal peoples are more “in touch” with the land). An example of this nationalizing of environmental concerns can be seen in *Nelson Science* which states that, “people produce mountains of waste. Canadians produce about 31 millions tonnes of waste each year. In the past, we just piled it up or buried it” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 20). As stated, *we* Canadians produce tremendous amounts of trash, a sentiment that *you* should be concerned about. Indeed, through a critical thinking simulation, the text suggests that, “as a Grade 8 student who is concerned with the environment, you have been chosen to offer some thoughts [on an oil spill]” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 200). The environmentally conscious *we* comes to include *you* since it is assumed that *you* are cognizant of and concerned about environmental damage. After all, as *Pearson Science* notes:

We are fortunate to live in one of the most water-rich countries on Earth (Figure 12.1). You have learned, however, that there are many reasons for us to be concerned about both our supply of water and our water quality. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 338)

Here, *we* are members of one of the most water rich nations, noted as the Canadian nation in the caption for the figure referenced above: “in Canada, where we have so much fresh water, it is easy to think that our water supply is limitless” (p. 338). Consequently, *we* learn that *we*

have to be concerned about the supply and quality of *our* abundant reserves of water, something that the incorporated *you* comes to learn about. It is this responsibility for the preservation of water that structures much of the discussion around conservation and environmental protection, a discussion that is complemented by discussions around other liquid based resources that *we* have a lot of: oil and water.

Exploiters of resources: oil and water. The texts rely heavily on discussions around both of the liquid resources and the ways that this may be linked to environmental concerns. Complementing this is a related discussion around consumption, linking the economic imperative central to *our* national container to the usage of *our* natural resources. Both resources, individually relevant to discussions of natural resources, get represented in the text as something important to *us*, something *we* need to care about and something relevant to the national context. As *Pearson Science* suggests,

Pipelines cross our country bringing water and fuel to homes and communities.

Usually, the fluids are transported without problems, but sometimes spills can occur.

[Question] 1. Go to ScienceSource to find out the fluids that travel across Canada in pipelines. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 269)

This important resource travels across the national landscape (quite literally) but ostensibly no further, signalling the importance of this resource for *us*. Knowledge of this transportation method also takes on an educational dynamic as *Pearson Science* states that, “our knowledge of fluids has allowed us to transport fluids in a variety of ways” (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 250). In stating that *our* knowledge has been important in the transportation of the fluids, which is consequently bounded by the nation, the text is stating that *our* knowledge is

knowledge within the national space, in effect nationalizing the commodity itself (more on this later).

The primary method of defining the national *us* through resources is through a discussion of water, a topic that get privileged in the textbooks thanks to the curricular obligations. Simply put, *we*, as Canadians, ostensibly have easy access to water. The national *we* though can also be expanded, as with the geography texts, to reach continental bounds. For example, as *Nelson Science* states,

We have access to plenty of water in North America. We often take this resource for granted. Some of us misuse, overuse, or even abuse the water supply. How much water do you think you use in a day (Figure 1)? Let's find out. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 266)

The utterance here accomplishes the representation of *our* relationship to water, tempering this with qualifiers such as “some” and “often” that mitigate the potential essentialism in the text. However, there is still a strong current of bounding occurring through the deictic language, one that confines *our* understanding of relationships to water by *our* access to and use of water. *We*, as North Americans specifically, a proposition that partially obscures the nation and potential disperses blame to a space that includes but isn't exclusively Canadian, may take the resource for granted or mismanage *our* use of it but regardless of it, *we* all have access. Thus, regardless of our potential uses, the text essentializes *us* around access. Some of *us* may abuse the supply, some may not but “we [all] have access to plenty of water” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 266). The final suggestion in that utterance possesses no intrinsically nationally oriented containing language (“let us” could be limited by anything). However, the answer to this question gets presented for *us* on the very next page when it is noted that,

“on average, Canadians use about 330 L of water a day” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 267). While the succeeding question asks the student if, “you use more or less than this” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 267), the national *us* has a value that can now be articulated with the “plenty of access” mentioned earlier. This metric persists across the curriculum as well – the math textbook *Addison Wesley* notes that, “according to one source, the average Canadian uses between 300 L and 350 L of water per day” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 13). This assertion has implications for perceptions of consumerism and consumption in Canada, implying that access is not only tremendously easy but abused by the “average” Canadian. Consequently, the national *us* becomes essentialized, wasteful and neglectful of any obligation to conserve (more on water to come). *Our* cultural proclivity to waste water becomes emblematic of who *we* are, a grammar that, with subtlety, essentializes the Canadian *we* along arbitrary criteria across the curriculum.

The water that *we* use is also highly nationalized, made possible through a process that commodifies it and then represents it as *our* commodity. In this case, *we* have a responsibility to manage and maintain *our* water irrespective of the fact that water is a truly global resource, both in its need, use and through the consequences of use (pollution in one place for example does not respect national bounds and goes wherever the water goes). In this sense, the texts make concerted efforts to make the water *ours*, resting on the bounds of the national container as the limits for *our* water usage patterns. As *Pearson Science* states, “because most of the fresh water in Canada lies below the surface, we need to pay attention to natural and human factors that can affect our groundwater supply” (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 310). Sometimes the deictic articulation and boundedness isn’t so explicit. The same text notes that students will be expected to, “explain how natural events and human activities can

change the water table and affect our water supply” (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 307). Without context, the attempt to claim that *our* concerns should be on *our* water could be a concern about any particular body of water. However, the utterance is part of a set of learning expectations, a set that is fixed against a large graphic that represents a set of water tanks at a treatment plant. Here, “the sedimentation tanks are part of the [...] wastewater treatment plant in Canadian cities and towns” (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 306).

This containment is by no means exclusive to the *Pearson Science* text. The *Nelson Science* text accomplishes a similar feat in quietly articulating *our* concerns about water within the bounds of the national container. As the text states, “in Canada, we usually get our drinking water from wells, lakes, or rivers” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 276). The process of containing *our* concerns also presents itself in case studies, ones that actively seek to limit concerns to the political nation-state. As the *Nelson Science* text notes,

Water can be legally bought and sold across our borders. What are the implications of this practice? Will Canadians be short of fresh water in the future? Find out how much water Canadians export to other countries and the effects this has on our own supply of fresh water. You will summarize your findings in a letter to a local politician. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 324)

Our concerns over water get limited by the needs of the nation-state in that the implications of water sales are represented in relation to the borders between *our* border and somewhere else. Consequently, the student is asked to consider how this affects *our* water supply and how one might go about raising this issue in the political sphere.

The discussions over concerns extend into activity examples as well, reinforcing the idea that this notion of a nationalized conception of water needs to be privileged over a more

global understanding. In the *Nelson Science* text, there is a section on the creation of graphic organizers. In one example, the text discusses placemat organizers, a graphic organizer that, “gives each student in a small group a space to write down what he or she knows about a certain topic” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 409). From here, “the group discusses their answers and writes in the middle section what they have in common” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 409). The example used for this lesson about placemat organizers has as its focal point fresh water in Canada. Each of the sample answers on the part of the students (four in total) all invoke deictic language that articulates *we-ness* with the Canadian nation:

The world is running out of water. Canada has a lot of fresh water. Some of the world’s water is stored as ice. [...] Canada has the most fresh water of any country in the world. We waste a lot of water. [...] The world will soon run out of water. How can we in Canada make sure that we will always have fresh water? [...] Will there be enough water in the future? Since Canada has so much, what should we do with it?
(Paré et al., 2009, p. 409)

The four individual statements made by the four fictitious students posit that *our* concerns need to be understood in relation to Canada. This gets synthesized in the “middle section” with a reminder that *we* and Canada need to cohere: “since Canada has a lot of fresh water, we have a responsibility to use it well” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 409). Not only does this delineate *our* responsibility using rather arbitrary criteria but it fixes not only *our* access but *our* use. There is also a continual reproduction of this very fact within the span of a few statements.

Through the simple representation of abundance, notions of access manifest themselves throughout the science texts. Water becomes the nationally universal resource,

one enjoyed by all of *us*. The texts establish a relationship between *you* and the resource with the *Nelson Science* text stating,

Water is important for everyone. However, people in some regions of the world do not have access to clean water. How would your life be different if you no longer had access to clean water? Do you think you might be able to help people in areas that have no access to clean water? We must all treat Earth's water resources in a sustainable way. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 263)

Although not deictic in relation to a national context, it represents an articulation between the reader and the notion of access to clean water. The *Pearson Science* text does something similar, creating a context that is inclusive of *we* through the assumption that clean water is not a concern: “when we turn on a tap to get water, we usually give little thought to where the water is coming from” (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 324). The quote here uses the collective deictic term to construct the assumption that *we* have access to clean water.

This assumption is also tied to the national container. As stated in the *Pearson Science* text:

When we turn on a tap to get water, we usually give little thought to where the water is coming from. The same holds true when we flush a toilet. We are fortunate to be able to do this. Most of us in Canada obtain water from a municipal water supply like the one you just read about in section 11.2. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 324)

The articulation is set – the *you* and the *us* are the Canadian *you* and the *us*. Indeed, *Pearson Science* notes that *we* don't have to go very far:

People cannot drink ocean water because it is too salty. We can drink only fresh water. In Canada, there is no shortage of fresh water. We never have to go far to see

or stand beside a river, lake, pond or wetland. Most of us have clean, potable water piped right into our homes. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 273)

Aside from the realities of questionable water quality in all national bodies of water (beach closures in the summers speak to this in a very real sense), there is a continued sense of *our* easy access to clean water. The persistence of boil water advisories and questionable water quality in Aboriginal communities suggests elements of deictic exclusion and/or a lack of cognizance around the complexities of such generalized comments (more on this to come).

Oil. Water is not the only resource that gets used to contain and produce reasonable assumptions as to what *we* do or how *we* act. As the state with the third largest proven reserves of crude oil in the world (Central Intelligence Agency, n.d.), it is no surprise that the science textbooks discuss the resource in relation to the national container. Indeed, as a country heavily dependent on natural resources, it is no surprise that oil is a central fixture of what *we* have, what *we* use and what *we* exploit. Concurrently, environmental imperatives structure *our* relationship with the resources.

Keeping with the environmental motif, the science texts warn that *we* need to conserve energy as Canadians. Like water, oil is a global resource found in different locales around the world and used just about everywhere on the planet. The science texts recognize this but set up a juxtaposition of Canada and the world, locating particular individuals solely within the national container and within its realm of interest. For example, as *Pearson*

Science notes:

Our understanding of fluid technology allows us to extract oil from Earth's crust. We use this oil to heat our homes, run our factories, and fuel our cars. However, burning

this oil has caused air pollution and possible climate change. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 248)

By itself, this does little to contain *our* realm of understanding to the national context nor does it define the characteristics of an *us*. However, subsequent statements on the same page emphasize the ways that *we* inhabit a discrete national container within the global context.

First, the *Pearson Science* text notes that:

Canada uses approximately 2 million barrels a day. The world consumption is 76 million barrels per day. The oil industry provides employment to millions of people world wide. In 2007, Canada's largest growth in employment was in the oil industry. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 248)

There is a back and forth here between the national and the global. While this does not locate the aforementioned *us* within its bounds as people who use it to fuel *our* automobiles and businesses, it does (re)establish the bounds of the national container as something within the global context. As Billig (2009) argues, this is expected for the national and international necessarily co-exist as, "the ideology of nationalism could only triumph in an international world [since] nationalism assumes that particular nations take their place within an international world of nation-states" (p. 349). In the succeeding discussion, the bounded nature of the conversation becomes clearer when it encourages the student to use the national space as *the* location for action:

Your task is to choose the 'pro' or 'con' side of the following resolution: be it resolved that Canada should drastically reduce crude oil exploration, mining, transportation, use, and export. Research the issue, considering the social, economic, and environmental effects of burning oil for fuel. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 248)

Students are implored to use the national space as a metric to measure *our* usage. The *we* that uses fuel to heat *our* home and drive to locations is now understood to be a group within the national space as this becomes the exclusive domain of concern (concern about usage itself also important to *us* Canadians).

Nelson Science offers a similar template with regards to the use of oil. For example, the text notes that, “pipelines are just one way of transporting fluids, and oil is just one of the many kinds of fluids that we depend on and need to transport daily” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 200). Once again, the *we* is ambiguous and unbounded to any particular context but even so, resource use becomes an essential characteristic of *our* lives as Canadians, furthering the continual reproduction of it as a necessary condition of Canadian national identification. As with before, the ensuing discussion creates the context that the *we* that needs oil becomes the Canadian *we* or, at a minimum, the only one worth being concerned about. For example, the following discussion looks at an oil spill in Burnaby, British Columbia. As with the Pearson text, the information used here is both non-specific (using a B.C. example does not necessarily make it specific to the national context) and is used as the background for an example to get students to think critically. That said, the remainder of the exercise and *your* involvement within it automatically articulates the national space. For example, the *Nelson Science* mentions the following about an exercise designed in relation to the aforementioned discussion around oil spills:

Local and provincial politicians are invited to a town-hall meeting to hear concerned citizens’ suggestions about fluid transport happening in the community. Young people are invited to create posters and brochures to help inform the audience of some of the issues. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 200)

The context, by implying local and provincial meetings, draws in *you* as a concerned person that gets incorporated as part of the *we*. Indeed,

Your audience will consist of homeowners, farmers, cottage owners, boaters and fishers [...] your goal is to determine who should be responsible for the clean up of an oil spill, and to communicate this information to people in your community. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 200)

The discussion here implicates *you* in the conversation and does so in relation to a *we* that depends on the oil in a national context (through the B.C. example) where oil spills occur. At no point is a *we* discussed beyond the national space, effectively containing it against those national bounds and characterizing *us* as concerned and as dependent on it.

The discussion of oil as it manifests itself in the science textbooks reflects a similar trend in the geography textbooks that is worth noting. Specifically, as *Pearson Geography* notes, “Canada has the world’s second-largest oil reserves. Our economy has benefitted directly from the world price of oil” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 119). The emphasis on *our* economy in relation to the rest of the world, a place where other nations derive (tremendous) benefit from the price of oil, represents the national bound as the realm of relevance – the national container becomes the measure of importance even in the face of the notion that one other country has larger reserves. On the very same page, the container comes to take on the embodiment of overconsumption, reflecting once again the need to think about conservation:

Our society is addicted to fossil fuel energy, especially oil. Canadians use more than one million barrels of oil per day by using gas and products made from oil, such as plastics. Pollution and global warming make our oil addiction a serious

environmental concern. Record five ways you and your family could conserve fossil fuel energy. (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 119)

Here, the corollaries between the geography and science textbooks become evident as both use discussions of resources not only to contain the scope of knowable understandings to the national container but also to suggest that *we* use a tremendous amount of resources, essentializing *our* consumption patterns with no room for contestation.

Social class. While the geography textbooks deal with economics and the consequences of it as a process, the science textbooks effectively use economics as a means of reaffirming notions of middle class privilege and a racialized *us-ness* predicated on essentialist social class assumptions. For example, *Nelson Science* notes that,

Many of the devices we use everyday are combinations of the systems described in Table 1 [this lists human made systems including mechanical, optical and electrical ones]. For example, a car is a combination of systems containing an engine, which is largely a mechanical system; brakes, which are usually hydraulic systems; and a radio, starter, lights, and computer chips, which are mainly electrical systems. (Paré et al., 2009, p. 11)

Here, the assumption is made that *we* own or use cars everyday. This comes to be a national understanding in an unconventional way – the conversation that follows discusses Aboriginal clan systems, a discussion that reminds students of the national context. The articulation is strengthened by the flagging on the preceding page where readers see a picture of a Toronto ambulance, a subtle reminder that Canada's largest city is relevant and reflective of the types of automobiles that *we* drive. The consumerism that frames this assumption also becomes something that has negative consequences, primarily in terms of

wasteful dispositions (as mentioned earlier). In one particular case, the reader is reminded that,

As consumers, we often change systems long before it is necessary to do so.

Relatively new devices are discarded while still usable (Figures 1 and 2) [a picture of computer monitors at a waste management site and a cell phone]. Why do we replace items that still function? What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing this?

What, if anything, should we do about widespread consumerism? (Paré et al., 2009, p. 22)

By itself, the *we* stands alone without a referent but the preceding page sets the context. In this moment, the students is asked to, “imagine going to a grade 9 in a school where you did not need to attend regular classes all the time” (Paré et al., 2009, p. 21), a suggestion that is flagged by the picture of a school in Toronto that does just this, a school that has the Canadian flag prominently displayed outside. The discussion that precedes this is about electronic devices and thus the context is set; the text discusses electronic devices, reminds students that *you* are in a context where Canada is relevant and then return to electronics and *our* consumerist ways. So, while the consumerism isn’t directly tied to Canadian-ness, the subtle reminder that *you* exist within Canada frames how the *us* is understood.

The framing of economic privilege occurs in relation to water as well. In *Nelson Science*, the text discusses water in Canada:

Ontario and the rest of Canada have a plentiful supply of water. However, this supply is fragile and must be monitored to ensure that water will be available for future generations. Water is a renewable resource only if we take care of it. Do you think

that washing cars by hand is a careful use of our water supply? (Paré et al., 2009, p. 259)

Not only does this imply abundance for all—a fact that neglects to attend to the disparate levels of access including the well documented lack of fresh water access in Aboriginal communities (Eggertson, 2008; Mascarenhas, 2007)—but it also implies an understanding of washing cars. Indeed, the backdrop for this conversation is a large picture of children washing cars, implying that this is not only familiar but relevant to all of *us*. Consequently, representations of *us-ness* come to be framed around an activity that is ostensibly familiar, an affirmation reinforced through a question that asks *you* for an opinion. A compression here exists through a racializing grammar – *you* and *we* are presented together and in relation to an essentialized cultural assumption that *we* and *you* are familiar with the “wash the car in the summer” motif.

Not every example involves cars and/or water. For example, *Pearson Science* notes, If you put batteries into the garbage, they eventually end up in a landfill. Over time, the chemicals inside the battery slowly leak out into the environment. This may not seem like a big problem for your three or four batteries, but consider the potential problem. In 2007, Canadians bought 550 million non-rechargeable batteries. Up to 90 percent of these batteries ended up in a landfill. (Sandner et al., 2008, p. 257)

Here, *you* are assumed to use batteries on a regular enough basis that disposal is something that registers as part of daily life. This concern articulates with the greater national concern, framing *your* actions in relation to the national problem around battery disposal. Here, not only are *you* understood in relation to Canadian issues but *you* are also assumed to consume batteries on a regular basis. With the aforementioned notions of consumption and the classed

assumptions that drive these notions, the texts have used arbitrary (although not all that uncommon) consumption based criteria to racialize the *we/us/our* – it essentializes Canadian culture, defines *we/us/our* against a litany of different non-essential criteria and continually defines the cultural *us* against such criteria.

Conclusion. Through deictic language and the power of context driven meaning, the texts effectively accomplish two tasks. First, the texts establish the national container, defining its contours and reminding students that *this* is an important space to familiarize themselves with. Second, the texts ascribe particular characteristics to the national space and the ways that *we* and *you* define and are defined by it. With regards to this latter technique, the texts do their deictic work in relation to notions of economics, resources and migratory notions in relation to the national space. *We* become consumers, individuals concerned with the national space and how *our* practices affect the country that *we* live and *we* are so as an essentialized national *we*, one defined along arbitrary lines and continually reproduced as such. This is all done within a context that “just is” (in other words, taken for granted), a condition successfully and predominantly accomplished in the mathematics and language arts textbooks. Taken together, the texts work with a racializing nationalist grammar that positions *us* in relation to a set of cultural tropes that position various *us*’es and *them*’s in different places relative to the national *us*.

The discussion above does its work largely in the positive sense, defining what *we* are and how *we* fit within this space. In other words, the texts primarily focus on defining what *we* are, not what *we* are not. However, the representation of a social context such as the national one necessitates and implicitly creates the space beyond *ours*. Consequently, the texts create an unseen and un-discussed category of people who occupy the space outside of

the country. This creates the racialized *us* as one existing in relation to a *them* who doesn't fit within the arbitrary, essentialized and continually reproduced bounds that define *us*. This is no more apparent than with Aboriginal peoples and immigrant groups in the texts, groups that are continually *they'd* and represented as not "of *us*" in a persistently implicit fashion. This "exclusion within" offers itself as an important example of how deictic framing can essentialize, generalize and consequently exclude vast portions of the population without being overtly exclusionary. To a discussion of this example I now turn.

Chapter 8: Containment and Exclusion

In the last two chapters, I discuss the creation of an national container, demonstrating the ways that texts use subtle deictic language to nationalize the nebulously defined *we*. However, as Hall (1997) reminds us, as much as binaries are reductionist, “we do not seem able to do without them” (p. 235). The textbooks are no different, employing a range of deictics to shape and present the inevitability of binaried difference. In this chapter, I explore how this occurs with specific reference to Aboriginal and immigrant groups in Canada.

The deictics as they exist within the texts do their ‘nationalist work’ by noting, in subdued fashions, the criteria for existence within the category of *we-ness* and/or re-inscribe the bounds of the national container itself. A consequence of this is the exclusion of particular groups who fail, through no fault of their own, to meet these linguistically imposed rules. Because the texts preoccupy themselves with the national context and its cultural features, it foregoes extensive discussion of specific *thems* and instead, racializes *us* by essentializing features of the *we* through the continual reproduction of arbitrary criteria. However, *they/them* is used and generally in one of two ways. First, *they/them* is used not in reference to a cultural group but to a group delineated in the text as relevant to a question or discussion. For example, *Addison Wesley* has the following: “twenty-five grade 8 student are going on a school trip. They pre-order sandwiches” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 125). Here, *they* refers to grade eight students whose cultural category remains unknown and not suggestive of any type of inclusion or exclusion (except for, perhaps, an affinity for sandwiches). In a different sense, *they* and *them* is used to point to a nebulously defined group that, although it could be the grounds for delineating exclusions/inclusions, remains

too ambiguous to serve any sort of detrimental purpose. For example, in *Pearson Geography*, the text notes the following about refugees and Canada: “to successful refugees, Canada is **accessible**. The others must leave Canada, although they are free to re-apply under the same or another immigration category” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 162).

While the aforementioned categories of *they/them* do exist as potentially problematic, more explicitly exclusionary deictic forms of *they's* exist that effectively essentialize particular experiences on seemingly arbitrary grounds, reproduce these differences with regularity and facilitate the potential for negative consequences with regards to conceptualizing national identity. In effect, this racializes *them* as distinct from *us*. For the purposes of illustrating this process and the extraordinarily negative consequences this has for subjectivity within the national context, I want to explore one specific and common trend: the positioning of Aboriginal location within the nation but contained as separate from *us* in the *here* and *now*. Note though that what follows is not premised on an argument that Aboriginal peoples are the only group that falls outside of the deictically defined *us*. Exclusions work against any group positioned as not fitting within the normative template of Canadian *we-ness* including, but certainly not limited to, racialized Chinese (Stanley, 2011), racialized Japanese (Aoki, 1979/2005) and racialized Africans (Shadd, 2001) peoples. Here, I present this case as an interesting example of how exclusion can work in a particularly nuanced and subtle fashion through a grammar of time and space.

Thinking about the inclusions of Aboriginal peoples within the national landscape, it is important to recognize that this presence is often acknowledged in some way – indigeneity is often used as an expression of Canada’s historical genesis. Indeed, Saul

(2008) argues that Aboriginal peoples are one of the three pillars of Canada (the others being the English and the French), a proposition that lingers in notions of what life was like in Canada when Europeans came to Turtle Island. Indeed, Aboriginal culture and history are never quite obliterated from the historic and cultural record in the texts. Even stories that are incongruent with national tropes of benevolence (see Donald, 2012b; Schick & St. Denis, 2005) or redemption (Roman & Stanley, 1997) are not completely elided including histories of pedagogical violence against Aboriginal children (see Smith, Ng-A-Fook, Berry, & Spence, 2011). While this may very well be the case, the relationship has generally been one defined by inequity, constituted through relations of colonial dominance. This relationship has led to calls for decolonizing work (Aikenhead, 2006; Battiste, 1998; Root, 2010) to undo the curriculum of dominance (Smith et al., 2011), calls that extend to areas such as anti-racism itself (Lawrence & Dua, 2005; St. Denis, 2007). This particular case of colonization, an act of racially inspired and state-sanctioned dominance differs from other manifestations in that not only were Aboriginal people conquered and almost entirely decimated by foreign “settlers” but *their* presence on these lands and *their* role in the collective historic imaginary places *them* in a different space when it comes to how *they* are represented in the texts as *here* but not *here*.

Here But Not Here

The presence of Aboriginal peoples in Canada has been theorized by Donald (2009, 2012b) as representative of an imagined existence, one where Aboriginal peoples exist beyond *our* (Canadian) reality, a proposition that does not deny existential reality but does forego historic and cultural presence as part of the nation. Using the myth of the fort as a

focal point, Donald argues that the walls of the fort, the “four-cornered version of imperial geography” (Donald, 2009, p. 3), represents the ways that Aboriginal presence, culture and history are positioned outside of what constitutes Canadian reality. This argument implies something about the existence of Aboriginal people – *they* register as part of the national container but yet occupy a separate reality. As Donald (2012b) argues, there has been, “the development of a national logic—delineated by the fort walls—of insiders (settlers) and outsiders (Indians)” (p. 41). Walled off into separate worlds, histories and existences, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples share a space but in very different ways. In effect, Aboriginal peoples are *here* on the lands but not part of the *here* that is necessarily Canadian. Consequently, Aboriginal people are relegated to the past, displaced and erased. This is a consequence of the settler variety of colonialism perpetrated and perpetuated in Canada, a colonialism whose purpose is predicated on a process wherein *we*, “repress, co-opt, and extinguish indigenous alterities,” one that “*extinguishes* itself” (Veracini, 2011, p. 3). Positioning Aboriginal people are *here* and not *here* serves to extinguish *their* presence spatially and temporally.

The consequences of this *here* but not *here* discourse are not only the exclusion from discussions but the framing of the discussion in a particular way. The textbooks have a tendency to exclude Aboriginal people deictically in two different ways. First, the texts displace Aboriginal people from the contemporary spatial and temporal context, using context to locate *them* in a *then* and “over *there*” that elides *their* experience from the lived realities of the modern nation. In this way, the Discourse of Aboriginality, or the Aboriginal “form of life,” is displaced to a time and place away from *ours*. Second, they simply fail to include Aboriginal notions into discussions of who *we* are, suggesting that

the national *we* in Canada includes little to no Aboriginal character. Indeed, the essentialized and naturalized *us* is one temporally removed from the Aboriginal person. Through the displacement of the Aboriginal existence, *they* become cultural Others included as ancillary characters in the narrative of Canada, but only so in limited ways. In this sense, the “inclusion” of Aboriginal histories and knowledges are contained as pockets in the national imaginary (see Figure 3), involved in the story of Canada but only in certain places and times. This is not to argue that Aboriginal people are wholly excluded from a conversation of an *us*. For instance, *Discovering* notes the influence of Aboriginal people on *today's* culture:

Today's North American culture is a result of centuries of such [cultural] diffusion [...] The moccasins she [a fictitious girl named Angela who embodies North American culture] wears to walk to the bathroom were invented by North American Aboriginal peoples of the Eastern Woodlands. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, pp. 184–185)

While moccasins could certainly be argued to be a stereotypical artifact to use as an example of cultural inheritance, this does acknowledge an element of *today-ness* with regards to indigeneity in that these artifacts do exist as part of the cultural fabric of the nation *now*.

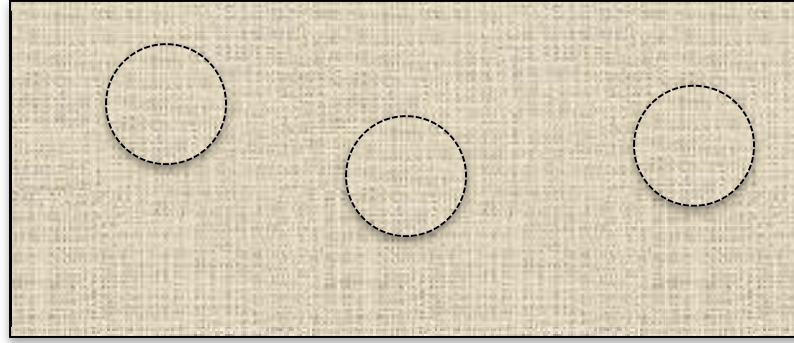


Figure 3. Aboriginal containment. The brown mesh represents the nation, the circles representing the circumscribed realities of Aboriginal histories and knowledges. The lines, dotted, signify that there is permeability between the categories but yet, the texts contain the identification as distinct. *they/them* are at once part and not-part of the national context.

Temporal containment. By containing Aboriginal peoples in the past, the texts can relegate *them* to a time that is not pertinent to the contemporary moment, naturalize the divide and in essentializing Aboriginal experience as part of the past on a regular basis, the texts can continually reproduce the racialized Aboriginal *them*. This can occur through the pointing words of deixis, for as O’Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs (2011) note, chronological words can also be deictic. This ‘time deixis’ consists of two types: proximal and distal. Proximal words refer to current moments (such as *now*) whereas distal words refer to moments beyond the current context (such as *then*). The textbooks have a tendency of referring to *we* Canadians through the employment of proximal words while representing Aboriginal groups through the use of distal words.

While Aboriginal groups certainly did exist in the distal temporal moment, the preponderance of distal deictics positions *them* as predominately historical actors, erasing *them* from the proximal moment and creating a sense that these groups *did* exist only to cease as such. Take for example the following from *Pearson Geography*: “Aboriginal communities were often around water (lakes, rivers, and seacoasts)” (DesRivieres, 2008, p.

10). Given that humans generally tend to coalesce around bodies of water, such a statement isn't necessarily wrong. However, the statement is situated amidst a set of utterances that discuss locations of communities and why these sites are chosen. For instance, the preceding statement notes that,

Every community has a site, or the exact spot where it is located. The site has certain characteristics that attracted people to build there in the first place, such as reasonably flat land for homes and a fresh water supply. (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 10)

The use of *has* implies present possession or ownership and while this doesn't necessarily preclude Aboriginal community existence, the past tense deictic *were* in the discussion of Aboriginal peoples places *them* outside of the proximal moment without further discussion. It also suggests that Aboriginal people are different, not part of the "every community" that, ostensibly, points to all people. This is specific to Aboriginal peoples who are marked specifically as not part of the space in which "every community" exists in the current temporal moment. Consequently, Aboriginal peoples are put forth for consideration as an essentialized historical group, defined by *their* presence around water, a condition that persists throughout the suggestion. This also has the consequences of denying a conversation about colonialism and the forcible displacement of populations of Aboriginal people, sometimes away (quite literally) from clean water.

This can be contrasted with a representation of a space made possible only through the project of nation-state building: Hamilton, Ontario. As *Pearson Geography* states,

Hamilton emerged as Canada's major steelmaking centre more than a century ago.

Using the list [list of factors that make for a good site] as a guide, what site factors

can you identify in this photo? What are the potential challenges of this location?

(DesRivieres, 2008, p. 10)

In this case, Hamilton is placed in a distal context (through the use of the past tense *emerged*) but is brought into the proximal moment in two ways. First, *emerged* implies that it has grown or come about, suggesting that it may very well still exist. Second, this excerpt is a caption for a photo that clearly flags the existence of the community in the proximal moment by showing the community today.

Not all containment is place based and indeed, the use of distal deictics frequently positions this group beyond the current time without reference to any space. Sometimes the contrast is much more stark, dichotomizing the Aboriginals of the past with modern people. Take for example the following from *Pearson Geography*: “Aboriginal hunters and fishers had very limited effects on the earth. However, modern peoples can leave a much deeper ecological footprint” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 178). There are two actions at work here. First, Aboriginal people, specifically hunters and fishers, are racialized with regards to *their* cultural practices around hunting and fishing – the Aboriginal experience is essentialized and arbitrarily defined against a criterion of ecological footprint. The use of the word *had* with no contemporary complement in the face of “modern peoples” historicizes Aboriginal groups, erasing *them* from the present *we*. The indelible link between modernity and nationalism (Anderson, 2006; Billig, 1995; Gellner, 2006) would suggest that the containment and distancing of Aboriginal groups from the category of “modern peoples” (modernity applied to individuals) implies a distancing from this group and *their* national space. Much like the “every community” examples, modern people, however much it

might signify all people in a modern Canada, is explicitly articulated exclusive of Indigenous peoples.

While that stark contrast may be a rather striking differentiation of the historic Aboriginal person and the “modern peoples,” the primary methods of containment is through specific tenses. As O’Keeffe et al (2011) note, “the most frequent, and quite possibly the most complex, representation of time deixis is *tense*” (p. 53). In the previous discussion, the stark contrast to modern people made the juxtaposition quite clear. Tense, however, does not depend on such contrastive comparisons and instead, can operate on its own (as seen in the Hamilton example). Take for instance one particular moment where *Discovering* discusses the historical acquisition of resources in relation to early European explorers. While this in itself isn’t problematic per se, the lack of any attempt to draw Aboriginals into the present *we* accomplishes a similar task as the previous example. As *Discovering* notes:

Canada is well-known around the world for its abundant natural resources. These resources were first used by Aboriginal peoples. They hunted wild animals, caught fish and gathered foods such as berries, fruits, roots and seeds. In addition to supplying food, forests provided Aboriginal peoples with wood to help them build shelters. They used to make clay pots. Where the soil and climate were suitable, they were involved in agricultural activities such as growing corn, beans, and squash on land that they cleared. (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 114)

Here, the experiences of Aboriginal peoples are not only contained temporally but they are also essentialized, separated from *us* through the use of an arbitrary but purposive measure (chronology) and done so frequently. In this very paragraph, the experience is repeated

between sentences. Consequently, the paragraph racializes Aboriginal people through a process of temporally displacing the Aboriginal experience, essentializing it and reproducing this temporal distance on repeated occasions within the scope of a few sentences. At the same time though, the text may speak to a particular historical truth, namely, that natural resources were first used by the First Peoples. In this rather abridged discussion however, the use of particular tenses limits Aboriginal involvement with resources to a point in the past. The use of *were*, *hunted*, *caught*, *gathered*, *provided*, *used to* and *involved* suggest practices rooted in history with no contemporary complement. The use of *is* in the first sentence, instead of *was*, also has the consequence of placing the nation-state in the present moment, further dichotomizing two mutually exclusive groups as those who exist(ed) in different chronological spaces.

This type of deictic language use is common for both non-Aboriginal (primarily European) and Aboriginal peoples but the key difference is the use of proximal language to bring Europeans into the contemporary national space, a quality not extended to Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal people thus *existed* but are not extended the courtesy that is the representation of *existing*. The subtlety in tense locates indigeneity beyond the present, making the lack of knowledge or discussion of things such as residential schools (Smith et al., 2011), the official state apology for the schools (Mishra Tarc, 2011) and Aboriginal perspectives on science (Aikenhead, 2006) much more “normal.” In effect, why concern oneself with Aboriginal issues if the peoples no longer exist in the current moment?

Regardless of the answers to these aforementioned questions, the work being done here represents Aboriginal people as existing somewhere beyond the *here* and/or *now*, representing these group as stuck in a time and/or space not relevant to the world that *we*

live now. This serves to delegitimize Aboriginal issues, making these groups appear anachronistic or, worse, non-existent. Indeed, it is for this type of reason that texts such as *Discovering* can say, “in Canada, many members of Aboriginal cultures have stood up against these [North American and European] influences. They have asked for their traditions and lands to be recognized” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 189), using past-tense language such as *stood* and *asked* to represent Indigenous issues as ones of the past while simultaneously, perhaps contradictorily so, positioning efforts against government control “in Canada,” a simple grammatical choice that does acknowledge presence within the national space of Canada. While the text does note that “their successes are impressive, usually coming after decades of struggle” (Hannell & Dunlop, 2000, p. 189), the past-tense verbiage that precedes this overshadows the weak language here, such as “are” (instead of “was”), that might contemporize Indigenous existence. This temporal containment makes racialization easier – if one is essentialized as an anachronistic historical actor, defined as such arbitrarily but made to appear naturally so and is continually made “real,” Aboriginal peoples can be located outside of *us*, a group for which anachronism is of no concern. Concurrently though, *their* presence (rightly so) is acknowledged as one that has existed in Canada, locating this group within but beyond the national container.

Elision Through Immigration

One of the strategies through which *we* is also defined oppositionally is through discussions of immigration. Specifically, the texts present the current social context as one that *you* came to from elsewhere, effectively negating the presence of an Indigenous population from conceptions of the Canadian population. For example, *Language 8* asks

the following of the students: “where does your family come from? What is your cultural heritage? How important is this to you in connecting with who you are?” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 191). The questions are prefaced by an introduction to the succeeding text where *we* are told that, “Josie lives in North America, but her family came from **Senegal**, Africa” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 191). The protagonist of the story is identified from the outset as an immigrant to North America, a characteristic that comes to frame how *you* are assumed to exist in relation to migration – *you* are part of the obvious “*we* the non-immigrant.” The story ends with a set of questions asking students to “dig deeper,” one of which is the following: “what things in your life remind you of where you and your family come from? What do you hope to pass on to your great-great-grandchildren? Why?” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 198). While “where you come from” could be construed as a reference to cultural heritage, the story’s emphasis on place suggests otherwise. This question also, potentially, serves to exclude those who identify as Aboriginal and from *here* since time immemorial.

The questions asked are flanked by a brief biography of former Governor General Michaëlle Jean that once again articulates a racialized deictic nationalism. Here, it is mentioned that, “Michaëlle Jean was born in Haiti and immigrated to Canada with her family as a young child” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 199). Jean argues that “this generous land” was passed onto *us* by the First Nations peoples:

More than four centuries ago that spirit of adventure drove women and men to cross the ocean and discover a new world elsewhere. That spirit also led the First Nations to pass on to those new settlers the **essence** of this generous land. And it encourages people from all over the world to share in our prospects or to take refuge here and make a fresh start, safe from tyranny and violence. (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 201)

The “spirit of adventure,” that which compelled Europeans (ostensibly) to traverse the ocean is also evidently the same spirit that led First Nations people to pass on the “essence” of the national space. This utterance concurrently racializes Aboriginal people in essentializing the presence of a “spirit of adventure,” a quintessentially arbitrary criteria for defining racialized Aboriginality. Indeed, there is a subtle implication here that First Nations groups, embracing a particular spirit of adventure, voluntarily passed on the essence of *this* land, an implication that not only locates *them* in the distal moment (through the use of *led*) but suggests that the essence of the land was passed on to those who came to settle after Aboriginal peoples did, effectively erasing *them* from the space. Indeed, as Schick & St. Denis (2005) note, “in popular imagery, Canada is constructed as generous and tolerant by ‘giving away’ land to white settlers” (p. 302). It is worth acknowledging here that Jean, having left Haiti for Canada, has certainly enjoyed *our* prospects and what she points to is a permeability of Canadian nationalism, namely, that those who are “from all over the world” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 201) can come *here* and become members of this space (again, having occupied the highest political seat in the nation-state, it would be difficult to suggest that there isn’t the possibility of becoming an *us* with some sense of political power, however symbolic it might be in operation). However, the distressing grammatical reinforcement of colonialism continues to frame *our* space as one of a benevolent transference of an essence that obscures the patterns of dominance that shape *our* prospects *here*.

The nationalizing of place occurs in relation to specific spaces as well. The *Pearson Geography* text does this in relation to specific cities in a discussion of settlements in particular Canadian places. For example, the text asserts that, “Newfoundland attracted

seasonal European fishers five centuries ago. Just as the First Nations had, the European fishers settled along the rocky coast. Most communities are Irish, English, or French in origin” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 180). Similarly, “the Toronto area was home to the Huron and the Iroquois before the arrival of European settlers. It has become the favourite destination of immigrants to Canada since the mid-1900s” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 180). In each case, Indigenous presence on the lands is acknowledged as something that *was* but seemingly no longer is. In each case, Indigenous presence is elided from conceptions of national space through a combination of distal deictics and a privileging of immigration as the defining factor of contemporary demographics in each respective place. This combination makes possible a racialization of the Aboriginal *them* as essentially historical actors, arbitrarily determined using criteria such as location around water and previous existence in highly populated areas, and continually reproduced in subtle and uncontested ways in the grammar of the texts.

As with every aspect of deixis however, nothing is absolute. Discussions of migration do leave space for dissent from notions of “Canada as immigrant country.” For example, *Pearson Geography* notes the following: “for more than a century, about 20% of Canada’s population has been made up of people born in other countries. Think about the original reasons your family, or someone else you know, came to Canada” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 131). Although this leaves space for *them* to become *us*, in an unconventional way, the text excludes Aboriginal peoples here by essentializing the “Canadian” experience, one predicated on some lineage that traces back to locations outside of the nation-state. The reader, *your*, is assumed to be or know someone from outside of Canada. That said, this excerpt leaves open the idea that people in Canada have not necessarily immigrated here, a

notion further supported by the idea that the student is given the opportunity to ask someone else about this potential experience. The text continues: “in this unit, you will learn about the challenges and opportunities migration presents for people around the world, and the effect it has on Canada’s identity” (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 131).

Consequently, despite the potential space for discussion around the possibility that students are themselves Aboriginal, the texts negates this experience as relevant to national identity. In each case, it is immigration to Canada that is the focus for cultural and national influence, not Aboriginality.

This technique effectively places the Aboriginal body, history and culture in a location beyond conception in a contemporary Canada. Sometimes though this can be complicated by the ways that possibilities are made for contemporary indigeneity. For example, *Language 8* asks the following for “further reflection”: “reflect upon your own family background. First Nations people can trace their history back to pre-European times. If your ancestors came to Canada, how long ago did they come? What might appeal about Canada to potential immigrants?” (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 215). The verbiage here opens a possibility for indigeneity in the use of *if* at the beginning of the first question. Here, a space is made for a First Nations student to respond “I didn’t come to Canada nor did my family” but the framing of the question does not acknowledge the Metis or the Inuit, nor does it imply that there are non-European and non-First Nations people by dichotomizing early Canadian history as comprised of First Nations and European peoples. While this doesn’t explicitly preclude a student of such cultural group from answering in a similar manner, the *you* and *your* all but limit imaginings of the reader to non-First Nations and primarily European peoples. This limiting of where *you* come from racializes the cultural

we – it essentializes *us* and defines *our* experiences arbitrarily along lines of “non-immigrant” (despite the frequent employment of “country of immigrant” tropes in popular discourse), an arbitrariness that only works because it is central to what constitutes the secured reality of *us*.

Another distinct but linked issue involves the placement of this aforementioned question. It is situated amidst a collection of questions that imply pride in Canada, a proposition that may be difficult for a group of people who have been subject to colonial violence ever since “Canada” was co-opted by Europeans to describe the national space. Once again, the question imagines a *you* and defines it for the reader, limiting how it is that the student might conceive of people within Canada. Some of these questions include:

What is your personal view of Canada? What do you most appreciate about Canada? What makes you proud to be Canadian? When do you feel this pride the most? How do Canadians communicate their feelings of loyalty to their country? What problems do immigrants to Canada encounter? What improvements need to be made to support the resettlement of newcomers in Canada? (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 215)

The first two questions, that come prior to the “family background” question above, imply pride in the national space and a particular loyalty to it, a set of conditions and feelings about the nation that are perhaps less likely to be held by Aboriginal peoples relative to the non-Aboriginal population. The third question implicates *you* as a Canadian who feels pride about being as such, an articulation that carries over into the fifth question about loyalty. Together, these questions privilege notions of national pride and immigration to Canada, reinforcing the trope of “national pride” and “immigration as important,” two

questions that don't let a student build on the possible space of contention that comes with asking "if your ancestors came to Canada" (Pearson et al., 2008, p. 215).

The assumption that people come from elsewhere, a proposition that excludes Aboriginal association as it articulates with Canadian nationalism, serves to position Aboriginal people as different. Take the following from *Pearson Geography*,

For 400 years, Canada has been a destination for people from around the world.

You, a parent, or a grandparent may be among the millions of people who have left their homelands to come here. Except for Aboriginal peoples, Canadians all have immigrant origins. The main difference is how long ago our ancestors arrived.

(DesRivieres, 2008, p. 152)

Not only does this utterance frame history as having a beginning in Canada (400 years ago) but it positions *you* in relation to immigration, again foreclosing the opportunity to imagine Canadians beyond what is represented. While the phrase "may be among" potentially allows students to respond with "no I wasn't," a space reinforced at the end when the excerpt notes that there are differences in when "our ancestors arrived," the text dichotomizes Canadians and Aboriginals – *you* are likely among the millions who came *here*, amongst those "Canadians" who have immigrant origins. This is a particularly subtle manifestation of this approach as space is created but circumscribed as the potential for deviance from the norm of migration is limited by the continual reminder that *you* and *we* are likely the product of immigration. The consequence of this type of work is quite simple – Canadians are (and *you* may be) racialized as essentially of a people who owe a lineage to a group from beyond the national container, a proposition repeated throughout the excerpt. Here, inclusion is arbitrarily defined by this lineage, a suggestion reproduced by

the “except for Aboriginal people” statement that concurrently excludes and potentially includes Aboriginal people (this ambiguity however is not true for “immigrant Canadians”).

Conclusion. The effects of displacement, both temporal and spatial, combined with notions that immigration narratives can supplant histories of place inclusive of Aboriginal peoples, create a complex tapestry of deictically textured exclusion. Through excluding Aboriginal peoples, defining *their* existence as limited to certain times and places, and continually doing so, the texts partake in a series of what psychologists call “microinvalidations,” a technique that is, “characterized by communications that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, or experiential reality of a person of color” (Sue et al., 2007, p. 274). Here, the texts negate the realities of Aboriginal peoples in Canada both spatially and temporally by, in effect, arguing that “*you* no longer live *here* or in fact exist *now* at all.” Although more representational than psychological, the texts neglect to recognize the patterns that make this discourse possible, failing to see how colonialism has made such a discussion not only possible but reflective of reality in Canada. Compounding this is one particular type of racial microaggression as expounded by Sue et al. (2007): alien in *your* own land. Here, the assumption is made that one is foreign born and consequently, from somewhere else. The microinvalidation of Aboriginal peoples reflects this – *we* are people of *here* and although Aboriginal people are recognized as having *been* of *here*, *they* are alien to the current notions of *our* space. This is made possible in part by how Aboriginal people are racialized – essentialized, arbitrarily defined as “not *here* and not *now*” and continually positioned as such. Indeed, a process of racialized deictic nationalism, one predicated on racializing the national *we* works here by

defining a *them* through the continual use of particular tenses and deictic phrasing. It would seem that Hall's argument about binaries continue to haunt the grammars of *our* texts.

Through the language of the texts, Aboriginal peoples become "of somewhere/sometime else," a foreign body on *their* own lands. This, as with all deictic work, happens in very subtle fashions, putting aside the complexities of what constitutes *us* to re-inscribe Aboriginal erasure from the lands through a racializing of *them* as having essential anachronicity, reproduced through seemingly arbitrary criteria (such as *their* presence around water in the past) and continually reproduced through temporal and spatial deictics.

Such deictic exclusion frames the essence of who *we* are. *We*, as a particular group of people, are not something else. This is rather acute with descriptions of Aboriginal peoples and *their* erasures from the realities of Canada today. While this problem is by no means exclusive to Aboriginal peoples (other racialized "non-Canadian" groups are, by and large, excluded from historical and geographic narratives of Canadian place), the reflection of colonialism's erasure persists to re-affirm what *we* aren't. Although she makes this comment in relation to the history of residential schools and the effect on language, St. Denis (2007) articulates this concisely: there is, "widespread, deliberate, and for the most part, successful erasure and slaying" (p. 1073) occurring in these texts.

Given the limitations of national identification in a context where the banal holds tremendous social currency, the question to be asking is "how can one go about unsettling this type of language?" The simple answer is to avoid the use of this type of language, an answer that fails to grasp the semantic and grammatical necessity of such language and the

ease with which *we* can slip into its problematic use.²² The answer to this question has to focus on the conditions and spaces where *we* can respond to such characterizations. One such space is the online digital space, a technological space that, in many respects, has become central to what *we* are today. As scholars of the posthuman (see Weaver, 2010a, 2010b) note, life is now intrinsically technological. How then might *we* use this space as a medium to contest the banal? In other words, can *we* use the all-consuming technological space to reframe the all consuming deictic characterizations and exclusions? Can a digital space, one where texts are created collaboratively, provide the means to support a contestation of a racialized deictic national *us*?

Thus far, I have argued that textbooks, within the bounds of their circumscribed discussions of their disciplinary foci, represent particular notions of *us* and consequently *them*. The question that arises from this is “where do *we* go?,” a question that prompts me to consider what is often noted as the “next generation” of textual technologies: the Internet. Can these technologies precipitate different forms of resistance or do they simply repeat the all too familiar? To this question I now turn.

²² I am willing to admit that, on numerous occasions throughout a typical day, I catch myself using this language.

Chapter 9: Re/Writing National Identity Collaboratively

Textbooks, however much they may prompt students to consider ideas and narratives put forth in the text, cannot, by their very nature, create spaces for students to talk back. This is a limit of the medium as textbooks can do little more than create an artificial relationship between students and text. Should a student feel compelled to respond to an text's claim, assuming that the hegemony of the medium over culture and curriculum (Apple, 1989; Liu, 2005; Ornstein, 1994) does not successfully discourage contention, the text does not have to defend its narration of the topic. A salient question that manifests itself after the last chapter is "what does this mean pedagogically?" Thinking about the classroom space, it is imperative that space is created so as to facilitate critical encounters with the knowledge that is circulated in the classroom, whether this be through texts, teachers or students. Such critical encounters are central to curricula and their critical thinking and literacy requirements. In this chapter, I explore the possibility of one particular space, Wikipedia, as a site of speaking back to, through and against racialized deictic nationalism.

Wikipedia, as a collaborative enterprise, necessarily pulls in the epistemological and ontological considerations of its collaborators and demands that individual contributors be accountable for what *they* post. In previous studies, scholars have argued that Wikipedia encourages students to (re-)consider and think carefully about what *they* write. In having her students use Wikipedia as part of an English assignment for example, Sweeney (2012) concludes by noting that writing Wikipedia entries was, "successful in getting students to use inquiry to answer their own questions" and that, "because Wikipedia has a real audience and requires each posting to be purposeful by offering useful information,

students knew their contributions had to enter the conversation by adding something new and informative” (p. 262). In a similar vein, Moy et al. (2010) note from *their* study on using Wikipedia as a vehicle for training students to convey complex scientific knowledge to general audiences, “that students appeared to assess the material they added to the chosen entry more critically compared to when they were simply studying for the class, perhaps because of the visible nature of Wikipedia” (p. 1161). Together, these findings highlight the idea that students may more readily critically engage with content that is shared and easily editable.

What Wikipedia offers this project is a location from where individuals can present conflicting ideas about topics that have widely circulated and taken-for-granted narratives that support “common sense” ideas, a process not necessarily possible with a textbook, a medium with dialogic limits. While Wikipedia does not require users to present countervailing narratives of place and culture, and thus is not intrinsically a place of contentious dialogue, the lack of framing questions and open ended requirement to create a story collaboratively (instead of as a collection of individual responses) is suggestive of some possibility for contestation and ruptures in how others define what it means to be an *us*. To explore this, I investigate a Wikipedia article whose express purpose is the elucidation of a nationalizing identity, namely, the collaboratively fashioned “Canadian Identity” article.

Co-Constructed Canadian Identity

A reading of the online digital space that is the Wikipedia article highlights two important notions. First, the online digital space of collaborative knowledge production

tends to generate normative notions of identity and nationalism that get consumed by the readers. However, the discussion section wherein users discuss what constitutes the “official” narrative is much more contentious, fraught with ambivalence and in some moments, becomes a space for people to engage in rather lengthy diatribes about the very political structure that shapes identities within the national container. Here, users can casually point out the missing subjectivities that get excluded from the national *we* presented to the online digital community. Pervading this language however is a subtle deixis that serves to essentialize and naturalize Canadian identifications around common and simple tropes of identity, especially as ideas get translated for outward facing consumption in the main article. Before exploring the possibilities of this ambivalent space, I provide a brief outline of what the “official” representation that arises from and against this conversation looks like.

Official representation. The article begins, as with most lengthy discussions of a topic, a concise summary of sorts, that here gets encapsulated in a definition: “**Canadian identity** refers to the set of characteristics and symbols that many Canadians regard as expressing their unique place and role in the world” (Wikipedia, 2013). From the outset, grammar is used to delineate a group, through the possessive *their*, implying that certain people can possess and consequently live in relation to a Canadian identity. This national identity, as the article suggests, is rooted historically in European colonization of what is now Canada:

Primary influences on the Canadian identity trace back to the arrival, beginning in the early seventeenth century, of French settlers to Acadia and the St. Lawrence

River Valley, English settlers to Newfoundland and the British conquest and settlement of New France from the early eighteenth century. (Wikipedia, 2013)

Like the textbooks, indigenous experience and existence in Canada is acknowledged, but much like the texts, past tense grammar is used to position indigeneity beyond the scope of the contemporary context:

First Nations played a critical part in the development of European colonies in Canada, from their role in assisting exploration of the continent, the fur trade and inter-European power struggles to the creation of the Métis people. Through their art and culture, First Nations and Inuit continue to exert influence on Canadian identity. (Wikipedia, 2013)

This feeds into particular fundamental themes of Canadian identity, two (of three) of which focus on English relations with either the British Empire or the United States, effectively containing national identity to Anglocentric conceptions.

The article continues from here to outline the “basics” of historical development on the lands now known as Canada, a section that clearly privileges the English narrative given the preoccupation and attention paid to the British influence. There is a section on French Canadian history in Canada, one that helps to reaffirm European influence on the lands of Canada as being the important work:

From the founding by Pierre Dugua, Sieur de Mons of Port Royal in 1605, (the beginnings of French settlement of Acadia) and the founding of Quebec City in 1608 by Samuel de Champlain, Canada was ruled from and settled almost exclusively by French colonists. (Wikipedia, 2013)

The use of the temporal deictic *was* positions the nation as something that has only been ruled by European (specifically French in this case) explorers which fails to recognize the dominion over the lands by Aboriginal groups and the ways that the transition to European control is an contested process, not located solely in the past.

The text continues from here to provide more details about the specificities of Canadian identity. For example, the text frames Confederation around,

All of the primary aspects of the Canadian identity: loyalty to Britain (there would be self-governance under a federal parliament, but no rupture from British institutions), limited but significant home rule for a French-speaking majority in the new Province of Quebec (and a longed for solution to English-French tensions), and a collaboration of British North Americans in order to resist the pull and the possible military threat from the United States. (Wikipedia, 2013)

Here, the “primary aspects” of Canadian national identification and its historic markers come to be explicitly connected to British loyalty and limited French existence. This privileging of British identification lives on in the article’s language itself. While this is the English language version of Wikipedia, no attempts are made at meaningful inclusion of non-English languages.

Discussions of immigration, however much it might acknowledge the complex racialized picture of migration into the national space (both physically and Discursively), re-affirms the historically European nature of Canadian identity. Here, “Canada began to see itself as a country that needed and welcomed people from countries besides its traditional sources of immigrants, accepting Germans, Poles, Dutch and Scandinavians in large numbers before the First World War” (Wikipedia, 2013). Note the use of “began,”

which in this context implies that the process started and, with no implication otherwise, has not ceased. This process of on-going contribution dwells in subtle ways through this discussion of European immigrants. *We* are reminded that, “several immigrant groups settled in sufficient densities to create communities of a sufficient size to exert an influence on Canadian identity, such as Ukrainian Canadians” (Wikipedia, 2013), an utterance that reminds *us* that the groups settled and worked to create communities that exert influence on the national identity, something not made possible for non-European immigrants. The use of “create” and “exert,” neither of which are past tense uses of the verbs, imply ongoing influence or, at a minimum, it fails to imply a cessation, something done in subtle ways in relation to non-European immigrants. The consequence of this is quite simple – European immigrants exert influence on national identification, an influence not afforded to non-Europeans who were simply subjects of a racialized immigration policy that itself existed in a temporal context previous to the current one.

Modern times. The text shifts from here to the modern context, having established that, at least historically, Canadian identity has been largely dominated by English Canadian influence on the lands of the national container. The discussion begins, though, with a more complicated discussion of national identity, one that seeks to acknowledge the ambiguity of its essence.

Building on the work of philosopher Charles Blattberg, the article recognizes the inherent complexity within the national container. *They* note the following in relation to Blattberg:

Canada should be conceived as a civic or political community, a community of citizens, one that contains many other kinds of communities within it. These include

not only communities of ethnic, regional, religious, civic (the provincial and municipal governments) and civil associational sorts, but also national communities. Blattberg thus sees Canada as a multinational country and so asserts that it contains a number of nations within it. (Wikipedia, 2013)

However much ambiguity and “multi-national” national identity is acknowledged here, the article returns to familiar motifs:

In a poll that asked what institutions made Canada feel most proud about their country, number one was health care, number two was the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and number three was peacekeeping. In a CBC contest to name ‘The Greatest Canadian’, the three highest ranking in descending order were the social democratic politician and father of medicare Tommy Douglas, the legendary cancer activist Terry Fox, and the Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau, which suggested that their voters valued left-of-centre political leanings and community involvement. (Wikipedia, 2013)

Beyond using a popular culture artifact as the referent for Canadian conceptions of the nation, the text makes a value judgment about those who invested time into representing the character of the nation and the major figures responsible for shaping it.

Having temporarily moved away from privileging Anglo conceptions of the nation, the trope reveals itself again in rather banal fashions following the seemingly tokenistic inclusion of the CBC. As the text reads,

Most of Canada's recent prime ministers have been from Quebec, and thus have tried to improve relations with the province with a number of tactics, notably official bilingualism which required the provision of a number of services in both

official languages and, among other things, required that all commercial packaging in Canada is printed in French and English. Again, while this bilingualism is a notable feature to outsiders, the plan has been less than warmly embraced by many English Canadians some of whom resent the extra administrative costs and the requirement of many key federal public servants to be fluently bilingual. Despite the widespread introduction of French-language classes throughout Canada, very few anglophones [sic] are truly bilingual outside of Quebec. (Wikipedia, 2013)

Despite citing a source (Borins, 1983), the text, in rather uninspired ways, privileges English notions of language in Canada. The text suggests that Quebecois prime ministers have used “tactics,” a word that not only has negative connotations but is not equally used in relation non-Quebecois prime ministers. The text also highlights the consequences of bilingualism for the English populace, failing to highlight the ways that it not only supports French Canadian presence within the nation but also adds a positive dynamic to Canadian identification. Finally, the text again addresses the Anglophone population, highlighting the relative disinterest in learning the language, effectively eliding the Francophone population from *their* role in the linguistic community of Canada.

The discussion also includes a section on national relations with the United States, a discussion that reflects national preoccupation with representations and understandings of American cultural and geographic proximity (Seiler, 2002; von Heyking, 2006). The conversation quickly shifts into the realm of politics and not in the expected fashion wherein differences between the two nations are presented. Instead, *we* are left to read the differing conceptions of the relationship between the two nations based on one’s location within the political spectrum. Here, the left is presented as a group distrustful of

“Americanization,” a term that becomes not only pejorative in nature but reflective of an anxiety about right wing politics:

The term “Americanisation” is likewise frequently used by members of the Canadian political left to designate unfavourable policies. For example, private, or two-tier healthcare is often described as simply “American-style” healthcare in political debates. Many of these criticisms ostensibly arise from the belief that the United States, and the United States government, is fundamentally more conservative than Canada, and as a result “Americanize” becomes synonymous with “right-wing reform.” (Wikipedia, 2013)

The right, as a means of identification distinct from the left, is presented as group who is favourable to increased relationships with the United States. Indeed, “because they may already oppose policies such as socialized healthcare or Canada's gun laws, the term ‘Americanization’ is not as frequently used as a term of condemnation by those on the political right” (Wikipedia, 2013). Although the discussions do little to privilege any particular conception over the other, the apparent preference for “left-leaning” Canadians as described in the discussion of the CBC may suggest for the reader that many Canadians would prefer the left’s understanding of the Canadian/American relationship.

The consequences of bringing into the discussion the United States as an means of comparison repeats an Anglocentric conception of national identity. In this text, there is a subtle preoccupation with conflating Canadian identity with Anglophone identity. Indeed, in this conversation, the Quebecois are mentioned as a group fearful of encroaching Anglo-American culture. English Canadians, not preoccupied with similar linguistic fears, appear

to have an ambivalent relationship with the United States and come to be *Canadian sans linguistic identifier*. As the text notes,

Canadians and the United States share a somewhat common culture, even if it is best known as American culture. This stems from the perspective that Anglophone Canada and the US developed on a similar timeline, based on similar (although not identical) immigration patterns, with a common language, with extensive media cross-over, and that there are few reasons for fundamental differences between the Anglophone Canadian and American cultures. (Wikipedia, 2013)

At the beginning of this section, it is “Canadians” that share culture with the American neighbours to the south. Following this, the conversation prefaces the national identification with “Anglophone” but continues discussing the cultural production and sharing as if Anglophone Canadians are the same as “the Canadians.” Canadians come, then, to be known as Anglophone Canadians. This is not to suggest a complete absence of Franco-Canadian identity however. In broaching the topic, the text uses the work of John Ralston Saul, who makes the argument that,

It cannot be repeated enough that Quebec and, more precisely, francophone Canada is at the very heart of the Canadian mythology. I don't mean that it alone constitutes the heart, which is after all a complex place. But it is at the heart and no multiple set of bypass operations could rescue that mythology if Quebec were to leave. (Saul, 1997, p. 293 cited in Wikipedia, 2013).

This rather short section, largely framed around Saul’s observation, concludes with a statement from the Official Languages Commissioner who argues, like Saul, for the centrality of language to national identity. However, (s)he does so in a way that elides

racial identification from the Canadian identity: “[I]n the same way that race is at the core of what it means to be American and at the core of an American experience and class is at the core of British experience, I think that language is at the core of Canadian experience” (Official Languages Commissioner cited in Wikipedia, 2013). Interesting to note here is the absence of the French language in the article. While this is the English variant of the discussion²³ on Canadian identity, the supposed centrality of the French language would seem to suggest that it ought to be a part of this discussion.

The conversation does also include a conversation around Aboriginal people, a group largely forgotten thus far since the last short discussion. The text once again leans on Saul’s (1997, p. 88) proposition that Canada is a collection of first cultures (Aboriginal, French and English) just as it recognizes that, “the dominant culture tended to dismiss or marginalize First Nations to a large degree” (Wikipedia, 2013). Despite being a possible space for questioning why this might be the case, the conversation largely talks about historic actors such as Tecumseh or Joseph Brant, recognizing Aboriginal influence on the current moment only through rather limited artworks such as, “*The Spirit of Haida Gwaii*, at the apex of the main hall in the Vancouver Airport” (Wikipedia, 2013) by Bill Reid. Inclusion remains tokenistic, failing to appreciate the ways that the dominance has precluded a more comprehensive discussion of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. This discussion also has the consequence of essentializing all of Aboriginal experience as embodied through the representations of the Haida. Complicating this further is the misrepresentation of space as it pertains to the pre-colonized lands – the Haida, represented in Vancouver, fails to consider those who occupy/occupied those lands traditionally (the

²³ Something interesting to note is the complete absence of a version of this article on the French version of Wikipedia. No article exists for “l’identité canadienne.”

Musqueum). Consequently, not only is Aboriginal existence essentialized but it also positions particular groups as representative of all (something often seen in schools with the over use of totem poles as relevant to all Aboriginal peoples).

Following this is a discussion around multiculturalism and identity, a section largely supportive of the notion that plurality within the country reflects equality. This gets phrased as something normal, a word used specifically in the text: “in metropolitan areas such as Toronto and Vancouver, there is often a strong sense that multiculturalism is a normal and respectable expression of being Canadian” (Wikipedia, 2013). Said expression is also unquestioned: “multiculturalism and the state of inter-ethnic relations in Canada is relaxed and tolerant, allowing ethnic or linguistic particularism to exist unquestioned” (Wikipedia, 2013). The consequences of such an introduction normalizes plurality but in so doing, fail to complicate how the normative and unquestioned co-existence may actually be tense and complex. The, perhaps unintentional, consequence of this normalizing of multiculturalism is the continued lament of a coherent national identity. For example, in outlining critiques of multiculturalism in Canada, the text presents the following:

The indulgent attitude taken towards cultural differences is perhaps a side effect of the vexed histories of French-English and Aboriginal-settler relations, which have created a need for a civic national identity, as opposed to one based on some homogenous cultural ideal. (Wikipedia, 2013)

The rejection of a “homogeneous cultural ideal” is argued to be rooted in fractious historic relationships in Canada, an assertion that elides a history of colonialism and English rule in Canada that has ensured a particular cultural hegemony in Canada. While the claim being made here is not referenced (there is a “citation needed” next to this), various other

assertions from historians and scholars are included. For example, the text, referencing Richard Gwyn (1996), argues that he, “expresses concern that Canada's sense of self may become so weak that it might vanish altogether” (cited in Wikipedia, 2013). The text also leans on John Ralston Saul’s (1997) postulations, interpreting his assertions by arguing that, “Canada's approach of not insisting on a single national mythology or identity is not necessarily a sign of the country's weakness, but rather its greatest success, signaling a rejection of or evolution from the European mono-cultural concept of a national identity to something far more ‘soft’ and complex” (Wikipedia, 2013). What each of these has in common is the mythology of cultural ambiguity or non-existence, an assertion that suggests a lack of culture and consequently, precludes any notion of national identification that possesses specificity. This fails to recognize how, thus far, national identity has been narrativized and crafted in a particular way thus far in the document. From here, the section ends with a comment on recent political moves by the Harper government to assert a national identity at the policy level, implying that the country is moving to official expressions of national identity, a claim that fails to see how much policy as it exists now reflects and reifies popular conceptions of identity and taken-for-granted exclusions (legislation, for example, limiting access to the national container).

The article concludes with a bulleted list of things that are “distinctly Canadian.” The section is filled with rather meaningless statements, many that say little about the nation, but what does persist is the trope of “non-identity” that plagues conceptions of the national identity. For instance, the text notes that, “the search for the Canadian identity often shows some whimsical results. To outsiders, this soul-searching (or, less charitably, navel-gazing) seems tedious or absurd, inspiring the Monty Python sketch *Whither*

Canada?” (Wikipedia, 2013). This is complemented by quotes from various Canadians who observe similar “non-identity Canadianness” including ones from Michael Myers and former Prime Minister Mackenzie King. While more detail is elucidated in the article about this and other points, the body of the “official” representation is not of direct interest. Instead, I turn to the discussion that occurs on a connected page, one wherein collaborators not only highlight the tension against this narrative but also the pedagogical possibility of co-constructed representations of *us*.

What occurs in this document is an attempt to make sense of the messiness that is a nationally contained identity (the complexity also gets reflected in the organization of the document, which itself is chaotic). To account for this, the text resorts to simplistic and exclusionary assertions that privilege the Anglo narrative of Canada as a primarily British inspired space. Regionalism, ambivalence around the relationship with the United States and the rather complete exclusion of specific non-European cultures from the discussion suggest that the narrative, despite written collaboratively, is reflective of uncontested narratives of European hegemony. Consequently, the narrative that survives the epistemological differences of the collaborators is a rather uninspired one. Indeed, the freedom afforded by the openness of the web ultimately fails to facilitate a breaching of the idea of “Canadianness.”

While the article itself is a veritable trove of nationalist representations and the implicit racialized nature of said context, the Wikipedia article is not the point of specific interest. As noted earlier, the value of collaborative technologies rests in the dialogic nature and the ability for co-constructed representations. Although the article itself is the product of dialogic interaction, it does not reflect any and all struggles that lead to the final product.

Instead, it narrates the nation (Bhabha, 1990) in a particular way, reflecting the circulated stories that are all too common. What is important to note here are the ways that the individuals in the communities that comprise the user base undertake *their* narration. In the next section, I explore the site of struggle for this article, looking at the “talk” section wherein collaborators discuss, synthesize and ultimately narrate contesting and complementary notions of national identification.

Talk(ing) Back to the Constructed Identity

The “talk” section of the Wikipedia article is designed to be a forum where collaborators can talk through issues that *they* think are relevant and important for the article. In this case, the talk section offers an interesting insight into the tensions that appear not only in constructing a coherent representation of a particular topic but in this case, it provides an intriguing look at how individuals contend with the national identifier “Canadian.” It is also as unorganized as the representation available in the article itself, suggesting that the messiness of representation is also present in the work done to craft the representations.

One of the recurring themes is the contestation of stereotypical representations of national identity, a proposition that points to frustration with the familiar template. As one commenter argues, “instead of any participants doing any non-superficial research at all, it appears that contributors have distilled this down to the most superficial, stereotype-ridden examinations of Canadian Identity possible one actually made worse by the inanities of multiple authors” (Wikipedia, 2012). In a similar vein, user “skookum1” contends the rather simplistic trope of identifying with inclement weather:

If by being Canadian I'm automatically supposed to identify with all that cold and skates and such, then I must not be Canadian; but I was born here, raised here, live here - so obviously that paradigm, so much like America's apple pie - can't describe "Canadian identity" - not mine anyway. (Wikipedia, 2012)

The user here contends one of the specific fixtures of Canadiana that commonly gets articulated. *They* also do so using deictic language. In using the word *here*, the author very much identifies as a member of the national container (signified by the *I*), implicitly asking *us* to consider the consequences for *here*.

Following a rather uneventful discussion about the role of Quebec in producing prime ministers and the Winter Olympics, there is a section entitled "the challenge." In this section, collaborators note the difficulty in articulating this identity and outline a few identities and phenomena that should be addressed. These include English, French, Quebec and First Nations identities, multicultural phenomena and the notion that identity can be defined as a negation of American identification. The challenge, as it is called here, represents a step forward in contending the exclusion of First Nations from the articulated national *we*. However, subsequent comments in this section fixate on the complexities of Anglo and Franco identities that, although it unsettles some dimension of linguistically defined essentialism, still privileges European explorations of identity to the exclusion of First Nations identities. For example, some commenters dwell on the differences of English and French Canadians saying things such as,

It's so difficult to get right that you've already got stuff wrong; 'French Canadian' is not a single unified identity, but a group of several identities which are themselves

quite distinct from each other. (Go ahead and tell someone from Kapuskasing that Franco-Ontarian isn't a distinct identity...I dare ya! *grin*). (Wikipedia, 2012) and, “similarly English Canadian can mean Westerners, Northern Ontario, Southern Ontario, Ottawa/Montreal, the Eastern Townships, the Maritimers, Newfoundland. Anglophone/francophone [sic] is probably more fundamental, and gets strangely overlooked rather frequently” (Wikipedia, 2012). While beneficial in unsettling the complexity of Anglo and Franco identities, focusing on the complexity of English and French Canadian identification re-centres it as the locus of national identification, suggesting that identifications of European origin are central to the struggle over national identification.

The contentions around historical narrativization persist in the article as one collaborator reflects on the ostensible revision of history: “so much of revamped Canadian history is a crock of s**t, especially recent Canadian history” (Wikipedia, 2012). Although the contention is uttered in response to a discussion around whether or not free trade “won” in the west, the response to the revision or shifting nature of historical narratives seems to suggest that the idea of reading history from alternative vantage points is not well embraced. Despite this, the rest of the text is replete with discussions that press the implicit point that the history and sociology of Canada is subject to differing re-readings. Take for instance the discussion around Quebec separatism. One collaborator defers to a set of statistics (reference notably absent) to argue that support for separatism is still high whereas one individual uses personal life experiences as a Quebecois to argue, “that seperation [sic] is still a bizzare [sic] topic here” (Wikipedia, 2012). The pedagogical value of this utterance can be seen at the end of this individual’s response where she or he simply

states that claims of separatism's tenuous and complex existence in contemporary Quebec is, "something to think about..." (Wikipedia, 2012). In some ways, this might reflect differing levels of understanding between two linguistic groups who, as Zanazanian (2008) argues, teach Quebec national history in very different ways. In another way, the commentary highlights the complexity of differing experiences that employ the voices of those directly involved. The discussion complicates the discourse around separatism, effectively problematizing rather simple notions of how historical trends might be reflected in the present moment.

The discussion also takes on American identity and its relation to Canadian identity. In one section, a collaborator makes a rather critical statement on the quality of the article, arguing that the, "whole article looks like it was thrown together by a bunch of american [sic] grade 8 students with nothing better to do" (Wikipedia, 2012). Another collaborator responds by arguing that the previous collaborator must have been joking:

Are you kidding? Must have been a Canadian; full of too many banalities and textbook cliches on "the struggle to define being Canadian" that only a Canadian would have written it; an American wouldn't care, and if he had, he would have written with more flash and pizazz and probably some unusual takes on us we hadn't seen ourselves. (Wikipedia, 2012)

Here, the collaborator touches on the supposedly banal nature of Canadian identification, one that lacks the emotive or entertaining force of American narratives. While a common complaint amongst students (one that I myself levied against Canadian history as a student), it reflects a deference to the grand narrative of history without recognizing that

Canadian identity includes a multiplicity of voices that get silenced, which, may augment the clichéd and static understandings intrinsic to the grand narrative.

The most interesting aspects to this original comment about the ‘eight grade author’ comes from a self-identified American who states that,

As a Yank (a Hoosier, even), when I've visited Canada and worked with Canadians from all over (academia), I see that there really is a “positive” Canadian identity, even if Canadians can't quite put their finger on it. And it's pretty cool. (Wikipedia, 2012)

Of interest here is the notion that those who observe the production of a national identification from a vantage point outside of the national container seem to recognize what ‘Canadians’ don’t: an identity. Although not racialized in its assumptions, the comment reflects what literature on whiteness claims about the inability for racialized white individuals to draw inferences about *their* own racialized status and the affordances this makes possible (Schick & St. Denis, 2005). From the outside, one is able to see this identification, a *we-ness* that is ostensibly imbued with clichéd character and little depth.

The most interesting dynamic in the talk section however is a large block of text simply titled “comment.” Here, a user responds to a comment that perhaps the discussion around identity should be re-written from the beginning. In this instance, the user launches into a rather lengthy discussion of how productive such a conversation has been. Seemingly getting lost in the discussion, the collaborator appears to lose sight of the original comment (how productive the conversation had been) and delves into a convoluted and disjointed opinion piece on the nature of Canadian identity. She or he argues that Canadian identity, “is largely a fiction of government policy” which belies what they argue might be a

collection of identities that are, “Canadian in context but entirely different” (Wikipedia, 2012). This appears to open the door for new articulations to settle and inhabit the national identification discourse including Manitobaine, Saskais and Aboriginal identities. The individual proceeds from here to deconstruct the deictic *we*, making the case that *we* in Canada was more relevant to the familial context, making the argument that, “we never had to wear hyphens and didn't think much if the person next door was Danish-Italian or Hungarian-Chinese; we were all Canadians, even with heavy accents” (Wikipedia, 2012). Given the emphasis on familial connections and a seeming indifference to the ethnic or national categories, it is perhaps not all that surprising that the author takes on the notion of racialization within the nation. In discussing the ways that her or his mother's subjectivity was essentialized and naturalized, the collaborator notes the following:

When she re-immigrated to Canada at the start of WWII, to join up, after a childhood and school years in California, where her family had moved from Stanbridge East, Quebec when she was four, the immigration form/officer asked her what her ancestry was; she put her father was French-Irish (French -from-France, by the way, not old-stock de *souche* Quebeckers even though there are *pur laine* Quebeckers with the same surname) and her mother was English; what they put on her form was that she was French-Canadian, and although she has nothing at all against French-Canadians she said to herself, vehemently, that “*but I'm not French-Canadian*. She got sorted and labelled, like a statistic; and that's I think the biggest problem, as anyone who's thought a bit as they filled out the census forms, or tried to work with the ethnicity statistics so often cited in Wiki; they're very misleading

and mostly try to *categorize* you rather than deal with you as a person, as an individual. (Wikipedia, 2012)

While not calling it racialization, the collaborator is referencing a process that exists within the nation-state, whereby official national practices (immigration control and the census) try to naturalize and essentialize particular identifications. In this case, the mother's subjectivity is naturalized as being of a French-Canadian one and her subjectivity was essentialized despite contestation (however implicit). The collaborator recognizes this, rebuking the categorical nature of censuses.

In an unrelated moment within the same line of thought, this same collaborator pushes back against government funding programs that ostensibly force her or him to “take ethnic sides” (Wikipedia, 2012) and consequently, *they* feel forced to write about ethnic or national identities in *their* community instead of writing, “about the experience of *being a Lillooeter* by identity” (Wikipedia, 2012). Once again, the collaborator is responding to the idea that ethnic or racialized categories need to be central to the discussion, arguing that *we* the Lillooeter (the Lillooet is an area in British Columbia) can be a more productive site of discussion than ethnic or racialized identifications. While this might be problematic in that she or he is displacing the oppression of First Nations, Chinese and Japanese Canadians from the realm of possibility in a later comment (they do, however argue that First Nations issues might be important because of their relevance to the community), *they* are re-articulating what the national *we* might mean in light of the context, re-conceptualizing the notion of containment as the referent for understanding *we-ness*. Although this is the case, the collaborator talks about the exclusionary dynamics of Lillooet, arguing that the communities that were determined to hold onto an ethnic identity left, “*because they*

couldn't handle the integrative identity of the place” (Wikipedia, 2012). The collaborator here is working through a history of racism, one wherein those (*they*) who couldn't integrate were excluded. Interestingly, the collaborator appears to be defending such exclusion and even addresses the idea that *their* defense of identities pre-multiculturalism has subjected *them* to claims of racism. Despite this, *they* argue that *they*, “don't think Canadian identity' is the right title [...] and the issue should be the complex of identities that make up all the different kinds of Canadians” (Wikipedia, 2012). In this, *they* contend the *we*, a word *they* use to mark the Pearson/Diefenbaker era search, “for a common, binding identity and purpose” (Wikipedia, 2012). Perhaps ambivalently, *they* argue that *we* had regional (largely provincial but not exclusively) identifications that were tied together by the Crown (Wikipedia, 2012), which would suggest that the British dynamic of Canada's history was the unifying factor. Consequently, the contestation of the notion of categorizing people mentioned earlier, however problematic, is accomplished here – *we* all exist independently, tied together by a common allegiance to the British monarch.

In an interesting discussion that follows this, the text provides a discussion on the immigrant status of First Nations people. One collaborator responds, rather vehemently (signified by the multiple punctuation marks used for emphasis) that First Nations are not immigrants:

Canada's large geographic size and relatively open immigration policy have led to an extremely diverse society, including a large set of First Nations and other immigrants. What's this??? Now first nations [sic] are immigrants??? This part of the sentence "First Nations and other immigrants" is implying that First Nations are immigrants! Why in the name of god [sic] would they be called "First Nations"

if they were immigrants! They're the only people in Canada who aren't immigrants! (Wikipedia, 2012)

The person said this in response to a comment that argued immigration has created a sense of diversity in Canada as it articulated First Nations groups with immigration. Although the implication is poorly constructed, the collaborator takes issue with this. In response, a collaborator takes on the contention that First Nations groups are not immigrants, arguing that, “their ancestors came from asia [sic] thousands of years ago” (Wikipedia, 2012). By its very nature, immigration implies movement to an area that already has an established human presence, which would negate the notion. Regardless, the ‘First Nations as immigrant’ motif does serve to articulate First Nations with immigration, a process highly racialized and problematic for newcomers (see Abu-Laban, 1998; Bauder, 2003; Li, 2001). This might suggest that First Nations groups came to *this* land like any other group and not as distant migrants who settled virgin lands.

Part of the discourse around immigration is the idea that Canada’s history is quite short, itself tied to notions of statehood (and a short one). As one collaborator quips, “let's face it, Canadian history isn't that long,” likely reflecting an understanding of Canadian history starting with European exploration or nation-statehood. As Miller (2002) notes, “many of the northeastern woodlands people in the United States and Canada are believed to have reached their locations approximately 12,000 years ago” (p. 11), a conclusion that supports the notion that *their* history is considerably longer than what many people would consider “ancient” or “long.” Indeed, the antiquity of the Greco-Roman world, a discipline preoccupied with peoples from roughly 2000 years ago is deemed “classics” in its disciplinary classification.

A final comment worth noting about the discussion around the “talk” is the explicit discussion around absences. One collaborator mentions the explicit absence of African-Canadian dimensions to the article, making the point that, “they have been here before and [sic] Confederation, and have contributed significantly [sic]” (Wikipedia, 2012). Although curricular oversight and textbook exclusion might account for the initial exclusion, this comment was posted back in 2008 and thus, there has been ample time to trace and explore African-Canadian contributions to national identity. After all, as the commenter argues, *they* have an existence in relation to Confederation, not *us*. A similar exclusion occurs in the discussion around Indigenous people. As one collaborator notes, “the paragraph [one on Indigenous people] isn’t intended to be an exhaustive list of every indigenous group in the country. Neither the article Aboriginal peoples in Canada nor the article on First Nations tries to do that, and if this is done anywhere, it should be in those articles, I think” (Wikipedia, 2012). In making this kind of statement, the collaborator is implicitly arguing that discussions around Indigenous groups are not valuable in augmenting or addressing notions of national identity.

Wikipedia, collaborative construction, and deixis. The text, at first glance, appears to reproduce nationalist notions of identity rooted in European exploration of the national context. The text is rather disjointed and fails to contend few (if any) notions of supremacy or contend any of the sacrosanct fixtures of Canadian nationalism (including multiculturalism). Fleeting moments of possible disruption fail to highlight the complexity of dominance. For example, a brief section on xenophobic views towards the Chinese fails to address notions of resistance or existence beyond “railway workers” (see Stanley, 2011). Identity markers tied to notions of regionalism or comparative analysis with the United

States frame Canadian identity in relation to a Eurocentric narrative of nationalism and history, a process of representation that could potentially unsettle taken-for-granted articulations with the national container and not something like a community.

The “talk” section, the dialectic space where collaborators can work through the articulation of the aforementioned identity, produced a rather ambivalent response to any of the problems present in the article. In some cases, authors expressed grave concerns over the representations or exclusions from the articulated national *we* (as seen in moments such as those questioning why African-Canadians were excluded from the discussion) and in others, individuals were preoccupied with elements of the modern nation-state that didn’t actually contend its existence or exclusive *we-ness* (such as a debate over the location of the federal Liberal Party of Canada on the ideological spectrum and its relation to other parties).

Amidst the complex ambivalence however was an interesting set of dialogues that, although commonly disjointed and seemingly confused, created rifts in the otherwise secured notion of national identification. For instance, there were arguments that national identifications are a “political fiction,” are “created more than developed” and are something, “they've been trying to sell to use since they tried to make the Dominion somethign [sic] more than a branchplant of the UK” (Wikipedia, 2012). In this moment, *they* are left undefined and deictically, the context provides little insights into who *they* are. However, the language of the utterance and the intent behind “selling” identity suggests that *they/them* articulates with those involved with the construction of official national-political discourse in Canada. The assertion of independence from “branchplant” status and the reformulation of “dominion” might point back to the multicultural work of Trudeau or

the political work of Pearson that asserted Canadian identity. In this case, the collaborator is pointing to Canadian identity as a fabrication of the white political establishment. This notion is supported later when the collaborator argues that the page is, “built on political assumptions that were always more of a marketing campaign than a real identity/culture, i.e. a government project, not a nation” (Wikipedia, 2012).

At a more personal level, the “talk” section affords collaborators the opportunity to articulate *their* relationship to the national identification. As the same collaborator from above mentions in relation to the ‘Canadian as managing the cold’ trope, there is a particular resistance to well-circulated tropes where national belonging somehow corresponds to an affinity or at least a tolerance of the cold. In this instance, although the deictic *I* is quite clearly articulated with the collaborator constructing this response (I the person), *I* is also articulated with Canadian identifications (I the Canadian). Here then, it is sutured to a form of national identification that diverges from stereotypical notions that correspond to notions of wilderness. In constructing such a response, the author also takes on the idea of “dominant culture,” suggesting that *they* are without question not a reflection of dominant culture yet *they* identify as Canadian. Perhaps unintentionally then, the collaborator contends dominant understandings of Canadianness, shifting the meaning to include non-dominant understandings. *I* the Canadian becomes one that subverts normative notions of what it means to be a national subject.

Through the discussion, it becomes clear that what constitutes the character of the national space is hardly coherent and simply defined. The contours of this national identification lack any sense of simple elegance; it is rough, it is enigmatic and it is not naturally or objectively of any type of character. While the contributors all use *we* and *us* to

delimit and reproduce understandings of national identification, the exact bounds are commonly confronted and contested. Discussing the difficult ideas, while not necessarily breaking through the rather normative conception of Canadian identity, is fraught with rifts when individuals talk through it with each other. Giving people the space to do so might create potential new notions of *we-ness* that are, productively so, ambivalent. That said, the space is hardly perfect. While cracks might appear in the cultural fabric woven by the users, elements of identification are left unchecked. In the Wikipedia article, for example, gender is largely absent from the discussion and when it is included, it is introduced in problematic fashions. For example, one commenter calls out what *they* initially claim is “stupid and possibly offensive” trivia:

Also, if you take a look in the source code, there's another bit of trivia that has been commented out. I think it's pretty stupid and possibly offensive; is there any reason to leave it in there at all? It reads: *The belief that Canada is on the brink of break-up has led it to be described as being like “a beautiful, talented woman who keeps on slashing her wrists”, while some have described it as being like “a dull party where the guests [the country's provinces] are too polite to leave.”* (Wikipedia, 2012)

In commenting on this piece of “trivia” and others, this same commenter states that, “FWIW [For what it’s worth], I don't find any of them offensive; they seem very much in line with the sort of black humour that Canucks often have whenever unity/identity debates come up” (Wikipedia, 2012). Not only does this commenter argue that anthropomorphizing the nation as a woman whose noteworthy attributes are her beauty and inclination towards self-harm is not offensive (after initially arguing that it is), *they* leave unchallenged the idea that the nation is gendered. No discussion is had about the possibilities of complicating the

gendered expectations of national language nor are any critiques levied against the notion that, if the nation is going to be feminized, it must be done through the image of a woman whose primary identifying markers is her violence towards her beautiful self. One discussion of gender however offers an example of what is needed in a space like this. The user “Skookum1,” mentioned earlier, uses the story and experiences of *their* mother to disrupt the implications made about her identity, namely, that she was identified as French Canadian despite not identifying as such. As quoted earlier (repeated here for emphasis), this experience led Skookum1 to conclude that immigration officers and other state means of classification such as the census are, “very misleading and mostly try to *categorize* you rather than deal with you as a person, as an individual” (Wikipedia, 2012). What Skookum1 has done is introduce the narrative of a group often marginalized, one whose experiences can serve to disrupt the commonplace narrative of a national *us*. How though can *we* introduce more disruptions such as these? It is here that I turn to some initial formulations as to what a space that is conducive to the divulging of such disruptions should/could look like pedagogically.

Chapter 10: Concluding Thoughts

Stephen Colbert: “I got one problem with you.”

Ellen Page: “Ok.”

Stephen Colbert: “Ok. If I can just get it out of the way. I’m a big fan but I found out, um, and I didn’t know this, um, and I was disappointed. You came out as openly Canadian.”

Ellen Page: “Mhmm. I mean, I feel like I’ve been openly Canadian for a really long time, so, it’s, did you just find this out?”

Stephen Colbert: “I just found out, mhmm. When, when did you know?

How young were you when found out that you were Canadian?”

Ellen Page: “I mean, as soon as I had, like, any form of consciousness I’m pretty sure I knew. I knew, you know.” (Hoskinson, 2014)

In the above excerpt, taken from an interview on the American satirical news broadcast *The Colbert Report*, host Stephen Colbert begins an interview with actor Ellen Page by confronting her about her Canadian identity. Having just come out publicly about her identification as a member of the LGBT community, Colbert uses language common to discussions around the expression of sexuality in using the word “openly” to describe Page’s nationality. Endemic to this conversation, however satirical in nature it may be, is a particular representation of what this project explores. At the outset, Stephen expresses disappointment that Ellen is Canadian, something that he jokingly frames as a choice. Colbert questions this national “choice” by asking when she found out and how young she was when this happened. Ellen’s answer points to the central argument woven through this

text: national identification, often at the forefront of discussions of who *we* are, exists early (as Ellen puts it, at the moment of consciousness) and becomes one of the first means to define and essentialize elements about one's identification. What Colbert has inadvertently done by prompting Page to "justify" her national identification is reflect and poke at the banality of national identifications.

Who *we* are, however slippery such an assumption about *we-ness* that might be, as I have argued, becomes one largely rooted in *our* relationships to the national context and the racializations that this entails. This process, however, is not only non-absolute but is vulnerable, a condition that calls forth constant repetition of a particular manifestation of *us* so as to secure its essence and existence. In drawing attention to this, Billig (1995) points to the passive operation of nationalism and the ways that this secures the "ontological metaphor" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003) of the nation across the Ontario curriculum. While critics of the banal national thesis such as Skey (2009) question the generalizability of this argument for diverse populations (admitting that this might be unfairly assumed) and argues that, "we need to actually ask who takes their identity for granted" (p. 337), what is important to remember is not the ways that such an argument flattens populaces such that dissent is made impossible (for such a thesis does not do so anyway). What is important to note here is the ways that the articulation of a national identity, what Grossberg (1992) reminds *us* is, "the production of identity on top of differences, of unities out of fragments" (p. 54) and how this creates essentialized identifications, continually reproduced, on top of arbitrary cultural difference, or, racialized notions of the population. The success of this can be seen in the everyday ways *we* deictically point to others, reaffirming its discursive

function, one evident, as Page jokingly notes, at first consciousness or as I argue, through encounters across the curriculum with this idea of a cultural *we* through textbooks.

Textbooks

Long a staple of Ontario education, textbooks have proven to be resilient in spite of their rather anachronistic essence. What makes this possible is both the pedagogical and professional utility of a convenient package and the fact that it speaks an all too familiar narrative about the taken-for-granted presentation of life. These textbooks also present complicated stories as oddly familiar and simple, ones that reaffirm that which *we* either know or think *we* ought to know. Indeed, the very passive means of affirming a reality about *us* constitutes a *Reality*, a nationalizing narrative about this place and time that become taken-for-granted understandings of *us*. This bring me back to the initial research questions:

How do textbooks fix a national we and, in turn, how is this national we racialized?

Methodologically, I suggested that the patterns in the texts reflect relations of dominance, that regulate access to particular representations of the national *we* and that, in turn, create a pattern of social cognition, one which circulates socially shared knowledges. Serving as an explanatory framework for the reading of the texts, I argue that the books serve to create a particular *we* through the ways that they position particular people in relation to a racializing and nationalizing grammar.

From the evidence provided and through a close reading of the constructions, I have argued that the textbooks create an articulation through what I call racialized deictic nationalism. Across the Ontario curriculum, textbooks have positioned a banal *we* as

having an essence, one that is largely fixed and reproductive of a limited set of tropes that effect exclusions from the national identity. Primarily, the process is accomplished in two different but equally important fashions. First, the texts engage in a process of containment, securing the bounds of the imagined nation and reifying its taken-for-granted existence. The “deep, horizontal comradeship” that Anderson (2006, p. 7) argues as central to nationalist thought is exemplified here; the nation does not take on a particular character but it does take on a shape that extends across a particular limited space. Following this, the nation comes to be defined, its contours woven through a grammar of racialization that essentializes identifications using arbitrary criteria and then, leaning on the necessity of grammar, continually engages in securing these descriptions. An *us* is formed, one made possible through the repeated use of a racialized deictic nationalism that continually marks *we/us/our* and reinforces it through its repetition.

Although operating to secure *we/us/our* identities as national beings in different ways, the texts have come to (re-)produce a taken-for-granted deictic *us*. Indeed, the textbooks have stayed true to the etymological origins of the word deixis by “showing” or “pointing” (Stawarska, 2008, p. 401) to a *we/us/them/our/you/etc.* whose meaning is not only derived from the nationalizing context of the text but also comes to inherit and produce racialized, or particularly essential, natural and on-going differentiations of an *us* along cultural lines using the nation as the metric against which culture is measured. While the pointing is used in different ways across the texts, together they do the important work of crafting an *us*, a “form of life” that essentially becomes *our* “form of life” to the exclusion of *their*’s.

This is not to argue that all instances of deictic language use are racialized and nationalized in the texts. In part, this makes its banality even more successful and ideologically consequential as the racialized deictic national language simply blends in with the innocuous or grammatically necessary deixis. This is what makes Ellen Page's rather innocuous statement about national identity as forged upon first consciousness so unquestionably correct – she is using a language that just seems so natural despite it being a learned understanding. As scholars note, this making of the *we* that gets ingrained into *our* consciousness is inseparable from the notion of race (Goldberg, 2002; Miles & Brown, 2003; Rattansi, 2007; Schick & St. Denis, 2005; Stanley, 2011).

As evidenced in the analysis, the texts have a tendency to resort to cultural and national criteria for engaging in a process of racialized distinctions. Using the definition of racialization provided earlier, one that details the creation of social categories through an essentialism that naturalizes arbitrary differences that require continual re-inscription, it becomes clear that the national container becomes the means through which to delineate a taken-for-granted *us* that not only becomes essentialist but also becomes a continually re-fixed identification through the deictic process. What makes this work so well is the elision of a discussion that is unequivocal and forceful in saying that “Canadians absolutely do X and aren't Y”; in representing particular motifs in rather uninspired ways as constitutive of *us*, the texts represent and fix *our* racialized national *we-ness* without having to be so explicit. In a national context where multiculturalism is the preeminent discourse around inclusion, despite the ways that it, “enable[s] racism and colonialism” (St. Denis, 2011, p. 308), racialized deictic nationalism serves as a grammatical means of fracturing the population into a literal *we* and *them*.

This process has tangible and discursive consequences, both of which follow as a necessary outcome of the (re)creation of an *us*. Just as Hall (1997) reminds *us* that “racialized discourse is structured by a set of binary oppositions” (p. 243), as demonstrated earlier with particular reference to Aboriginal peoples and immigrants to the national space, the operation of a racialized deictic nationalism includes the creation of a *them* that, in its very essential condition, is not *us*. Who *we* are, *our* form of life (Discourse) comes to be the means through which one is positioned along an “*us/them* spectrum.” As argued, this involves deictic references to spatial and temporal locations, representations of social location in relation to particular spaces and times that can just as powerfully dislocate individuals from the contemporary national space.

While each subject is different in its essential disciplinary focus, they all contribute to the implicitly shared goal of reproducing social and historical commonality. This is a major contribution to the success of racialized deictic nationalism, namely, the constitution of its grammar with no disciplinary limits. However much particular topics might be more conducive in representing a *we*, as many textbook studies might imply through their “silencing,” this process exists across discipline, making use of the assumptions and representations elsewhere to contribute to its reflection and (re-)production of a racialized deictic national *us*. Each textbook uses the curricular emphasis of that grade and transforms it, however subtle, into a discussion that calls *us* to remember what *us* is. Science, for example, focuses on water systems as a curricular area of inquiry (Ministry of Education, 2007), a topic that addresses one of the most inherently universal objects of inquiry. As is widely accepted as objective fact, water is absolutely essential to human life, occupies just about every crevice in each corner of the world and is the primary constituent component

in the composition of the human body. Yet, despite its rather disinterested existence relative to the socio-political configuration that modernity has perfected and demanded of *us*, water becomes a topic that can banally reify the racialized deictic national *us*. This, along with other characteristics, provides a way to understand *us*, a formulation that might look like the following:

Table 7

The Canadian <i>We/Us/Our/You</i>	The Other <i>Them/They/Their</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pride in Canada • Immigrant or progeny of immigrant • Wasteful • Economically successful • Environmentally conscious • Access to necessary resources to have a high quality of life • Direct involvement in the economy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional • Contained to history (particularly Aboriginal peoples) • Living, relatively so, unsafe lives • Adaptable • More likely to live agrarian style life • Hard working and less fortunate

Template of national identities in grade eight textbooks. Here, *we* have possible conclusions about how racialized deictic nationalism might position individuals and define categories of *us* and *them*.

It would seem, from this conclusion, that the history of discussing Canadian identity and the publishing of texts that make this possible (see Clark & Knights, 2011; von Heyking, 2006) have led to a state where textbooks have become Canadian “through and through,” right down to the grammar.

Digital Spaces

What these conclusions spark are questions of pedagogical response. While education was, and remains a central part in the production of national identifications and nationalism as a whole (Gellner, 2006), it also remains a space of possibility for, if it is central in defining nationalism and its identities, education can play an important part in its

redefinition. While individual lessons themselves may not successfully, “contend the daily set of privileges and acts of supremacy that inhere in the social fabric of the racialized nation” (Smith, 2014a, p. 32), disrupting the supports of dominant discourse is possible. Indeed, for example, in conversing with others, Luu argues that a sense of dissonance manifested itself, one that “compelled me to seek and interrogate the contradictions and breakdowns in the dominant discourse” (Phelan & Luu, 2004, p. 187).

I argue in this project that the contestation of racialized deictic nationalism, one that becomes central to *our* Discourse/form of life, can begin in the digital context that saturates the lives of most (Grant, 2014). Indeed, these digital forms have come to act in a fashion similar to appendages and with the growth of what are called “wearables,” digital accessories that supplant non-digital accessories such as Google Glass (glasses) and Android Wear (watches), *we* see a trend towards the digitally connected everything. The evidence for this can even be seen in the increasing popularity of the term “Internet of things,” a concept that points to the push to represent each thing (in the very broad sense) in the digitally connected space such that everything that exists as a “thing” has a networked complement (think smart devices such as connected refrigerators). As these technologies further saturate *our* daily lived realities and come to play an even more integral part of how *we* communicate, these technologies can become spaces to propagate new and rather unheard stories of *us*.

Given this, I asked the following:

Can digital technologies provide a way of deconstructing/opening up or challenging this we?

There is little to doubt that the political will to increase digital competencies will continue to increase as the technological landscape continues to further permeate *our* respective social, economic and political milieus. Given that organizations working in Ontario education are calling digital learning “the new normal” (Chen, Gallagher-Mackay, & Kidder, 2014), it is safe to say that the increased digital reach has extended itself to the pedagogical world of *our* schools.

The answer to this question, as evidenced by the analysis of digital spaces, is distinguished by its ambivalence. Initially, such an answer led me to conclude that the digital world is marred by its ambiguity and frequent reproduction of normativity. However, the ambivalence that defines the overall conversations online is one largely unavailable in textbooks, which are quicker to represent *us* in an unequivocal manner. Thinking about this, I argue that the ambivalence serves a productive purpose, functioning in a way to poke holes in the metaphorical wallpaper (Grant & Stanley, 2014) that blankets nationalist representations of *us*.

Digital spaces are by no means a panacea nor are they automatically functionally reproductive. Indeed, as Daniels (2008) argues, “digital media is neither a panacea for eliminating racial inequality, nor is it a dangerous lure for young people drawing them inexorably toward hate groups” (p. 148). While the online digital space may present opportunities, it is tempered by the realities of both online racism and nationalism (Conversi, 2012; Daniels, 2009; Smith, in-press; Steeves, 2014; Therwath, 2012) and the inescapability of a grammar that, as the textbook analysis illustrates, is ever present. Its existence as a space of racialized and nationalist reproduction is hardly surprising however for the essence of a space of discussion cannot in and of itself undo the powerful cognitive

impressions of normative discourses. What the digital spaces offer however is a location for individuals to encounter differing understandings about the normative discourses around a racialized nationalism. Consequently, they offer something similar to what Steinberg & Bar-On (2009) created in *their* project to re-conceptualize the essence of the textbook; digital spaces, locations where anyone with a keyboard can write a text that can exist linked in a complex web with everyone else, offer individuals the opportunity to “write back” or produce what critical race theorists call counternarratives.

Mediation of racialized deictic nationalism. As noted above, the creation of possibilities doesn’t accomplish anything by itself; possibilities have to be pointed to. In other words, creating a space for contestation doesn’t mean that it will be used to contest something and instead, individuals have to learn how to use the resources available to them. Encounters with the banal, then, require the thoughtful and concerted efforts of a mediating educator. As a show of how one might go about doing this, I propose the following simulation lesson as way of conceptualizing how a classroom can both critically engage and respond to the work of a racialized deictic nationalism with the help of a teacher-mediator, an educator whose purpose is to intervene in discussions of an *us* and prompt critical consideration of the grammars that often goes unnoticed.

Critical encounter. I frame this lesson around a simulated social studies class, not because I think social studies is necessarily the place best suited for such an anti-oppressive lesson but rather, I do so not only for reasons of familiarity but also because my experiences have suggested that this is a productive space for contestation and a relatively hospitable space to enter the types of conversation needed (Smith, 2014a, 2014b). Thus,

although, as Kumashiro (2001) reminds *us, we* can educate students to be critical in conversations of all subjects, I focus on social studies for the purpose of illustration.

A simple means of starting a lesson can be by introducing students to the idea that the world around *us* continually reminds each person of the national context. Using one's own environment as a case study, a teacher-mediator can provide examples of simple significations of the national context in typical locations. As an example of what this might look like, I took pictures along my walk from my apartment to one of the University of Toronto libraries on a typical morning commute. Along the way, I took pictures of anything that served to remind me that I was walking down a Canadian street. Some of these include the following:



Figure 4. Flag in a window. Here, a flag, situated in an unremarkable fashion, signifies the national existence. This visual explicitly points to the national context, an explicit marking that sometimes appears in more subdued fashions:



Figure 5. Incorporation of national symbolism. Here, although superfluous to any sort of description about the business itself, the maple leaf occupies a spot in the logo for this company (see red half maple leaf), marking it and *us* as existing in relation to a Canadian national context.

Here, a more subtle operation of banal nationalism is occurring. In *their* discussion of nationalism, Millard, Riegel & Wright (2002) note that, “one of the most striking examples of the new nationalism in English Canada is the seeming omnipresence of the Maple Leaf and other nationalist symbolism” (p. 19), a point that can be broached in the classroom through the representation of this fact by illustrating how it works in a “typical” Canadian context. By illustrating the seemingly simple ways that the Canadian national context is

positioned in the often passively ingested significations that mark the “typical” Canadian landscape, critical discussions of the meanings can begin. Indeed, emphasizing that *this* place is continually marked is a pedagogical precursor to deconstructing why nationalist representation is a necessary outlet of critique for it is only once a student understands its continual representation that the consequences of nationalizing language and representation can matter.

The second part of the lesson requires students to consider how often language positions “pronounced” groups in relation to the nation. An exegesis of often used textbooks can provide a useful starting point. Here, students consider how often the text(s) make assumptions about who *we* are literally speaking. In other words, students can be asked to look for key pronouns and other context dependent language to consider just how often, much like the visual signification on a typical street, the national *we* is constructed as having particular penchants and orientations to social, historical and political ideals or narratives.

A complementary part of this lesson, one that actually occurs throughout, is continual prompting and questioning. The role of a teacher-mediator should be one that includes texturing analysis and exploration of continual signification of the *we* with questions that get students to ask questions similar to the following:

1. What does this mean for me and for others?
2. How does this type of language construct my own sense of self?
3. How does this limit how people can orient themselves to the ideal *us*?

Students can be asked to consider answers to questions such as these as *they* work on problematizing narratives of *us*. In so doing, students can be asked to seek out

racializations of *our* space by picking away at the simplicity of marking this space as being “Canadian.” This is possible through teacher encouragement of students to think about how this space is continually made *ours* and how this *our-ness* is re-affirmed through stories of *this* space that tells of a particularly contained notion of a national *us*. Juxtaposing this critical exploration of banal marking with a discussion of historical and geographic exclusions, using a textbook as a critical artifact, can lead students to explore how racialized exclusions are implicitly re-affirmed in daily significations of space, place and time.

Through such critical exploration, students can be asked to consider how *our* space is predicated on a particular type of national identification. Even asking students to consider the *we* in “we stand on guard for thee,” a line that echoes through the classroom space every morning, can serve as a starting point to prompt student consideration of what makes *this* space one comprised of particularly privileged and racialized subjectivities, ones that privilege the essentialized, arbitrarily defined and re-affirmed characterization of the cultural *us*. Using discussions of banal markers above, and how these articulate with the space that they are located in, educators can question the visual and grammatical collocation of deictic wording and particular racialized assumptions about the national *us*.

Where, through this critical encounter, does the technology fit? As various scholars have argued (D’Angelo & Dixey, 2001), some more ambivalently so through recognition of the ways that technologies mediate and resist racism (Gabriel, 1998; Skinner & Rosen, 2001), technology can help individuals and groups contest patterns of racialized injustice. In this context, technology, particularly those spaces such as Wikipedia that allow for dialogue, can allow for discussions about the possibilities of articulating what it means for

certain bodies and groups in a “grammared” world, one that privileges a particular Discourse, or form of life. These digital spaces give students the chance to articulate differential notions of *us-ness* that may not necessarily correspond to the stories *we* tell each other. Far from reproducing what Rogers and Christian (2007) call the “immutable truth” of dominant narratives (p. 34), these spaces offer a way to mutate the meaning of *we* to better honour its bounds as constituted by the entirety of a population. As Dahlberg (2001) argues, online spaces can foster deliberative dialogue, one that can promote critical discourse required for democratic processes. Although Dahlberg is speaking to democratic process, the argument holds about the capacity of online spaces as ones that encourage necessary and critical dialogue. Speaking more directly to the inability or difficulties with knowing difference, Lacina & Sowa (2005) argue that online spaces can help teachers better understand issues and idea from different cultural vantage points by engaging in dialogue. Through *their* research project involving conversations between teacher candidates and established teachers (living and working in various national contexts), Lacina & Sowa (2005) make the case that each of the people involved (researchers, teacher candidates and established educators), particularly teacher candidates, were able to discern the benefits of talking about multiples lens for understanding the world in a safe online space. Merryfield (2003) makes a connected point, arguing that online communities help to free people from inhibitions that might quell discussions about cultural difference, an argument that speaks to the potential safety online spaces may make possible. Taken together, these arguments point to the capacity of online spaces as ones where individuals may not only appreciate the opportunity to discuss the operation of a racialized deictic *us* but also the possibilities of more frank and concise conversations that are dialogic²⁴.

²⁴ This is not to suggest that online spaces are the only solution as textbooks, written responses and artistic

What is key in an online context is the role of the teacher-mediator, which, like in-class exercises broaching difficult topics, remains crucial. In Lacina & Sowa's (2005) study, it could very well be argued that the success of challenging myopic notions of the "Other" wouldn't have been successful without the mediation of the involved teacher educators/researchers. Indeed, within *their* own particular contexts, it is very likely that students will, at some point, have difficulty conceptualizing ways of being or "forms of life" (Gee, 2012) that do not include experiences within *their* own realm of understanding. This necessitates a conversation about the racialization of the national *us*, one that implores students to consider how it is that who *we* are is often (re)presented as an essentialized and continually reproduced *us* that is, in many respects, arbitrarily inclusive and exclusive. Part of this could involve asking students to conceptually broaden *their* understandings of who *we* are by purposefully including culturally incongruent notions of *us-ness* or re-framing simple things often defined as relevant to *our* culture. For example, *Pearson Geography* unquestioningly states that, "we led the United Nations' annual ratings for five consecutive years before Norway took the lead" (DesRivieres, 2008, p. 52) Here, students can be prompted to reconsider who *we* are. Thinking about the aforementioned questions, what might the *we* signal about the reader? How might that position the student reader in relation to "we the high quality of life Canadian"? Who might this be excluding by the very essentialist and arbitrary defining of *we* as being a people of an unquestioningly high quality of life? How might this correspond and be re-affirmed by visual signifiers? Finally, students can be asked to consider how notions of quality get reflected elsewhere in relation to nationalist signifiers. Thinking about the picture of the truck (see Figure 5), emblazoned

representations of different ways to "write *us*" may also be possible. Should online "re-writes" of the racialized deictic national language not be possible, teachers can use the texts themselves as critical jumping points for discussions.

with the logo of “The Downsview Group,” a company that prides itself on, “operating with the industry’s highest level of skill and expertise to flawlessly transform client visions into realities” (The Downsview Group, 2012), students can be asked to consider if there’s a connection between the claim of quality and the logo and whether or not this exists elsewhere as well.

Student responses to the signification of an *us* that follows a particular cultural template or assumed social character (such as quality of life) can serve as the basis for digital responses. As Hoechsmann (2008) argues,

Changes in access to technology have facilitated new conditions for young people to shoot, cut, and mix multimodal texts, and the emergence of the Internet as a convergent multimedia vehicle and a hang out for a global audience has enabled youth to communicate across borders and across the street. (p. 60)

Within this statement lay two important notions about how the digital, in this context, can leverage different and more complicated understandings of *we*. First, students can leverage these technologies to “shoot, cut, and mix” different *we’s/us’es/our’s* – *we’s/us’es/our’s* who fit the high quality of life, *we’s/us’es/our’s* that don’t and *we’s/us’es/our’s* that complicate the idea of inclusion being tied to quality of life. Secondly, this technology has the potential to let students see how *we*, taken up elsewhere, can unsettle the idea of Canadians being exceptional, thereby broadening the idea that *we* as it is tied to quality of life is tenuous at best and problematic at worst as a unique characteristic. By using something like a wiki, students can collaboratively write the new story of *we* by detailing not only how this isn’t always the case but actively excludes certain people from fitting within the taken-for-granted articulation of *we* with “quality of life” with “Canadian.” Key

to this process is the active mediation of the teacher. The needs and changing demands of students, Larrivee (2000) argues, “call[s] for teaching styles that better align with emerging metaphors of teacher as social mediator” (p. 293), or what I call teacher-mediator, a teaching style that implores educators to think about the assumed, how it positions *our* students and how *we* can respond and intervene in the take for granted.

Final thoughts: Undoing racialized deictic nationalism. The employment of digital technology in an increasingly important role in schools signals the likely coming of a new dominant and, dare I say banal, technology of education (as Dobson (2005) reminds us, “*writing itself* is the fundamental information and communication technology underpinning any literate culture” (p. 125), a suggestion that points to the idea that textbooks themselves are a technology). While digital technologies are not new, their pervasive use in every classroom for every student is still a potentiality, not a reality. Before digital technologies become the new conventional pedagogical fixture of Ontario classrooms then, *we* need to consider how to use its ever increasing reach to unsettle what is now a pervasive reproduction of taken-for-granted notions of *us* in the quintessential technology of schools today: textbooks. However, this is not just about escaping the form of the textbook and instead, this is about creating spaces for students to confront the silent reaffirmation of the linguistic conditions of racialized deictic nationalism that is otherwise limited by the nature of the textbook as a medium.

While the entrenchment of textbooks as a curricular vehicle is not likely to ease anytime soon, there needs to be a means to offer students the opportunity to speak back to its banal nationalist and racialized reproductions. And while technology is by no means a panacea for the issue of continued *us-ness*, it does provide some possibilities to escape the

seemingly inescapable. Indeed, it provides an avenue to contest and unsettle the unquestioned reality of an *us* that is exclusive of *them*. In this way, it complicates the reality that Smith (2012) reads in her observations of a colonizing methodology: “when I read texts, for example, I frequently have to orient myself to a text world in which the centre of academic knowledge is either in Britain, the United States or Western Europe; in which words such as 'we', 'us', 'our', 'I' actually exclude me” (p. 37). What *we* can hope for, to borrow Grant & Stanley’s (2014) verbiage, are tears in the blanketing of this racialized deictic nationalism.

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