WHAT'S IDEOLOGY GOT TO DO WITH IT?
RACE & CLASS DISCOURSES IN SOCIAL STUDIES EDUCATION

by

PAUL MICHAEL ORLOWSKI

B.Eng., Carleton University, 1982
M.A., The University of British Columbia, 1997

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
in
THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(The Centre for Cross-Faculty Inquiry in Education)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
September 2004
© Paul Michael Orlowski 2004
Abstract

This study examines ways in which political ideology influences discourses of race and social class in the formal curriculum and teacher attitudes in social studies education. More specifically, the study determined how elements of conservative, liberal, and radical ideologies affect discourses around race, social class, democracy and citizenship.

The study drew on two data sources: all seven versions of the formal social studies curriculum used in British Columbia's high schools from 1941 to the present; and transcripts from interviews with current social studies department heads in ten high schools in Vancouver, British Columbia. Critical discourse analysis was used to analyze both data sources. The interview transcripts were also analyzed using an interpretation of meaning approach.

The study demonstrates that the British Columbia curriculum evolved from a conservative document to one influenced by liberalism. The early curriculum guides were essentially conservative. The 1956, 1968, and 1980 versions indicated oscillation between these two ideologies. The 1988 and 1997 versions were completely dominated by liberalism. Over this time period, conservative depictions of non-white peoples that were overtly racist transformed to liberal representations in a pluralist multicultural framework. Social class issues were always presented from the standpoint of capital in the conservative versions of the curriculum, while subsequent liberal versions almost completely ignored social class representation. The treatment of democracy and citizenship evolved from conservative to liberal conceptions. Radical elements were almost completely absent from any curricular documents.

The study revealed that ideology influences teacher attitudes toward issues of race, class, democracy and citizenship. In general, liberalism was the most dominant ideology. Conservative discourses, however, appeared more than in the formal curriculum. Teachers invoked radical discourses only rarely. The liberal cultural deficit discourse was used by the majority to explain differences in academic proficiency along axes of race and class. Conservative genetic-deficit discourses appeared about as frequently as radical discourses that focused on unfair structural problems. The teachers were evenly divided in their use of conservative and liberal discourses about democracy and citizenship.

Recommendations were made to alter social studies curriculum and teacher education programs to reflect social justice aims from a radical perspective.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ii

Acknowledgements vi

Chapter 1: Introduction 1
   Overview 2
   The Social Positionality of Paul Orlowski 8
   Rationale 11

Chapter 2: A Conceptual Framework for the Study 18
   Ideology 18
   Modernity 22
   The Political Ideologies of Modernity 24
      Liberalism 24
      Socialism 27
      Conservatism & Nationalism 29
   Postmodernist Critiques of Modernity's Ideologies 32
   Ideology Today 35
   Discourse 36
   Hegemony 41
   Social Justice 48

Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods 54
   A Textual Analysis of Curriculum 55
      Background Theory 55
         The Role of the School & Political Ideology 55
      Curriculum & Political Ideology 59
   Methodology for the Analysis of the Curriculum 64
   Methodological Issues with Interviewing Teachers 68
      Issues with the Interview Method 69
      Recruiting Participants 72
      The Participants 74
      Data Analysis Issues 76
      The Interview Questions 84
      On Language 88
Acknowledgements

It goes without saying that I had an enormous amount of support in order to complete this study. This support came to me in various forms. Without getting poetic, I will mention this group of compassionate, generous, thoughtful and insightful people.

As a fulltime teacher in Vancouver high schools, I would like to extend my gratitude to three wonderful administrators who supported me over the past five years: Lynn Green, Mary Daniel, and Pat Mitchell. Among other things, I needed their support to get two 3-month leaves from my teaching position so that I could focus on the actual writing of the dissertation. I would like to thank the Vancouver School Board for allowing me to do the study and for granting me the two leaves (one a paid leave). I also extend warm thanks to the 10 teachers who participated.

In terms of academic and scholarly support, I wish to thank the following group of professors who, either in courses and seminars or in various projects, contributed to me getting to this place: Peter Seixas, John Willinsky, Leslie Roman, Karen Meyer, Don Fisher, Frank Echols, Gaby Minnes Brandes, Charles Menzies, and Jean Barman. (I also appreciated Charles’ friendship during this period.) Graham Smith and Wayne Ross appeared late in the journey – both were excellent university examiners. All three members of my supervisory committee were truly super advisors: Jean Barman, Lisa Loutzenheiser, and, of course, my actual advisor, Deirdre Kelly. Deirdre also demonstrated an acute talent in scholarly-and-therapeutic support, an approach that was instrumental in helping me to complete this project, from start to finish.

My friends were outstanding in various ways, be it in letting me contact them wherever they were and at whatever time of day or night it was, simply to allow me to wax and wane in a not very rhapsodic manner, somehow knowing that this was essential if I was to finish. This group includes Stephen Madigan, Tom Yungwirth, Lois Sanford, Josh Berson, Bruce Gaines, Holly Tracy, Jack Buksbaum, Andrew Cash, Kim Scott, Colin Sanders, Wendy Milne, and my sister Sarah. Thank you everyone. Deirdre Kelly must also appear on this list of people who I will always appreciate – her warm words of wisdom never fell on deaf ears. Thank you, Deirdre.

I have to finish by thanking from the bottom of my heart those dear people who had to endure living with a bear of a man at times (many times!) over the years: Lois Sanford, her son Haley, and, of course, my beautiful daughter Katrina. I think baritone folk singer Greg Brown describes this scenario best on Slant 6 Mind (1997): Like an ol’ grizzly down in his den, snortin’ and a growlin’ and pacin’ around. Thank you, everybody!!
Chapter 1

Introduction

[There is a general tendency for educators to avoid talks [sic] of ideology. It is not uncommon that one is labeled "ideological" when confronted by someone whose opinions differ from his own. (Leonardo, 2003, p. 204)]

We live in a society in which we are constantly being inundated with differing views on almost all aspects of life, be they social, political, or economic. Of course, sometimes some people agree with some of these views; at other times, they are fiercely opposed. This is the same situation with the ways people respond to their actual lived experience. Most often, opposition to certain aspects of their lived experience leads people to envision a different way to experience life, or a different version of the ideal society. Some who desire change actually attempt to do something about it. All three of these components – critique, ideal, and agency – comprise what I am referring to as ideology. Ideology is involved in all aspects of our social, political, and economic lives to such an extent that it is located everywhere. Yet, at the same time it is very difficult to detect, working in very insidious and influential ways. Ideology affects the ways we view each other and all of the institutions we have created, including the institution of the public education system. All sides in debates about school funding, teacher accountability, curricular content, and the role of the school itself, to state only a few examples, are steeped in ideology. (Note: Chapter 2 will explicate in detail how I am using ideology throughout this entire study.)

Yet, one of the great omissions in the multitude of current debates about public education is the role of political ideology itself. In western nations like Canada, these battles are most often waged between various conservatives, liberals, and radical socialists. If one were to examine the ways the mainstream media portray these struggles and debates, however, they would discover that the entire notion of ideology is rarely mentioned. Moreover, these ideological conflicts are not new.
In fact, public education has been the site of competing ideologies ever since its inception in the 1870s in British Columbia (Barman, 1991), and earlier in other parts of North America (Axelrod, 1997; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Kliebard, 1986). These struggles are often around the values schools promote and what role the teacher should take on. Schools inculcate students with a set of diverse and sometimes contradictory values in myriad ways. Social studies is an obvious source of values; yet, even within this discipline, there are numerous and diverse ways in which young people are taught to perceive the world. These values and ways of seeing are influenced by political ideology, whether the public, the teachers, or the students are aware of it.

Rarely is it explained outside of academic journals the role that political ideology has played and continues to play in the formulation of educational policy in general, and curriculum in particular. The research described here examines the ways that political ideology is infused within the field of social studies education, specifically within the public secondary schools of Vancouver, British Columbia.

1.1 Overview

Several years ago, in my role as a teacher in an east-end, working-class Vancouver high school, I was walking across the campus with about a dozen of my grade 12 students when one of them, unaware of my presence, yelled out to some grade 8 students of East Asian ancestry, “Go home, ya immigrants!” The subsequent conversation he and I had did nothing to quell the disturbing feelings I had when he first demonstrated his racial prejudice. This student was quite strident in his opinions of East Asian people living in Vancouver, namely, that they were taking potential jobs away from Caucasian people like him, jobs that rightfully belonged to him and others like him so that they might enjoy a higher standard of living. As it turned out, many White, working-class youth were
feeling threatened by the proximity of so many Asian people. Indeed, many were worried about their futures, both economically and socially. The common response was to accept the values and political ideology of a populist right-wing social and political movement, one that is attempting to gain power in Canada and the same one that has resulted in three of the last four American presidents. To a very large extent, this conservative movement is being fuelled by an attitude of *White defensiveness*.

In doing the research for my Master’s thesis, I documented a clear link between racist attitudes and economic concerns (Orlowski, 2001a). This was a critical ethnographic study examining the ways 25 working-class youth from five different racial groups perceived racism and economic inequality. Most of the racist attitudes that surfaced during the study were rooted in economic concerns. Although the First Nations participants exhibited a more sophisticated understanding of the forms of racism, and the adolescents of East Indian ancestry could speak to the unfair labour practices inherent in capitalism, there was clearly a lack of class awareness among almost all of them. To a large degree, it appears that the salience of social class issues is a factor in working-class racism.

In *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940*, Grace Hale (1998) explains how in the southern United States the privileged Whites benefited materially by emphasizing White supremacy and ignoring class concerns in both the mainstream media and in popular culture. This strategy resulted in duping working-class Whites to accept a lower standard of living in exchange for knowing that Black people were having an even more difficult time. Indeed, African American educator Cameron McCarthy (1993) claims that in American schools “the emancipation of the minority individual is fulfilled when he or she becomes a good capitalist” (p. 293). Citing social studies in particular, McCarthy questions how students from marginalized groups enter school without a class consciousness and finish school without one either. For McCarthy this is a crucial point as to how the tensions between working-class Whites and Blacks have been allowed to exist for
so long in American society. In the Canadian context, racial demographics differ from the Black/White binary common to a large portion of American research, but the same point can be made here. It is my contention that if an awareness of social class issues were to increase among Canadian citizens, then there would be more understanding between social groups, increased racial tolerance, and most likely less racism.

The two main sources of information in our society are the mainstream media and the public school system. If a recent *Globe & Mail* headline is correct when it claimed, “It’s not Canadians who’ve gone to the right, just their media” (Martin, 2003, p. A8), then is it the responsibility of educators to create a counterbalance by moving to a more progressive stance? As a veteran educator, I contend that it is incumbent upon teachers and curriculum to acknowledge the media’s shift to laissez faire economics and, to a lesser degree, social conservatism. This makes sense even for those who want to maintain the status quo. After all, virtually all of the struggles surrounding public education since its inception can be seen as a never-ending clash between those who see the role of the school as inculcating the young with the dominant societal values in an attempt at assimilation and those who see the school as the potential vehicle for progressive social change. Despite the obstacles, I side with those who look to schools to plant the seeds for a more socially just society. If emancipation for everyone is to be the ideal, then we need an informed and critical public. I understand why the Marxist-informed structuralist Louis Althusser (1971) considered the school to be part of the ideological state apparatus, and for much of the history of public education this has been the case. Yet, at the same time, I cannot conceive of a better place to develop counter-hegemonic discourses than the public school classroom, more specifically the social studies classroom.
I have been a front-line teacher in B.C. high schools for 18 years, most of them spent in the working-class multiracial schools of east Vancouver. Yet, this study is not about those 18 years; rather, it is best seen as an extension of my experience as a teacher. This study is an attempt to locate and analyze areas in public education that hinder a collective awareness from growing, one that weds progressive cultural initiatives with a call for redistributing the wealth.

The focus of this study is on the ways in which schools further entrench or work to deconstruct social hierarchies that are based on race and social class. More specifically, the research examines the ways in which political ideology has influenced and continues to influence discourses of race and social class in both the formal social studies curriculum and in the attitudes of veteran social studies teachers. My analysis of ideology has been informed by the politics that emerged during the birth of Modernity and the American and French revolutions. Therefore, the political ideologies that I use as the analytical frame for this study are conservatism, liberalism, and socialism.

My own study can be seen as coming out of the optimistic vision first espoused within classic liberalism, namely, emancipation for all. I am influenced more profoundly by its spin-off ideology, socialism. The major thinkers of early liberalism – Jeremy Bentham, Alexis de Tocqueville, John Stuart Mill, to name but a few - heralded the potential of the universal subject. Early socialist ideology, as espoused by Karl Marx, diverged from this path by splitting the universal subject along social class lines, into bourgeoisie and proletariat, capitalist and worker. Marx has been rightly criticized for ignoring gender and race issues. That said, I do not wish to throw out the entire Marxist project; rather, socialist ideology can be greatly strengthened by incorporating the concerns inherent within the various strands of feminism, anti-racism, and environmentalism. In other words, the impetus for this project is borne out of a conviction that this project of emancipation for all is unfinished but one very much worth pursuing.
The research is part of a much larger project led by Deirdre Kelly at the University of British Columbia. Located within the burgeoning field of Teaching for Social Justice, the overall goal of the main project is to describe ways in which veteran teachers of social studies and English understand what teaching for social justice means and pedagogical and assessment strategies they might employ to realize social justice aims (Brandes & Kelly, 2000; Kelly & Brandes, 2001; Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). The social justice aspect I explored in this study is reflected by the interview questions (see Appendix 1). The major research question for the study is:

**How has political ideology influenced discourses of race and class in both the formal curriculum and teacher attitudes in social studies education?**

Framing the study around discourses of race and class is not to suggest their primacy as axes of oppression. I contend that the categories of gender, sexuality, and ableism are equally important to study. I focused on race and social class and not the others in order to attain a sensible length for the final dissertation, as well as to build upon the research I began with my MA. Moreover, other members of the team led by Kelly are researching various forms of oppression that may be exacerbated in and through schooling.

My study can be divided into three distinct areas of research. The common thread running through all three sections is the focus on the role political ideology has played and continues to play in social studies education. (I am interested, of course, in how the influence of ideology in the schools gets translated into societal social relations, but this particular research can only help fuel speculation.) My analysis of the influence of political ideology in social studies education includes major discourses that have been employed to further entrench privilege for the privileged at the expense of the Other. All three research areas – race, social class, and democracy - examine the role of curriculum and teacher attitudes as hegemonic devices that serve to maintain the status quo. As
well, both the curriculum and teacher attitudes will be examined in order to understand their roles in fostering counter-hegemonic discourses of resistance.

First, the historical record provides the evidence for how a form of Whiteness – more accurately seen as a middle-class conservative “Britishness” - came to dominate the region now called British Columbia. It highlights the strategies the privileged employed in order to make British (and White) supremacy, capitalism, and Christianity seem both inevitable and natural to many of the inhabitants of the region. This part of the research focuses on legal, political, economic, and educational aspects of privileging some at the expense of others. Although it examines the role of public education in affecting social hierarchies during the nation-building period in only a cursory fashion, it provides the context for the subsequent sections that pertain solely to social studies education in British Columbia.

The second research area in this study is the actual B.C. social studies curriculum itself. Beginning with the B.C. Department of Education’s Annual Reports in 1926-27 and the government prescribed social studies curricula that were first published in 1941, this part of the analysis examines these documents for the ways in which racial and class concerns were represented or ignored over time. In order to determine how political ideology has influenced social studies curriculum over time (i.e., from 1926 until the present), a type of discourse analysis is employed in this aspect of the research, as well.

Third, a series of interviews with the head teachers of social studies departments in ten Vancouver high schools provides another source of data in order to determine the influence of political ideology in social studies education in B.C. The interview questions reflect both my own focus on teacher attitudes toward issues of race and social class and the overall project that my study is a part of, namely, the ways in which veteran educators think about teaching for social justice
(Appendix 1). The analysis of both data sources, namely, the formal curriculum and the teacher interviews, will be presented in chapters 5, 6, and 7. At this point, it is prudent to describe my own social positionality, as this has undoubtedly affected the research itself.

1.2 The Social Positionality of Paul Orlowski

My use of the term positionality involves the idea that people from differing social backgrounds often have different ways of perceiving the world, constructing knowledge, and making meaning. In other words, each individual’s social positionality is influenced by the social groups to which they belong, either by birth or by choice. A person’s experience is central to their positionality. As well, one’s positionality is always in relation to others. In other words, a person’s experience combines with other attributes, either ascribed or socially constructed, to create their shifting positionality. In the case of this study, I am a veteran, white, male teacher in my mid-forties researching the perspectives of other veteran white male teachers either a few years older or a few years younger than me. Despite these similarities, each of our experiences are different, experiences that undoubtedly influence our ways of knowing and perceiving our world. Researchers must pay attention to these different ways of knowing. As Deirdre Kelly (2000) points out, a researcher’s “beliefs, values and interests shape the topics and interpretive frameworks they select, the questions they ask, and the evidence they gather or co-produce” (p. 186). For example, I have an interest in this research because I am committed to working for social justice. I consider the public education system to be a source of hope, a site where it is possible for the seeds of social transformation to take root.

Political ideologies affect the ways that I see and act in the world, of course. Moreover, my own social positionality undoubtedly leaves certain traces upon any text I produce, a process Edward Said (1979) so eloquently described in Orientalism. As Kelly suggests, my role in framing the study,
how I conducted the interviews with colleagues, how I engaged in the data analysis, and how I drew
the conclusions have been shaped by the values I hold onto, values that are from the ideologies that
have influenced me. But why do some ideologies directly influence me while others do not? It’s
difficult to speculate as to why, but one thing for certain is that my own experience has been a factor.

I grew up in the east end of Toronto in a neighbourhood filled with working-class European
immigrants displaced by the Second World War and many working-class White Canadians who often
resented our presence. Yet, despite these tensions, I was fortunate to be part of a generation who
enjoyed the benefits of the social welfare state, including well-funded public education and
healthcare systems. My experience as the child of working-class immigrants living in a social welfare
state was positive and clearly beneficial for me. I am concerned with the current trend toward
privatization because I fear others from similar or less privileged backgrounds will not have the
opportunities I had. Consequently, I am a social democrat and tend to see the world through a
progressive lens. Although I am a liberal on social issues, I feel a radical democratic socialist agenda
is needed to deal with poverty in North America.

In the past twenty years or so, I have become aware of the erosion of public institutions, and
have often heard the mantra touted in today’s Vancouver dailies that the solution is either to privatize
or to develop private-public partnerships, that an infusion of corporate money will help slow down
the dismantling of the social welfare state. To me, this is nothing but a Faustian agreement; as such, I
disson these P3s, as they have come to be called, as yet another way for shareholders to benefit from
tax dollars, a policy to which I am politically opposed. After all, the gap between the wealthy and the
poor has been steadily increasing since neoconservative and neoliberal discourses rose to prominence
in the 1980s (Laxer, 1998, p. 5). During this same period, Canadian and American share-holding
corporations have been paying less and less of the bulk of tax dollars (ibid, p.10).
In terms of social justice, I believe that the Enlightenment with its liberal principles of equality and emancipation of all are noble goals that denoted a profound shift in European consciousness. Yet, I agree with Marx that liberalism is incapable of delivering on its promises. (The unequal distribution of wealth in Canada and the United States can lead me to no other conclusion.) But liberalism has been successful in one extremely important aspect of North American life, namely, inclusion and, by corollary, tolerance for difference. Because of the entrenchment of the liberal ideology within the Canadian mainstream, cultural struggles have been fairly successful for certain social groups. Indeed, liberalism has informed my own social views around difference.

I agree with those contemporary conservatives who claim that liberalism is incapable of solving today's social problems. Yet, I completely disagree with their reasoning. The current blame-the-victim discourse I find inaccurate and quite repugnant. Nor do I believe that there was once a mythic period of bliss in North America that was ruined by feminists, trade unionists, civil rights and visible minorities. Discourses of privatization and tax cuts are surprisingly effective in getting the support of those who are harmed by such policies. In order for the tide to turn against these regressive measures, counter-hegemonic discourses must find a way into the public's collective consciousness. Because the Canadian corporate media has moved so far to the right of mainstream public thought (Martin, 2003), I contend that it is left to public education to develop these counter-hegemonic discourses.

As a veteran teacher, I feel I have experienced some success in helping students reflect upon their worlds in critical ways, especially around race, class, gender, and sexuality issues. The social studies courses I teach are based in an ideological critique of our society, both past and present. Yet, as Leonardo points out (2004), "[i]deology critique is not merely criticism" (p. 14). My focus is on helping to facilitate student learning of "the ways that capitalism discourages, at the structural level, a
materialist analysis of social life" (Leonardo, 2004, p. 14). Ideology critique, media literacy and other ways of deconstructing hegemonic discourses are pedagogical strategies I employ.

Students are expected to understand the ideological positions posited by conservatives, liberals, and the radical left on both the social scale and the economic scale. As well, they are expected to do a series of assignments and engage in discussions that highlight the inevitable tensions and contradictions within a capitalist, democratic society. My pedagogical goal is to “assist students not only in becoming comfortable with criticism [of society], but adept at it” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12). In my teaching experience, this has proven to be the best vehicle to enable students in my classes to become informed about current political debates, knowledgeable about the insidiousness of power, and aware of what is in their own best interests. This type of education holds great transformative potential. At the least, it seems to me that many students in courses I have taught undergo a transformation along these lines.

I know that I am not alone in believing in the capacity of public education to make it a better world for everyone. Indeed, John Dewey and early Social Reconstructionists like Harold Rugg and George Counts have left some sort of progressive legacy in public education circles, even in British Columbia. Their vision, like mine, is a utopian vision, but one that I feel is worth striving for. There is no question that this stance has influenced this entire research project. Yet, my intentions have been to engage in good and respectful research.

1.3 Rationale

Education, as part of the functions of the State, is also an arena of social conflict. (Carnoy & Levin, 1985, p. 27).

This quote underlies much of my intellectual curiosity about this research project. It highlights the differing ideas various groups have with respect to the role of the school in society. On the one
hand, the school has had a long history of being a place where the inculcation of values, especially those espoused by the dominant groups, are presented in a palatable way, even as inevitable, to the fertile minds of the young (Apple, 1990; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Barman, Sutherland, & Wilson, 1995). The quote further points to another position, however, that of the school being a place where the values presented to students do not necessarily reflect those of the privileged but those of the oppressed and disadvantaged (Apple, 1990; Connell, 1993; Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 1996). Both positions are correct: the school has been used and is currently used to maintain the status quo; at the same time it is a site of resistance to the dominant discourses. This research is an attempt to gain a better understanding of the extent to which each position is reflected in the formal curriculum and in the teacher attitudes, particularly toward issues of race and social class. I believe this to be a matter of great importance; after all, the future will be shaped by the outcome of these debates.

Similar debates have occurred ever since the creation of public education in British Columbia in the 1870s (Barman, Sutherland, & Wilson, 1995), across Canada (Axelrod, 1997) and, indeed, in the United States (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Kliebard, 1986). In recent decades conflicting ideas around the teaching of issues of race and ethnicity have resulted in the ever-burgeoning field of multicultural education. Yet, multicultural education is a contested term, its more popular forms often heavily criticized by conservatives and radicals alike. Indeed, even though the dominant forms of multicultural education in today's classrooms are hallmarks of liberalism, there is a lack of consensus about them even among liberals.

Our society is in a state of great flux. The social welfare state itself is under threat as governments attempt to balance budgets and offer profit-making opportunities to entrepreneurs around healthcare, welfare and public education. There is compelling evidence that suggests North American social movements have resulted in increased recognition for various groups during the past
few decades (Razack, 1998; Fraser, 1997; Bannerji, 1995). This process is far from finished, of course. My preferred vision is to see both increased recognition as well as a more progressive redistribution of wealth in our society. As cliched as it may sound, I do not think it too much to ask for a world in which every person can live in dignity.

In *Achieving Our Country* (1998), Richard Rorty expresses concern that the cultural and social gains made through the hard-fought struggles of identity politics over the past two decades are vulnerable to a quick dismantling as soon as right-wing populist movements have the opportunity. Six years after the publication of Rorty’s book, we can see his fears are well-founded as the American president, George W. Bush, is threatening to end affirmative action programs, overturn the Roe vs. Wade Supreme Court decision of 1973, as well as block any attempts to allow gay people to legally marry in the United States. At the same time that Bush is leading the attack on visible minorities, women, and gays, he has given enormous tax breaks to the wealthiest residents of the wealthiest country, despite the record-breaking deficit, numbers of homeless and unemployed, and people who cannot afford healthcare insurance.

Indeed, although the situation in Canada is not quite as grave as it currently is in the United States, the gap between the rich and the poor is increasing (Laxer, 1998, p. 6) at the same time that racist attitudes appear to be on the rise. Progressive educators must be wary of the vulnerable state of Canadian social programs like publicly-owned healthcare and affirmative action and do their best to ensure they are not dismantled. They also must contend with forms of racism among youth, as well as throughout British Columbian society. It seems clear that there is a link between working-class economic insecurities and increasing racial tensions (Orlowski, 2001a).

Does social studies have a role to play in dealing with these serious social issues? As a veteran social studies teacher, I believe it has the potential to make some progressive changes in the
social relations of the province, to be the conduit for a transformation in the way that people view others from different racial, cultural and class backgrounds. This transformation is necessary if we hope to make our society, dare I say our world, a more socially just place with less suffering than currently exists. A major obstacle to this idea is the number of people, many of them in powerful positions, who feel that the role of the school is to maintain the status quo. Conservatives in both Canada and the United States are claiming that multicultural reforms already in place are part of the root causes of societal problems such as illiteracy and group conflicts (Hirsch, 1987, 1996; Granatstein, 1999; Cheney, 1994). Indeed, the current right-wing attacks on public education are making it increasingly difficult to convince the public that progressive curricular reforms are necessary if current social problems are to be addressed.

There has been a long chorus of voices calling for public education to address social problems (Dewey, 1916; Kliebard, 1986; Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Osborne, 1991). How is this tension between competing visions for the school to be managed? The curriculum itself may provide at least part of the answer. In British Columbia, the social studies curricula are called the Integrated Resource Packages (IRPs). In the introductory section of the latest version, there is a clear statement addressing the tension between those who favour the status quo and those who want the school to emphasize critical thinking about social problems. It reads, “[t]he overarching goal of social studies is to develop thoughtful, responsible, active citizens who are able to acquire the requisite information to consider multiple perspectives and to make reasoned judgments” (BC Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1997, p. 1). Are teachers in B.C. emphasizing this aspect of social studies in their lessons? This study is an attempt to find an answer to this question. (It is noteworthy that even the use of the term multiple perspectives can be viewed as ideological. This will be discussed in chapter 7.)
In recent years, a growing number of educators have called for schools to focus on teaching from a social justice perspective, no matter how daunting the obstacles (Kelly & Brandes, 2001; Cochran-Smith, 2001; Kumashiro, 2000; Greene, 1998; hooks, 1994; Connell, 1993; Curtis, Livingstone & Smaller, 1992; Apple, 1990). Are the schools capable of accomplishing such a task? After all, they have been rightly implicated as a powerful hegemonic device in the constructing of social hierarchies throughout western nations (Althusser, 1971; Stanley, 1995; Gikandi, 1996; Willinsky, 1998). My experience as a teacher in the public school system leads me to be more optimistic than an Althusserian-influenced perspective. Although I understand why some people dismiss the possibility of the same institution that helped make dominant the discourses of White supremacy, capitalism, and patriarchy now take on the task of deconstructing them, I feel that there is enough opportunity and autonomy on the part of the teacher to help foster critical thinking, resistance, and action.

Many of the struggles around public education and the curriculum are struggles between competing political ideologies. The concept of ideology has been prominent in Marxist-informed analyses of social problems, especially throughout the industrialized nations of the west. Yet, according to Zeus Leonardo (2003), there have been only two major works focusing on political ideology in public education: Bowles & Gintis' (1976) *Schooling in Capitalist America* and Michael Apple’s (1990) *Ideology and Curriculum*. Of course, there is a small but growing number of scholars in education who have used the concept of ideology to some extent to further critical social theory and pedagogy (Giroux, 1981, 1983; Wexler, 1987; McLaren, 1989; Sleeter, 1996; Kelly, Brandes & Orlowski, 2004). In Canada, the historian of education, Ken Osborne, has written extensively on the possibilities of reforming the teaching of history and citizenship from a democratic socialist perspective (1988, 1991). Sociologists of education such as Jean Anyon (1980) and Annette Lareau-
(1989) have made important contributions to this research, albeit not overtly addressing political ideology. To the best of my knowledge, however, there has not been a study anywhere that examines the way conservatism, liberalism and socialist radicalism influence both the social studies curriculum and the attitudes of the teachers employed with teaching it. If I am wrong in this assertion, I know I am at least correct in claiming that a study such as this has not been done in British Columbia before now.

The underlying assumptions for the analysis of this entire project are based upon the effects of the various political ideologies in social studies education. The official knowledge in the formal curricular documents is influenced by political ideology (Apple, 1990). The ways that teachers see the world and teach about the world are similarly steeped in ideology. Issues of race and social class are undoubtedly seen through ideological lenses. This project is an examination of the extent to which political ideology informs both the formal curriculum and, through interviews, the ways social studies teachers think about historical and contemporary issues of race and social class. Before discussing the data and the relevant scholarly literature I need to clarify the meanings I attribute to the most important theoretical concepts for this research, namely, ideology, discourse, hegemony, and social justice. Chapter 2 will do this and provide the overall framework for the entire project. Chapter 3 is about the methodology as well as the methods I employed to do both the textual analysis of the formal curriculum and the analysis of the teacher interviews.

After Chapter 3, the focus of the research is on the role of public education to support and maintain hierarchical social relations. Chapter 4 is historical in nature and will provide context for the chapters that follow. It describes the way that White privilege, primarily from a pro-British perspective, was created and maintained in the new settler society that became British Columbia. In particular, the discourses that supported and maintained the imperialist project will be examined.
Chapters 5, 6, and 7 focus on political ideology in the B.C. social studies IRPs and the attitudes of the teachers. At the beginning of each of these chapters, I will make a case for the importance of the category under consideration – race, social class, or democracy/citizenship – so that schools may be better utilized to help us achieve the society in which we would all like to live. These beginning sections will also include the relevant scholarly literature and theory for the chapter. I will re-address political ideology in each of these chapters, focusing in turn on conservative, liberal, and radical conceptions of race, social class, and democracy and citizenship. Interpretations of concepts vital to the overall project that arise in each chapter will also be described at each chapter’s beginning. Each of these chapters will include data analysis of the two sources, namely, the formal curriculum and the teacher interviews.

The first formal social studies curriculum was in British Columbia was published in 1941. The study begins in 1926, however, as the Department of Education’s year-end exams provide a source for what the teachers were expected to cover. (Note: the 1926 exams were the earliest ones I was able to locate.) Six subsequent curriculums were published, with the latest version of social studies curriculum appearing in 1997. All versions were analyzed for the political ideology or ideologies that influenced the curriculum developers. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 will also explore the teachers’ attitudes around these same issues, each chapter corresponding to one of race, social class, and democracy.

In chapter 8, the conclusion, I make suggestions for changes to both the social studies curriculum and to teacher education programs in the B.C. context. This final chapter is a summary of the findings and suggestions for future research. Before the analysis begins, however, I must discuss the scholarly literature that informed my own understanding of these issues and helped me to frame the entire study. In other words, it is necessary to discuss the theoretical considerations of ideology, discourse, and hegemony. This is the focus of chapter 2.
Chapter 2  A Conceptual Framework for the Study

Many of the concepts crucial to the research have contested meanings. Others need to be defined for the sake of clarity. I will provide more context for some of these terms in the data analysis chapters. At this time, however, it is prudent to offer some definitions and interpretations. As I have already used the term *ideology* several times, and it being the central concept for this study, I will begin there.

2.0  Ideology

According to Raymond Williams (1977), the French philosopher, Destutt de Tracy, was the first to use the term *ideology* as a concept representing the “science of ideas” during the Age of Enlightenment’s early period. Yet, it was Karl Marx who began to use the term to critique social relations of domination. According to Henry Giroux (1981), Marx conceptualized ideology in political terms both as “a critique of consciousness” and as “possibilities within consciousness” (p. 19). Zeus Leonardo (2003) furthers the Marxist notion of ideology by arguing that it is about so much more than examining the “negative distortion” supported by hegemonic devices; ideology is also about “positive projection” (p. 206). John Schwarzmantel (1998) re-states Marx’s conceptualization in a clear manner by explaining that each political ideology consists of three elements: a critique, an ideal, and agency (p. 2). In other words, each ideology has a response to the prevailing social conditions, either favourable or not, depending on how an individual’s perspective agrees with the dominant ideology. Moreover, each ideology has an articulation of the ideal society. Whereas agency for Marx seemed to be based upon a worker-led revolution, the theories developed by both Leonardo and Schwarzmantel suggest myriad possibilities for action based on ideology.
It is necessary to describe the major political ideologies that have informed my analysis, of course, but it seems wisest to first discuss some characteristics of ideology in general. Ideology is about the “thought-production of human beings” (Giroux, 1981, p. 19). A political ideology contains “a specific set of assumptions and social practices” that leads to various “beliefs, expectations and biases” (p. 7). In other words, a political ideology socially constructs its own knowledge. Relations that are constructed socially and historically by supporters of the dominant ideology are considered to be natural. There are also material effects from the relations produced by supporters of the dominant ideology. This has important implications for my data analysis. For example, in explaining the existence of poverty within capitalism, a conservative would believe that the problem lies with the poor themselves, that they do not have the motivation to learn useful, wage-earning skills, whereas a socialist would point to the economic system itself as the reason. In this case, a person’s ideology provides the lens in which they perceive class issues.

If a person acts to further entrench the dominant ideology or resist it, then this person’s ideology is the source of the plan or agenda that guides their actions. In other words, all political ideologies function to provide the framework for political action designed to produce the good society, a term that is highly contested and at the root of many if not most political struggles today. According to Schwarzmantel (1998), the basic notion of ideology is that it is possible to transform society and change human nature so that people are prepared to become suitable members of the new society (p. 63). The capability of ideology to change human nature rests on its relationship to discourse, a connection that I will discuss in a subsequent section of this chapter.

Current political ideological debates are often around inclusion and exclusion. As Slavoj Zizek (1994) puts it, this is because in terms of social power ideology “regulates social visibility and non-visibility” (p. 3). As an example, the current conservative movement in the United States is
fuelled by a backlash by angry White (mostly male) people, against immigration, feminism and the liberal response to these changes, namely, affirmative action programs. *White defensiveness* can be viewed as a reaction to what is, for Whites, the novel experience of having to argue for one’s beliefs rather than simply assuming their acceptance. Sometimes, the cause of this conservative reaction may be the new experience of being in a minority.

Although the terms *ideology* and *perspective* are often used interchangeably, for me there is a crucial difference. I interpret the meaning of political perspective to be the coupling of critique and ideal. In other words, perspective refers to the lens through which an individual sees the world, or a “critique of consciousness,” *without* association to agency. The second aspect of the Marxist conception of ideology, according to Giroux, “possibilities within consciousness,” addresses notions of action on the part of the individual as well as the collective. Perspective does not include this aspect. The Schwarzmantel prescription for *ideology* also clearly separates perspective from ideology by including the notion of agency, most meaningful for political and social activism, of course, and the major reason why this research project even began in the first place.

Before I outline the core characteristics of each of the main ideologies, it is necessary to explain why I have chosen to use conservatism, liberalism and radicalism for my analysis. The radical ideology that has most informed my own understanding is related to a Marxist articulation of socialism. I am familiar with feminist (Dillabough, 2003; Bettie, 2003), multiculturalist (Bannerji, 1995), and environmentalist (Giddens, 1994; Abraham, Lacey, & Williams, 1990) concerns with Karl Marx’s work. Yet, I agree with feminist political philosopher Nancy Fraser (1997) who contends that it is best for those who subscribe to a radical ideology to re-work socialism by incorporating these valid concerns to make it an even stronger ideology than it was in its original form or any time since. In other words, to question Marxism from a critical perspective is not the same as outright dismissal. The major
difference between the class-based Marxist interpretation of the radical ideology and my interpretation of the radical ideology is that I am considering class as much more heterogenous than Marx. Race/class intersections have played a prominent role in the history of B.C. coal mining (see chapter 4) and continue to play a role in the attitudes of teachers today. The multicultural metropolis that is Vancouver renders the classical Marxist notion of class more or less obsolete. It is the ways that race and class are represented in curriculum and thought about by teachers that is germane to this research.

But one may ask whether the concept of ideology is useful at this particular historical moment? Has it served its useful purpose and now needs to be discarded? In Beyond Left and Right (1994), Anthony Giddens, at one time considered a sociologist with a socialist perspective, makes a case that the old ideologies of conservatism, liberalism and socialism have been turned inside out by powerful social, environmental and technological forces to the point that today’s socialists are conservative and today’s conservatives seem to adhere to an extreme brand of radicalism. To some extent, a case could be made that the New Democratic Party in Canada is a social democratic movement trying to preserve the hard-fought struggles won by the common people, such as public healthcare and welfare, against corporate intrusion and demands for privatization. There is also a strong case to be made that the current U.S. administration led by George W. Bush is an extreme brand of radicalism even though it presents to the masses as driven by conservatism. Clearly, Giddens is onto something. That said, I will refrain from changing the usage of these terms, if mainly to be in harmony with the vast amounts of scholarship that use conservatism to describe a type of right-wing politics and radicalism to represent a left-wing politics. I consider the usage of these terms to contain much relevance in the contemporary context.

Stanley Aronowitz (1988) makes the contentious suggestion that we abolish the concept of ideology altogether, in education and everywhere else. Poststructuralist and postmodern theorists have
attacked modernity and its political ideologies on several fronts (Foucault, 1980; Lyotard, 1984; Laclau & Mouffe, 1985). For now, I will state my position of resisting the decision to do away with the concept of ideology by claiming that political ideologies offer the language to debate and discuss social hierarchies, trends, and movements. This will need to be discussed further, of course, but the argument will be clearer if at this time I describe the conditions and traits that have allowed the three major political ideologies to develop in the ways that they have.

2.1 Modernity

Modernity itself is a period that began with the Enlightenment and the American and French revolutions in the late 1700s. The characteristics of modernity are varied and complex, so much so that I can only offer a simplistic overview that highlights traits pertinent to my study. In The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity (1987), Jurgen Habermas interprets Hegel, whom he considers to be “the first philosopher to develop a clear concept of modernity” (p. 4), to claim that there were two features that separated the new period from that which came before. First, the notion of individual freedom or emancipation, contained in the idea of subjectivity, meant that individuals were free to apply their own thinking to making a new social and political order. Not only was the person responsible for their own actions, but society itself was the result of collective human action rather than a God-given creation. Second, ties between the state and the economy must be completely severed. Taken together, these two features led to radically altered social relationships during the period of modernity. Traditional, ascribed roles that once ensured people remained in their station until death became destabilized, enabling some commoners the opportunity of social mobility and the pursuit of happiness. The essential state of the individual and of human nature itself, considered flawed by the authorities of divinity, were, for the most part, outright dismissed by philosophers of the Enlightenment. Yet, these
same philosophers could not find a solution to the problem that has dogged modernity since it began, namely, the possibility for a society of autonomous individuals to collectively unify. There was concern that the new society “might fall into decadence and corruption, because commerce could loom so large in people’s lives that they would neglect the public and political spheres” (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 33). The recent trend in North America for regressive tax reform indicates that these concerns remain valid. It is possible to see certain ideologies, such as conservatism, nationalism, and socialism, develop responses to this tension of individual freedom and social cohesion, a tension that continues to destabilize the liberal project to this day.

Modernity also ushered in the notion of progress, tied as it was to the control of nature, and a term that has been highly contested. In recent decades, there has been a considerable attack on the idea of inevitable or teleological progress, especially the manner in which early liberal and socialist thinkers portrayed it. My position is that the term still holds some validity, although more for the purposes of guiding the path and the vision of the ideal society rather than as something inevitable. For me, progress refers to an expanding inclusivity, in terms of both individual rights and economic security. For example, if the agency of certain groups leads to the eradication of poverty and the right of the individual to some form of housing, then this is progress. The notion of individual rights leads to another concept that also gained currency during this period and seems to have had better endurance, namely, citizenship. Citizenship is important to this entire project, linked as it is to democracy, inclusion, power, and social justice (see chapter 7). In fact, citizenship and democracy are so important to the period of modernity that many of the tensions and struggles throughout the entire period are centred around them.
This research project is about ideology and teaching for social justice in twenty-first century British Columbia. I think it is pertinent, however, to describe the reasons why and how the major political ideologies originated.

2.2 The Political Ideologies of Modernity

The concepts of democracy and emancipation are central to my notion of social justice. Both democracy and emancipation were also central to the tensions within the politics of modernity that led to the competing political ideologies. Many philosophers of the Enlightenment, even those who believed that human happiness was possible, “had doubts about all human beings sharing in the benefits” (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 23). There was major debate around who should profit from the new society with its burgeoning economies, who should be included, and what role should be given to the “vulgar masses” in the democratic republic that the “cultured elite” was attempting to create (p. 23). That the working classes of Europe were thought of in this contemptuous manner sheds light on the even worse treatment that the indigenous peoples of the empire-building territories were subjected to. Despite these obvious contradictions in Enlightenment philosophy, several political ideologies emerged out of these struggles, each one made up of many situations that are grounded in social and material reality (Zizek, 1994). The first ideology to articulate a new way of perceiving the world and organize society through human reason during this period was liberalism.

2.2.1 Liberalism

The two social cornerstones of liberalism in its classic form are “the supreme value of the individual and the need for a political system that was suitable for an emancipated and rational population” (Schwartzmantel, 1998, p. 68). Hence, it can be argued that the concepts of
emancipation and democracy are the progeny of liberalism. Initially, liberals were quite happy to engage in the pursuit of wealth and the conquest of nature (p. 74). An economic system based on free-market principles became dominant as the newly emerging bourgeoisie refined the economically successful but racist mercantile system that had existed for at least a century prior to these revolutionary times. Adam Smith’s *Wealth of Nations* became the source of rational liberal principles. Smith’s belief in free-market capitalism was based in part on what he also thought to be the best way to free the most people.

To varying degrees, liberalism became entrenched in France, Britain, its colonies, and the United States. A growing populace of small property owners began to create social stability and allow democracy (in its representative form) the opportunity to flourish. Yet, some liberal thinkers like Alexis de Tocqueville worried about the effects of excessive privatization (Heffner, 1956, pp. 209-213) and excessive individualism (ibid., pp. 192-194) because they would work to undermine any concern with common citizenship, public values, and collective benefits. Others, like John Stuart Mill, were concerned with who would be granted citizenship rights and what negative effect giving non-propertied White men (i.e., labourers) the vote would have on the “tone of political discourse” (Schwartzmantel, 1998, p. 80). At this point in history, there was very little thought given to any notions of emancipation for those who had been colonized or enslaved.

Eventually, liberalism developed civil, political, and consumer rights for all White men and in this way was successful in integrating these masses into the new society. By the late 1800s, classical liberalism evolved into *progressive* or *reform liberalism* in which a more state-interventionist approach developed in part to appease the growing discontent of the working classes. Reform liberalism also included a “tempered” individualism, which developed out of the inevitable tension between “an ideal of liberty” and “an ideal of equality” (McCullough, 1995, p. 27). Over the course
of the twentieth century, a colour-blind racial discourse became part of liberalism (Lewis, 2001; Frankenberg, 1993), and with this appeared another cornerstone of the ideology, namely, meritocracy. Meritocracy refers to the social system whereby each individual reaches a social and economic status commensurate with their individual talents and how hard they have worked. It is also used to explain why some individuals “excel and others flounder” (Lewis, 2001, p. 799). At the same time that meritocracy reinforces the inequalities in our society, its existence makes people unconscious of any notion of privilege. In other words, meritocracy works as a hegemonic device. This was a central part of the socialist critique of liberalism. Yet, both ideologies had not developed any serious thought to notions of justice for those who were not of European extraction. Neither would the significant number of Europeans who had a more conservative vision of the ideal society be concerned with the welfare of non-White people. But for the first time, there was a new way of discussing what kind of society was best, with a language that included a conceptual framework based upon emancipation for all, citizenship and other democratic rights, and above all, the primacy of the individual. They merged together to form what is likely the first discursive formation that addressed social justice issues in a profound way (in Eurocentric history, at least). Yet, liberalism had its detractors, even among those who might concur with its stated aims.

Karl Marx agreed with much of nineteenth-century liberalism (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 95). His major criticism of the liberal position was what he saw as an unsolvable contradiction: the rights of the individual in an economic structure based on inequality. For Marx, the prime social unit was not the individual. It was social class.
2.2.2 Socialism

A product of both the industrial revolution and the French Revolution, the original idea of socialism was that human beings could control and master "the forces of nature and production to achieve a common happiness of mankind" (Schwartzman, 1998, p. 88). Socialism can be seen as a spin-off ideology from liberalism, another attempt to realize the same emancipatory goal. The original socialist tradition was in agreement with the liberal idea about a rationally controlled society that could be made even better, that is, progress through conscious human action. Both ideologies agreed that the notion of divine guidance was simply not credible.

Contrary to popular misconception, Karl Marx had little difficulty with the liberal idea of democracy and its potential to engage and deliver power to the masses. Indeed, Marx had approved of the demand for universal suffrage made by Chartist working-class organizations in Britain in the 1830s. Moreover, he had commented that its "inevitable result ... the political supremacy of the working class" was only a matter of time (in Schwarzmantel, p. 22). Yet, democracy in action proved itself to be different from democracy in its ideal form. The same people Marx referred to as the working class were called the unenlightened or even the vulgar masses by many bourgeois liberal thinkers. Marx became convinced that liberalism was, at best, a naïve attempt to bring freedom to the masses (pp. 95-96).

The failure of liberalism became especially clear to Marx after the 1851 Third Republic election in France, a test for liberal democracy in which the bourgeoisie ended up supporting the elites rather than the workers (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 181). A major tension within the liberal philosophy was made clear: the desire for universal rights coupled with the fear of the unenlightened masses holding the reins of power (ibid., p. 39). For these so-called unenlightened masses, however, power was still beyond their reach, traditional community support networks were breaking down, and
working conditions for the labourers of the industrial revolution were abominable. Historian Eric Hobsbawm explains the dilemma the working classes of Europe faced.

Three possibilities were therefore open to such of the poor as found themselves in the path of bourgeois society, and no longer effectively sheltered in still inaccessible regions of traditional society. They could strive to become bourgeois; they could allow themselves to be ground down; or they could rebel. (Hobsbawm, 1962, p. 245)

As Hobsbawm suggests, the Marxist critique of liberalism cogently expressed the discontentment of the masses and their potential for revolution. For Marx, liberalism’s major flaw was its emphasis on the individual as the most important unit in society. In the Marxist interpretation of the social relations of that period, it was social class that was the crucial aspect of a person’s identity. This was because of the great disparities in wealth and opportunities with which the working classes had to contend.

It is beyond the scope of this research to go into any depth about the Marxist prescription for freedom based on a violent confrontation over the means of production between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. It is paramount to my argument, however, that the original socialist ideology also articulated a vision for a socially just world in the same vein as its liberal predecessor. According to Marxian philosopher Peter Singer (1980), “Marx was devoted to the cause of human freedom” (p. 72). The liberal conception of freedom fits perfectly with the economic theories of capitalism, and on its own terms appears coherent. Yet, as Marx pointed out in the first volume of Capital (1961), from a broader, historical perspective, the liberal idea of freedom is unattainable for most people within capitalism. This is because of the basic contradiction that workers cannot be free when they are vulnerable to the capitalist tendency to exploit them and sell products at exorbitant prices.

Yet, as Marx and his early supporters viewed the liberal ideology as naïve and flawed, a similar critique of socialism has been launched by feminists (Dillabough, 2003; Bettie, 2003;
Hartmann, 1993), multiculturalists (Fraser, 1997; Bannerji, 1995), and environmentalists (Giddens, 1994; Abraham, Lacey, & Williams, 1990). At this point in the discussion of the role of ideology, suffice to say that Marx predicted, indeed, saw as inevitable, a worker-led revolution that would finish the bourgeois project of liberalism, namely, the emancipation of everyone. Adherents of both liberalism and conservatism were appalled at the notion of what kind of society the labouring masses would construct. A violent revolution was a frightening prospect; yet, so was the idea of the working classes gaining power through the mechanism of universal suffrage. Marx gained few allies from opposing ideologies, given his view of the inevitable clash between social classes.

In fact, it is Marx’s deterministic view of history with which I take exception. For me, human destiny is not pre-determined; rather, it has all to do with our agency in constructing what it is we truly want. It is precisely this position that the conservatives took exception with; for them, human reason is flawed. A central tenet of conservatism is that society should be led by a stable group of people who, through past experience, would have the ability to do so wisely. Its spin-off ideology, nationalism, is positioned even further to the Right on the Left-Right spectrum. Because it is only a matter of degree that separates these two ideologies, and because the criticisms leveled by liberals and socialists are similar for both, I will discuss them in a single section.

2.2.3 Conservatism and Nationalism

The conservative ideology developed as a reaction to modernity and the revolutionary fervour it spawned. According to Schwarzman (1998), “[c]onservatism was critical of modernity while at the same time being its product” (p. 111). The commercial forces unleashed by the liberal project were tearing apart the bonds needed for social cohesion. Moreover, conservatives considered the notion of progress, central to both liberalism and socialism, as unsettling and threatening to tradition
and community. A central theme of conservatism is that tradition gains strength from the long held views inherent in the common sense of the community (McCullough, 1995, p. 43). Conservative theorists believed in "the idea of an organic and hierarchical society, in which people knew their place yet are related to each other as part of a totality" (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 110). In other words, tradition and progress are directly at odds with one another; conservatives cherish the former while fearing the latter.

Conservatism shares with socialism a fear of the fragmentary atomistic processes in the individual-obsessed philosophy of liberalism. Both were fearful of liberalism’s unchecked economic policies, processes that might render all familiarity unrecognizable. The similarities between the two ideologies end there, however, as traditional conservative thought was focused on how to maintain the status quo in the face of economic, political, and social upheaval (McCullough, 1995, p. 44). The idea that society must depend on human reason repulsed conservatives, who focused on divine guidance in this life to get people to the after-life. As a corollary, conservatives such as Edmund Burke were staunchly opposed to involving the masses in the political realm (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 114).

In its original form, conservatism was adamantly opposed to democracy. Yet, there were some conservative theorists who attempted to encourage the engagement of the masses into politics through the use of referenda and plebiscites. (This strand of conservatism has been articulated recently in Canada, as the now defunct Canadian Alliance Party had called for this referenda mechanism to be part of federal democratic initiatives.) Conservatism in this form appears to use populism to give people a false sense of participation as authoritarian politics are entrenched. As Rorty (1998) points out, progressive legislation brought about through the painstaking lobbying of various groups is quickly extinguished.
Strands of conservatism venture even further to the right on the Left-Right political spectrum, of course. Fascists seized the opportunity presented by the onward rush of modernity to claim that rational human thought is flawed, that an all-powerful leader is required to forge a strong sense of community in the face of social forces brought on by democratic, liberal thought. Fascism contains a central element of the ideology of nationalism, namely, the use of revisionist history and myth to foster a racial or ethnic pride. Most fascist forms of nationalism also use vulnerable groups as scapegoats in order to mobilize the masses to move toward a perceived greater level of prosperity. There are more progressive forms of nationalism. But for our purposes, the discussion on nationalism focuses on its more common and regressive form.

Nationalism is much more likely to survive social crises because of its chameleon-like qualities. As well, its critique of the universalism espoused by liberals and socialists allows it to mobilize large groups of people opposed to the concept in these postmodern times, allowing groups to be pitted against one another, as currently seen throughout many parts of the world, such as in central Africa, the Balkan states, and even to some degree in Quebec. Moreover, nationalism is able to better guarantee “a sense of inclusion and citizenship” (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 147), most often by excluding others from the rights and benefits of citizenship. (A most frightening situation arises with what de Tocqueville called the tyranny of the majority.)

The critiques of conservatism and right-wing nationalism from both the liberal and socialist camps are clear and succinct and based on several principles of social justice. To begin, a society constructed by rational human-thought makes more sense than one based on divine principles (which most on the Left would claim to be open to multiple human interpretations anyway). Moreover, and especially germane to this study, traditional communities are most often non-egalitarian with entrenched social hierarchies and therefore clearly anti-democratic. Traditional hierarchies by
definition take exception with the discourse for the emancipation of the masses, a situation that can lead to the oppression of many for the benefit of the few. Lastly, the focus on tradition and the past often seems to lead to the exclusion of certain groups from attaining citizenship. Even more disturbing, extreme conservatism and right-wing nationalism often scapegoat vulnerable groups of people.

From the taxonomy of political ideologies I have described here, it is clear that both liberalism and socialism include principles of social justice. Both couplings – liberalism/socialism and conservatism/nationalism – work, to a large extent, in opposition to each other. This binary produces tensions around the issues of engaging the masses politically, of inclusion and citizen rights, of equality, and of progress. All of these ideologies have changed over time to adapt to changing conditions. Liberalism has embraced a larger role for government. The radical left, represented to some degree in Canada by the trade union movement (Palmer, 1992) and the New Democratic Party, is concerned with matters of race and gender. Conservatism today emphasizes the importance of meritocracy and the primacy of the individual (Sadovnik et al., 1994) much more than earlier conservatives. According to postmodern theorists, however, all of the ideologies that arose out of modernity are flawed and mostly irrelevant for today’s society.

2.3 Postmodernist Critiques of Modernity’s Ideologies

There are many aspects of how reality is understood in the modernist paradigm to which postmodernists take exception. The assumption that objective truths exist and that value-free science can uncover these truths has been shown to be problematic from a postmodernist perspective (Murphy, 1989, p. 2). Moreover, postmodernists attack what they see as the major flaw in western epistemology, namely, that knowledge as well as order are conceived dualistically and underpinned
by metanarratives. According to John Murphy, “a metanarrative style of knowledge … is used to buttress norms” (ibid, p. 14). In other words, these metanarratives act as hegemonic devices that conceal certain forms of power. An important example of this is the universal subject that was at the centre of liberalism’s Enlightenment, a concept that positioned the economically privileged White male as the hegemonic norm.

Relatively new ideologies such as certain versions of feminism and critical multiculturalism have articulated well developed critiques of this liberal notion of the universal subject. Indeed, feminist critiques of socialism are equally damning. After all, according to Zeus Leonardo (2003), “[w]omen’s role in the Marxist conception of history is either muted or absent” (p. 208). Furthermore, in tandem with environmentalism, these critiques of the older ideologies emphasize what they see as the inability of the metanarratives to address the social problems to which they claim to have solutions. The ever increasing diverse pluralist nature of Canada and the United States, especially in urban centres, suggests that what the metanarratives of each of the major political ideologies promises are even less likely to be delivered.

It is the postmodernist critique of the claim to universalism within the metanarratives of the liberal and socialist ideologies that is most pertinent to this study. For example, in The Postmodern Condition (1984), Jean-Francois Lyotard develops a convincing argument illuminating the contradictions within European liberalism, especially its claims of emancipation existing side by side with concealed dynamics of oppression. This particular contradiction can best be seen when one considers the social, political, and economic oppression of indigenous peoples and the economic oppression of most of the working classes, both in the past and in the current context.

The political conditions during this emerging postmodern period are vastly different from those that led to the creation and development of the Enlightenment. The erosion of the powers of the
nation-state, one of the cornerstones of modernity, has added to the social fragmentation and disappearance of community for many people. The undeniable destruction of the environment proves that liberals and socialists were wrong in thinking that nature could simply be controlled. A class, such as Marx’s proletariat, no longer can be seen as a subject in history: yet, neither could it be determined entirely from economics. This is because the Marxist notion of social class has been destabilized by a host of other factors that includes race (Fraser, 1997), gender (Hartmann, 1993), and consumerism (Jameson, 1983). As well, shifting subjectivities make social movements based on any one marker of identity suspect. In fact, the problematic status of any social movement or collective agent powerful enough to claim to speak on behalf of society about general grievances has added to the conviction among many that no grand metanarrative can speak for all social groups. One of the most common postmodernist critiques of modernity is that there can be no universal emancipation in this postmodern world (Lyotard, 1984). By corollary, there can only be a politics of identity and difference.

In short, postmodern theorists question the idea that any one group is capable of developing an emancipatory political agenda as both the liberals and socialists espouse (Laclau, 1988; Lyotard, 1984). Each ideology is limited because it speaks to and benefits only a partial population in society, blocking any hope of realizing its ideal through agency, as well as making any claims to universality unsustainable. The postmodern critique of socialism is that a person’s identity includes several markers, social class being but one. The postmodern critique of liberalism is centred around the notion of the primacy of the individual, that the individual is a rational and autonomous subject of agency. Progressive social movements, most of which “protest structural inequalities that they perceive unfairly privilege some social segments and oppress others” (Young, 2000, p. 92), are obviously at variance with conservatism’s axiom of knowing your place in traditional social
2.4 Ideology Today

If democracy and emancipation are to be more than pious aspirations, the ideologies must once again be linked to social movements and political parties that are putting them into practice. (John Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 12)

I include these postmodernist critiques to address the frequent and often valid attacks on any conceptual discussion of the political ideologies that developed in response to the sweeping changes transforming western societies during the period of modernity. In order to have relevance today, there is no question that the ideologies of emancipation - liberalism and socialism - need to take into account the postmodern critiques. In particular, socialism must find the political space and will to take into account the diversity along axes of race and gender and not only social class.

I believe, however, that the political ideologies of the Left-Right spectrum are still highly relevant in the politics of today's postmodern society. Political ideologies are necessary for a truly democratic politics to develop. John Schwarzmantel (1998) claims that if we do not have political ideologies that political parties subscribe to, then we get power for the sake of power. In the Canadian context we have seen this very development with the land-slide election victory of the B.C. Liberal Party in 2001, which immediately demonstrated a neoconservative ideology as soon as they formed government. Explicit articulation of these ideologies would enable debate and discussion to flourish with a backdrop of common understanding. But does the public possess a common understanding of the major political ideologies? If they do not, which I suspect to be the case, then how best to change this? If a socially just society is the end goal, as it is for me and many others, a class-based socialist notion of a collective agent that includes race and gender is better positioned to build sustaining coalitions in order to confront the major obstacles. A public understanding of ideological critique
would greatly strengthen such a movement. After all, what other options do advocates for social justice have?

Some people do not agree with the principles of social justice, of course. Moreover, the liberal vision of an ideal world differs from the socialist vision. Conservatives do not accept the notion of equality, believing that traditional social hierarchies are required for social cohesion. All of the adherents to these ideologies compete to garner support for their way of seeing the world and their plans to organize society through the use of discourse.

2.5 Discourse

[A]t the heart of ideology is the problem of social relations of domination made intelligible through discourse. (Zeus Leonardo, 2003, p. 204)

This quote is indicative of the way that I have used the concept of discourse throughout the entire project, namely, as a constant and dynamic engagement with power. A comprehension of the role discourse plays in sustaining or resisting dominant ideologies is of paramount importance to this research. Leonardo (2003) concurs, arguing that “a discursive understanding of ideology critique” has huge “potential as an analytic tool” (p. 204). Such an understanding forces a person to “appreciate the role that language plays in the representation of social life” (p. 204). Within this framework, ideology is not reified; rather, it is “never complete but instead is evolving and modifying itself” and “never stands on its own but is involved in relations with other ideologies” (p. 209). At the risk of oversimplification, ideology rests at the pinnacle of certain sets of discourses that have formed into powerful discursive formations. Not all ideas or discourses take hold to form an ideology, of course. Stuart Hall states, “It is not the individual elements of a discourse that have political or ideological connotations, it is the ways those elements are organized together in a new discursive formation”
Across time, the discourses change, as do the discursive formations, thereby forcing ideologies to adapt, always in response to changing material and social conditions.

Yet, ideology does not fall prey “to relativism or a dilut[ed] concept beyond recognition” (Leonardo, 2003, p. 204), even as the supportive discursive formations emphasize various discourses to different degrees. This is because there are core characteristics, discussed earlier in this chapter, that are unique to each of them. To use an example pertinent to this research, the conservative ideology no longer is dependent upon the dying race or the yellow hordes discourses to support the notion of race-based social stratification. (See chapter 4 for further discussion of these earlier discourses of conservatism.) The current discursive formation in support of conservatism includes anti-affirmative action and blame-the-victim discourses that work to fuel a white backlash.

Traditionally, discourse and discourse analysis are thought of in mechanistic terms and within the realm of linguistics (McHoul, 1993). Rather than thinking of discourse in this way, I have used it in a more Foucauldian sense of the term, that is, as a critical tool enabling the illumination of the political ideologies underlying the B.C. social studies curriculum and influencing the attitudes of the teachers toward issues of race and class. In other words, discourse is how “ideology is understood, perpetuated or challenged” (Leonardo, 2003, p. 207), an approach that informed my strategies in determining how ideology influences social studies education in terms of race and class. Leonardo and I are not alone in realizing the potential of this poststructuralist approach to ideology critique.

Australian educator R. W. Connell (2004), a self-proclaimed “socialist,” emphasizes that “[p]oststructuralism represents an important creative resource for the social sciences and the humanities” (p. 22). A poststructuralist understanding of language in the representation of social life demonstrates its importance with discourse, discourse analysis, and ideology.
clearly stopped being solely within the domain of formal linguistics.) As Leonardo (2003) puts it, “language is a tool not only for communication, but also for domination and liberation” (p. 205). Connell considers the theoretical work of Michel Foucault to be particularly effective in demonstrating the usefulness of viewing the connections between language, discourse, and power (p. 23).

Foucault (1970) reconceptualized language as a sociopolitical entity, as the means by which things can actually be created. For Foucault, knowledge itself involves social, political and historical conditions under which various statements come to count as true or false. In other words, power is always at the root of discourse and which discourses gain currency as official knowledge. Foucault is not saying that there is no truth. On the contrary, he is in agreement with postmodern theorists that there can be many truths of the same event, each with its own rationality. For Foucault, as for me, what is important is: which interpretation of the truth, at any given period, becomes the official discourse and how does this occur? Or, in other words, two important questions stemming from Foucault’s theory of discourse are: first, “How does an interpretation get to be told as truth?” and second, “What can be said?” Even to ask such questions demonstrates a radical ideological position. To ask such questions involves the notion of power.

Power is the underpinning of Foucault’s theory of discourse (1977, p. 27). Yet, power is conceived very differently from commonsense and sociopolitical interpretations: “Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere” (Foucault, 1979a, p. 93). In the Foucauldian sense, power is conceived as a set of relations of force, relations that are local and historically contingent. Power is seamlessly built into daily relations and practices, rather than as some thing imposed from the top down. Discourse is not so unidirectional.
The dominant discourses in a society work to maintain the status quo and further the interests of the privileged. In the course of White settlers populating the region now known as British Columbia, the dominant discourses of White supremacy, Christianity, capitalism, the dying race, and the yellow hordes all worked to increase economic, social and political power for the White (mostly British) middle class at the expense of the Other (mostly Aboriginal and Asian). Yet, it is crucial, according to Allan Luke (1995), that we see discourse as more than simply “top-down ideological manipulation” (p. 9). Without specifically referring to Foucault, Michael Apple succinctly states the Foucauldian premise, “[w]herever there is power, there is resistance” (1989, p. 182). In other words, dominant discourses can fail because human beings are also agents capable of changing the conditions under which they live. History is replete with examples of discourses that run counter to the interests of the privileged, sometimes gaining enough currency because of the way they explain material conditions to foster social movements that actually succeed in changing or transforming major segments of society. The gains created out of feminism, anti-racism and trade unionism – movements that continue to fight against various forms of oppression – attest to this. In short, the dominant discourses are about power; the counter-hegemonic discourses are about resistance to power.

But what exactly is discourse in the way that I am using it? Popkewitz states that discourse “sets the conditions by which events are interpreted and one’s self as an individual is located in a dynamic world” (cited in Britzman, 1991, p. 16). From this I assume that Popkewitz means that discourse shapes each individual’s experience and subjectivity, a Foucauldian contention. Therefore, the unified self of the Enlightenment, so crucial to liberal philosophy, has been destabilized to the ever-changing subject, another important poststructuralist contribution. This is but one aspect of how the concept of discourse is crucial for an understanding of ideology.
Discourse is always connected with desire and power. If it is a dominant discourse, these connections are hidden if desire and power are to manifest themselves in the social relations of a society. The dominant discourse functions hegemonically because, at least in part, those who hold social, economic and political power are in the minority. As Norman Fairclough (1989) puts it, “[d]iscourse can never be ‘neutral’ or value-free; discourse always reflects ideologies, systems of values, beliefs, and social practices” (p. 21). In other words, discourses can work toward either sustaining unequal relations of power or challenging them.

In order to understand the connection between discourse and its relationship to power, one must engage in an analytic combination of ideology and discourse, or what Lemke (1995) calls “the ideological functioning of discourses” (p. 12). This is what Luke (1995) calls critical discourse analysis. The results of such analysis is what Leonardo (2003) refers to as ideology critique. I concur with Leonardo’s contention that “[i]deology critique lifts the veil of common sense in order to arrive at underlying interests and agendas structured in language” (p. 208). Critical discourse analysis is the strategy I have employed in this research in order to engage in an ideology critique of social studies education in British Columbia. For example, the knowledge contained in the Ministry-sanctioned curricula is interwoven with power. First, it is seen as official knowledge upholding authority (Apple, 1990). Second, its particular knowledge is what the students learn about. Whatever is excluded is not in the dominant discourses that structure society and its social relations. What is included eventually becomes normalized, as if this was inevitable, natural, perhaps even invisible. Both exclusion and inclusion are examples of hegemonic strategies.

Discourse is engaged with the representation of our world. And, according to my understanding of Popkewitz, it is also engaged with shaping our consciousness of the world. Yet, interwoven with power as it is, discourse is set in a material condition or a set of material conditions
which, in turn, sets boundaries on the socially productive imagination. As an example, the discourses of
White supremacy and capitalism, in tandem with the dying race discourse, worked to rationalize the
theft of Aboriginal lands and subsequent legislation forbidding status Aboriginal people from owning
land or starting a business in British Columbia from the 1850s until the 1950s. Discourse, in this sense,
engages in power with definite material consequences. It also supports a political ideology, in this case,
conservatism.

It is the elements of various discourses, as part of discursive formations, that are involved in
the dynamics of constructing political ideologies. It is often difficult for certain discourses that have the
best interests of significant numbers of people to take hold because the dominant ideology influences
these same people to perceive the world in ways that work to oppress them. In other words, discourses
do not compete as equals. Whereas some are considered to be authoritative, others are quickly
marginalized, even by those who might benefit from the ideas contained within them. Roland Barthes
“proposed the notion of ideology as the ‘naturalization’ of the symbolic order” (cited in Zizek, 1994, p.
11). At this point, the idea of hegemony will be helpful in explaining what Barthes calls the
“naturalization,” which is the connection between ideology and discourse.

2.6 Hegemony

It is often astounding to learn of people who act in ways that are not in the best interests of the
social groups to which they belong. A few examples will make this statement more concrete. There
are some teachers in the union to which I belong, the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation (BCTF),
who want the union to disappear, to be replaced by a loosely affiliated association. In June 2001,
during the last election in British Columbia, a province in which the majority of the populace is
considered working class, 58% of the popular vote went to the neoconservative and virulently anti-
union B.C. Liberal Party rather than to the pro-labour New Democratic Party. To understand why it is not uncommon to witness people acting with a contradictory consciousness, it is helpful to utilize the Gramscian notion of *hegemony*.

Hegemony refers to the ideal representation of the interests of the privileged groups as universal interests, which are accepted by the masses as the natural order. Antonio Gramsci (1971) developed the Marxist conception of hegemony as the principal manner in which social order is maintained within capitalist societies. Force is not required in a society whereby the masses freely give their consent to the existing order and social hierarchies, (although the possibility of force is ever present). In the context of the last B.C. election, a bourgeois or middle-class hegemony permeated almost the entire public space for debate so that even the working classes considered the notion of severe tax cuts as being in their own best interests. The subsequent massive funding cuts in social services, public education and healthcare, in tandem with a record-breaking deficit and an agenda of privatization, has left the masses reeling. It is prudent to discuss the role of hegemony that enables situations like this to arise.

Hegemony is more than a political alliance between social forces made up of certain classes or fractions of classes. In the European context of Gramsci’s time, hegemony was the integration of a variety of class interests that were distributed throughout society “bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity … on a ‘universal’ plane” (Gramsci, 1971, pp. 181-182). The effects of hegemony are so difficult to combat because hegemony itself “constitutes the limit of commonsense for most people” (R. Williams, cited in M. Apple, 1990, p. 4). In other words, hegemony shapes how people view life itself through organizing values, rituals, and meaning. Many aspects of an individual’s reality are confirmed by other aspects. For example, in the historical context of British Columbia, imperialism required that White people take land away
from the First Nations people. Discourses of capitalism, Christianity and White supremacy formed a rationalizing discursive formation to aid in this theft. The White settlers saw First Nations people as inferior and treated them accordingly. After some time, this oppressive process led to greatly increased dysfunction in First Nations communities, reinforcing notions of European superiority and the racial hierarchies that emanated from them.

Henry Giroux (1981) describes this form of hegemony, which he and others term "cultural hegemony," as "the successful attempt of a dominant class to utilize its control over the resources of the state and civil society, particularly through the use of the mass media and the educational system, to establish its views of the world as all inclusive and universal" (p. 23). Indeed, both Giroux and Apple (1990, p. 5) appear to be greatly influenced by the Marxist interpretation of hegemony relating mostly around social class, or how one class consciously imposes its values on another class. As the historical example in the previous paragraph indicates, however, I consider the same dynamic to be at work with race relations, as well.

In Gramscian terms, Giroux is claiming that the state operates in a much broader framework than what is commonly thought of as the public sphere, namely, the government, political parties, and the military. The state, according to Gramsci, also includes the private sphere of civil society, including church, the media, and of great significance for this project, public education (Gramsci, 1971, p. 261). The state can be seen as a social relation in much the same way that Foucault conceptualized power. Rather than thinking of the state in Althusserian terms, as a distinct institutional category, it is more profound to think of it as a form of social relations that enables capitalism and other dominant discourses to find expression. This broader conception of the state also allows for a better understanding of the hegemonic devices employed in the service of maintaining the status quo. Gramsci noted that the success of the hegemonic function of the state depends on the
“organic intellectuals,” a group made up of educators, journalists, and experts within various fields. These organic intellectuals play a hegemonic role in the way that they can control and further entrench certain discourses that support the dominant ideology. In short, their role is to manufacture consent. Yet, this group is not a monolithic entity sharing exactly the same views. It is possible to see how the role of the organic intellectual can be de-stabilized. In particular, as the Social Reconstructionists contend (Rugg, 1921; Counts, 1932; Sleeter & Grant, 1994), the role of the autonomous educator offers hope for counter-hegemonic discourses to develop. Counter-hegemony includes the notion that, for example, a working-class culture with its own values and norms would arise to confront bourgeois hegemony. Of course, a counter-hegemonic movement can also struggle against white supremacist hegemony. The organic intellectuals of counter-hegemonic discourses might hold down any job, from within the trade union movement to community work. For the purposes of this research, examining the role of the social studies teacher as organic intellectual in the service of the state is crucial. It is also important however, that in this context the state itself be seen as an extraordinarily powerful dispenser of the dominant discourses that influence social relations, rather than as Althusser described it, namely, as a distinct institutional category on its own.

Before Gramsci’s time, much Marxist discourse involved the notion of a false consciousness, or the idea that many people adhere to one or more political ideologies, whether or not they are able to articulate it, that does not work in their best interest. Gramsci preferred the idea of a contradictory consciousness, which, according to Giroux (1981), means that “human beings view the world from a perspective that contains both hegemonic forms of thinking and modes of critical insight” (p. 25). Jean Anyon (1981) developed a theory of contradictory consciousness in a slightly different manner. She postulates that most people are influenced by a consciousness that is made up of a practical component and a theoretical component. The practical component involves the “everyday attempts to
resolve the class, race, gender and other contradictions one faces” (p. 126). In other words, it’s about how people understand the system to work. Theoretical consciousness, on the other hand, is mostly developed by the dominant political ideology in a manner that attempts to thwart serious dissent through the use of an array of hegemonic devices. For a significant number of people, the practical and the theoretical do not sit well with each other. This undoubtedly occurs for some workers who have been downsized, hard-working and long-serving employees who have been laid off because of something out of their control such as technological innovations or corporate mergers. The blame-the-victim discourse that has become commonplace in North American media outlets in the past 20 years or so must conflict with the practical realities of this newly unemployed individual. This contradictory consciousness may allow for counter-hegemonic discourses to find resonance in their way of seeing the world.

In Hegemony (1986), Robert Bocock describes another way of explaining the formation of a contradictory consciousness. He claims that it is probably the case that significant percentages of exploited populations in western countries today “remain subject in one way or another to reformist or capitalist ideology” (p. 32). Bocock asserts that these groups hold these values and political ideas for two reasons: first, simply trying to survive, as with much of the working classes; and second, attempting to enjoy themselves as consumers within capitalism. Looking at public education, a critical teacher may see a contradictory consciousness as an opportunity to develop a counter-hegemonic discourse. For example, the anti-consumerist philosophy found in the very popular Vancouver-based Adbusters magazine, used in tandem with the Canadian documentary The Corporation, can provide the resources for the progressive-minded teacher to develop lessons that have the learning objective of questioning consumerism from the perspective of an environmentalist or a sweat-shop worker. Students can have the opportunity to deconstruct the extremely powerful
pro-capitalist discourse at the same time that they understand the enjoyment they may experience from living within a capitalist society. Students can weigh the pros and cons, realize the contradictions involved in such a lifestyle, and decide to make changes if they are moved to do so.

Yet, Whitson (1991) makes a key point about counter-hegemonic efforts:

The concept of hegemony would be superfluous if it meant nothing more than domination through the combined effects of diverse ideological and coercive factors. The essential and unique contribution of hegemony is its revelation of how the program of dominant groups is advanced, not simply by excluding oppositional programs, but by locating the opposition within the total ideological and sociopolitical structure in places where the opposition may be harmless or even supporting to the structure’s viability. (pp. 78-79)

Whitson is warning those who critique the dominant relations that simply to offer a counter-hegemonic discourse may not be enough. Capitalism has proven time and again that it has the capability of co-opting oppositional forms. (An argument can be made that even an oppositional form like punk rock-and-roll culture can and has been co-opted.) Moreover, capitalism might lead other oppositional forms to places where they support the system they are trying to change. In the context of British Columbia, the emergence of the Green Party has led to a two-party opposition that works to the advantage of the neoconservative Liberal government. (Indeed, the neoconservative corporate media has not been an obstacle to the growth of the Green Party for precisely the reasons Whitson suggests.)

Bearing Whitson’s point of caution in mind, I still see a vital role for public education to be a site of fostering counter-hegemonic discourse. If the reproduction theorists were proven to be correct in their essentially determinist view of the school as a site of social class reproduction, then there would be little point in doing this research. Bocock dismisses the Althusserian concept of “ideological state apparatus” used by Bowles and Gintis (1976) because it is too deterministic and precludes the possibility of agency in the form of progressive and influential counter-hegemonic
discourses, in schools and elsewhere. Bocock further develops the notion of hegemony by incorporating human agency into the dynamics of ideological manipulation. Michael Apple’s (1990) assertion that “wherever there is power, there is resistance” is evident throughout Bocock’s theory. This study is an attempt to learn about counter-hegemonic discourses of resistance that might be used in Vancouver social studies classrooms.

Yet, I do not believe I hold false hopes and expectations for public education to be the great emancipator on its own. I am in partial agreement with Althusser (1971) in that I see the school system as existing with state-sanctioned approval that, in turn, exists to maintain the status quo. The dominant values within the school system in general, and the social studies curriculum in particular, are created outside of the school in the dominant social relations of capitalism. I differ from the reproduction theorists like Bowles and Gintis (1976), however, in that I know firsthand the possibilities for the enacted curriculum (Ross, 2001) to destabilize what is often taken for granted in society’s social relations, which are also created out of a multitude of struggles. In other words, agency on the part of teacher and students offers some hope. The attitudes of teachers, analyzed in chapters 5, 6, and 7, will provide at least a partial answer of whether that hope is warranted.

Historically, schools have also been the site of competing ideological struggles between the dominant group(s) and those who want less oppression and more privilege (Tyack & Cuban, 1995; Barman, 1988). As a veteran teacher, I have been part, and witnessed countless other examples, of teachers and students together creating counter-hegemonic discourses that serve to undermine or destabilize the dominant economic and social relations. In other words, there is room in the classroom to help manufacture dissent rather than consent. For significant numbers of educators, myself included, this is a matter of social justice.
2.7 Social Justice

At first glance, one may think that the term social justice is relatively straightforward and clear. Yet, as with most political terms involving social relations, it too is contested. Very shortly after Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien suggested he was willing to support legislation that would legalize same-sex marriages, opposition arose from several conservative groups. The Canadian Alliance for Social Justice and Family Values Association organized a rally in downtown Vancouver to "support the traditional definition of marriage" (Anderson, 2003, p. A13). As well, this "social justice" group appeared on radio programs voicing negative and homophobic comments about the potential legislation. This is an example of an ideological struggle around ownership of the term social justice.

In this study, I use the term social justice in only its progressive interpretations. I am dismissing any attempted ownership of the term by those adhering to a conservative ideology. After all, as I explained in the earlier section on ideology, conservatism seeks to uphold tradition, including traditional social hierarchies, as a means to maintain social cohesion in the face of vast social changes. In my conception of what social justice means, egalitarianism stands for the ideal, not hierarchy. As social conservatives attempt to usurp political terms for their own agenda, it is within the jurisdiction of progressive radicals to claim the terms they want for themselves, as well.

Yet, even among progressive or left-wing educators, social justice is somewhat contested. Some teachers encourage their students to become involved in charity, which educator Bob Peterson sees as progressive but not critical (Peterson, 1998, p. 87). I understand charity to be a liberal concept in the way that I described liberalism earlier. Some educators use the term progressive to describe an overlap between liberal and radical perspectives (Sadovnik, Cookson & Semel, 1994). Charity can be used, according to Peterson, "as an opportunity to build on students' seemingly innate sympathy for
the down-trodden" (Peterson, 1993, p. 87). A more radical teacher might focus on ways that the economic system we live under forces some people to require charity in order to survive.

In teaching about the past and the present, there are those who subscribe to a progressive perspective that resembles what the social historians call for, namely, describing events from the point of view of marginalized groups. In *Schools and Social Justice*, R. W. Connell (1993) contends that “the current hegemonic curriculum embodies the interests of the most advantaged” (p. 44), resulting in many students feeling excluded from important aspects of our society. He suggests that a more socially just curriculum would move the perspective of the oppressed, which he refers to as the “standpoint of the least advantaged,” to the pedagogical centre, because “[j]ustice requires a counter-hegemonic curriculum” (p. 44). From a similar perspective, Maxine Greene (1998) eloquently argues that to teach for social justice is to teach “for the recognition of social wrongs, of sufferings” (p. xlv). She calls for teachers to use classroom materials that have literary or historical figures who would not accept a status quo laced with injustice. Greene calls on teachers to show students “the joy of working for transformation in the smallest of places, so that they may become healers and change the world” (p. xlv). The data analysis chapters demonstrate the level of resistance many teachers have to Greene’s position.

I agree with both Connell and Greene that a curriculum focused on the experiences of the marginalized and those who have fought for justice would be more satisfying for more students than the current social studies curriculum. If they are suggesting that individual teachers discreetly use the autonomy they possess to undertake such educational endeavours, I support them. It is highly unlikely, however, that the elites and their supporters in the media and in the public education system would allow this perspective to infiltrate the curriculum on a large scale. In fact, for well over a decade, there has been a powerful conservative backlash against the social historians, particularly in
the United States. American historian Gary Nash attempted to include the voices of marginalized
groups in the early 1990s in a national curriculum, unleashing an incredibly vitriolic attack on his
own credibility and his “biased agenda” from very powerful conservatives. One of the most
outspoken critics of Nash’s progressive agenda for high school history was Lynn Cheney, the wife of
the current conservative American Vice-President, Dick Cheney. Here is a quote that she had
published in the *Wall Street Journal* as the chair of the National Endowment of the Humanities a few
days before the work by Nash and his colleagues was made public:

> Imagine an outline for the teaching of American history in which George Washington makes only a fleeting appearance and is never described as our first president. Or in which the founding of the Sierra Club and the National Organization for Women are considered noteworthy events ...

(October 20, 1994)

Cheney went even further, inciting American conservatives to block Nash, who she claimed wanted
American youth to learn about the Ku Klux Klan and McCarthyism rather than the wonderful
accomplishments of (White) Americans (Nash, Crabtree, & Dunn, 1997). The situation is similar in
Canada. In *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998), historian Jack Granatstein demands a return to the
Eurocentric and pro-British curriculum of the past. Granatstein, the president of the conservative
Dominion Institute of Canada, chastizes any teacher whose lessons make immigrant children and
their families feel bad about the country they worked so hard to live in. Granatstein attacks
progressive educators, whom he claims see “history [as] boring, irrelevant, and fit only for the slag
heap, except for small nuggets … useful for current concerns about racism, gender equity, and the
plight of native peoples” (p. 26). It is clear that to try to sell the Canadian public on a state-sanctioned
curriculum based on social history would be unleashing a conservative backlash much like the
American example. At *this* historical moment, the most that progressive educators can do is find
ways to teach for social justice on an individual basis. They must always be wary, however, of
conservative colleagues, administrators, parents, and members of the media and the public opposed to those aims.

One perspective of teaching for social justice that has informed my own approach was developed by Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant. They call it *Education that is Multicultural and Reconstructionist* (1994). It is based on a radical ideology that has as its aim to “promote social structural equality and cultural pluralism” (p. 211). They attack one of liberalism’s cornerstones.

America has an ideology of individual achievement, but ... this ideology masks reality. The resources with which a person starts, the opportunities open to the person, the circumstances in which a person lives, and the way others react to the person all depend to a significant extent on the groups of which that person is a member.

For Sleeter and Grant, the liberal notion of meritocracy is but a hegemonic device that works to conceal the ways in which the children of the privileged are more likely to succeed. They suggest that teachers design lessons that utilize the Freirian notion of *conscientization* (p. 212) in order for students to question the way society is structured. Through personal reflection based on their own experience, students may begin “to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1995, p. 17, my emphasis).

In a review of the literature on anti-oppressive education, Kevin Kumashiro (2000) summarizes and critiques four approaches. The first two are liberal approaches: Education for the Other and Education About the Other. The remaining two approaches, however, are radical. Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering focuses on transformation of existing “hegemonic structures and ideologies” (p. 36). It is also informed by Friere’s notion of conscientization by encouraging students “to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, and to take action against the oppressive elements of reality” (Freire, 1995, p. 17). The fourth approach, which Kumashiro calls Education that Changes Students and Society, emanates out of
poststructural concerns. Its major premise is that “oppression originates in discourse” (p. 40). Kumashiro’s review helped me determine the ideology influencing the teachers’ views around social justice issues (see chapter 7). It also suggested ways for teacher education programs to address tackling existing oppressive structures and discourses in our society (see chapter 8). These radical approaches have the potential to break the contradictions Anyon (1981) describes in her work around practical and theoretical consciousness. Kumashiro, Sleeter and Grant want teachers to encourage resistance and student empowerment. In short, they want the classroom to foster the development of counter-hegemonic discourses so that one day a more socially just society may be realized.

This chapter has primarily focused on the conceptual framework for the entire study. I will focus on the discourses used in the curriculum and in the teacher interviews to ascertain the influence of the three main political ideologies that arose out of the Enlightenment, namely, liberalism, socialism, and conservatism. (Note: In the contemporary context I refer to what began as socialism as the radical ideology to remain in keeping with the academic literature base I used.) It is my hope that some of these findings will be useful for the purpose of teaching for social justice. If the study’s findings lead to valuable suggestions that will improve the formal social studies curriculum and social studies teacher education programs in British Columbia, then it has been worth the effort. Improvement for me refers to increased likelihood of B.C. social studies education including the progressive aims of social justice. Chapter 3 describes the methodology I used to analyze the data for both components of this research that enabled me to develop these suggestions.

1 There was a movement in France around 1870 and a lighter form of nationalism in early twenty-first century Canada. In France, the state elite deliberately created a national awareness “based on the democratic republic and republican equality” (Schwarzmantel, 1998, p. 139). The Canadian example relies on the differences between Canadian and American societies, with polls showing a national pride in institutions like public healthcare.

2 Historian Timothy Stanley argues that although liberalism, conservatism, and socialism are arguably the main ideologies of modernity operating in Canada today, there are others that have been of utmost
importance in both historical terms and in other places. These include “fascism, communism, imperialism,
and bourgeois democratism” (personal communication, October 2004).

3 There are diverse opinions on the relevance of Marxism among feminists, environmentalists, and
multiculturalists. Liberal forms of all of these social movements are particularly opposed to Marxist
discourse, where as socialist and critical versions most often interpret these discourses in ways that
strengthen their own theories.

4 Iris M. Young (2000) persuasively argues against equating “group-based social movements” with
“identity politics” (p. 86). She contends that “social difference is not identity” (p. 87). Instead, she suggests
that it is better to consider “social group differentiation in relational rather than substantial terms” (p. 89).
Young furthers her argument by describing social movements motivated by the experiences of groups
based on gender, race, class, sexuality, and ability – including intersections with cultural differences – as
“attempts to politicize and protest structural inequalities that they perceive unfairly privilege some social
segments and oppress others” (p. 92). “Multicultural politics concerning freedom of expression [and] the
content of curricula ... can properly be called ‘identity politics.’ Most [of these] group-conscious political
claims, however, are ... claims for fairness, equal opportunity, and political inclusion” (p. 107).

5 According to R. W. Connell (2004), socialists have been unfairly maligned by certain postmodernist
critiques, at least in the Australian context. Making a distinction between socialism and Marxism, Connell
notes that “there is a tolerant and humane tradition in socialism which was well adapted to the recognition
of difference, and actually had provided important support to the new movements – the peace movement,
the Aboriginal movement, feminism, and gay liberation among them. This tradition was simply ignored by
the anti-Marxist polemics of the 1980s” (p. 22).
Chapter 3  Methodology and Methods

It will be useful at this point to re-state the research question.

How has political ideology influenced discourses of race and class in both the formal curriculum and teacher attitudes in social studies education?

From the question itself, it is clear that there are two main sources of data: the formal curriculum that contains what teachers are expected to teach, and the attitudes of the teachers themselves. The conceptual and theoretical considerations that helped me frame the entire study and that I described in chapter 2 relate to both data sources. Consequently, the methodology section will be divided into two parts, one describing the thinking that went into each component of the research. The first one pertains to the study of the curriculum itself, an evolving document that has been published by the B.C. government on seven different occasions throughout the twentieth century.

This entire study addresses the question of how political ideology affects social studies education, especially in terms of race and social class. More specifically, the ways that issues of race and class are represented in the formal curriculum and the ways that teachers think about them form the areas that this project explores. I will begin by describing the theory and methodology of the curricular aspect of the research. Both data sources will provide the content for chapter 5 on race and ideology, for chapter 6 on social class and ideology, and for chapter 7 on democracy and ideology. (The purpose of chapter 4 is mainly for context. It is a brief analysis of some of the research about the social conditions that led to a system of white privilege in British Columbia and how the public education system worked to entrench this privilege.)

The textual analysis of the formal curriculum can be summarized as the ways in which political ideology has influenced the state-sanctioned social studies curriculum in British Columbia. But before we get there, I must explain the background theory and methodology used in the textual analysis of the social studies curriculum.
3.1 A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS of CURRICULUM

3.1.1 Background Theory

In chapter 2, I discussed the conceptual framework that informed the entire research project, focusing on ideology, discourse, and hegemony in general terms. Ideology impacts upon a variety of aspects of schooling, including school organization and scheduling, evaluation, and the curriculum, including the issue of streaming, of course. Even the structure and relationship between school personnel and parent groups are ideological. Before addressing the methods involved with the two distinct data analyses, I want to discuss the ways that the different political ideologies conceive of concepts germane to this part of the research, namely, the role of the school and the curriculum. I include a brief discussion on the school’s role as conceived by conservatives, liberals, and radicals for the beginning point of the discussion.

3.1.1.2 The Role of the School and Political Ideology

The school promoters of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were clear that schools were needed as much for political as educational reasons. The curriculum had to be shaped, textbooks written, teachers trained and inspected, and children compelled to attend school, in order to preserve or create a particular social order. (Ken Osborne, 1995, p. 16)

Broadly stated, the role of the school is central to any discussion about the purpose of public education for a society. As I mentioned earlier, the purpose of public education has been the focus of hotly contested debates since its inception, in British Columbia and elsewhere. At the core of many of these debates is how best to socialize youth to become a certain kind of citizen.

In Exploring Education (1994), Sadovnik, Cookson, and Semel discuss the role of the school from the three political perspectives with which I am concerned. They have discerned that
conservatives see the school’s role as “providing the necessary training to ensure that the most talented and hard-working individuals receive the tools necessary to maximize economic and social productivity” (p. 8). In British Columbia, the Putnam-Weir Report (1925) called for schools to provide the shop training for boys and domestic science training (later referred to as home economics) for girls so that they might realize their economic potential. According to their taxonomy, Sadovnik, Cookson, and Semel would view the Putnam-Weir Report’s role for the school as a conservative one.

This indicates that the conservative ideology has adopted meritocracy from the more individual-oriented liberal ideology. The reason for this adaptation was most likely shifting popular attitudes across western nations. Traditional conservatism emphasized the maintenance of social hierarchies in order to maintain social cohesion. This focus, as will be shown in chapter 4, allowed the school to be used to work against groups that were outside of the power nexus. As the liberal ideology gained strength after the Second World War, multiculturalism became more mainstream in Canada, especially after the federal Liberal government under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau enacted legislation in support of multiculturalism in 1971. Conservative leaders, therefore, were forced to accept multiculturalism, lest the charge of racism be leveled at them. Consequently, meritocracy became part of their ideology, as well. Conservatives accept student streaming as a most efficient way of accomplishing this task, which should not be surprising when one considers the demographics of students streamed into the less academic school programs. These students are most often from immigrant and poor families (Kelly, 1993; James, 1990); they are also more likely to become members of the working class (Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992). Considering that the discussion in chapter 2 emphasized conservative support for social hierarchies as the best way to maintain social cohesion, the adoption of meritocracy in our contemporary society makes sense.
Liberals also see the role of the school as providing social skills and training for the demands of work. They differ from the conservatives, however, in that they emphasize the importance of the school to ensure equal educational opportunity for each student, regardless of background. This is consistent with the emancipation-of-all doctrine in classic liberalism that developed during the Enlightenment. As far as the role of the school is concerned, liberalism claims to level the playing field for each student to succeed and through the notion of meritocracy, differentiate as to the roles each individual will fill once they have left school. Yet, the liberal version of meritocracy ignores the fact that most modified high school programs are filled with students from economically and socially marginalized families. In sum, liberals view public education as the best vehicle for "redressing social inequalities through the equalization of educational opportunity" (Apple, 1990, p. 18). Yet, their focus on the decontextualized individual ignores the ways that power works to privilege students from certain backgrounds while oppressing others.

Radicals, on the other hand, view the liberal notion of "equality of opportunity as an illusion" (Sadovnik et al., 1994, p. 9). Whether a conscious political strategy or not, both equality of opportunity and meritocracy serve to placate the masses, regardless of racial and class background, into thinking that "they have been given a fair chance, when in fact they have not" (ibid., p. 9). One radical view stresses that to a large extent schools have been used to reproduce the unequal social and economic relations endemic to capitalist society (Bowles & Gintis, 1976). Radical resistance theorists (Willis, 1977, Giroux, 1983) have countered that schools are also the sites for agency on the part of students and teachers engaged in counter-hegemonic discourse formulation. Often, this requires an alteration of the formal curriculum into what E. Wayne Ross (2001) calls the *enacted curriculum*, or the way teachers and students engage with the course content.
Typically, radical educators are against the practice of *streaming*. This stance is because of the association between this practice and the future life chances of students. Streaming serves to more or less entrench students into certain pathways with varying degrees of opportunities. In terms of race and class, less academic streams are most often filled with students from less privileged backgrounds.

I would like to make one more clarification about ideological perspectives and the curriculum that proved to be helpful in the data analysis. In *Experience and Education* (1938), John Dewey described different approaches to education, which he used to create a binary he called *traditional* versus *progressive* orientations. Sadovnik, Cookson, and Semel (1994) base their own taxonomy on the ideologies of conservatism, liberalism, and radicalism. Yet, they state that the boundaries between these three perspectives are not clearly delineated. In other words, where there is an overlap between conservatism and right-liberalism, they use the term *traditional*; similarly, for the overlap between left-liberalism and socialism or radicalism, they use the term *progressive*. They state the distinction as follows: “In a nutshell, traditionalists believe the schools should pass on the best of what was and what is, and progressives believe the schools should be part of the steady progress to make things better” (p. 28). I found the binary to be most useful in the data analysis where it was too difficult to distinguish between two ideologies.

But what of curriculum? What differences do conservatives, liberals, and radicals hold about what the actual curriculum should look like? Before the discussion focuses on issues of race, I want to highlight how each of the political ideologies envision the formal curriculum. After all, Herbert Kliebard’s *The Struggle for the American Curriculum* (1986) outlines the crucial ideological differences between competing groups during the first half of the twentieth century, each intent on using the document for its own agenda. There can be little doubt that similar struggles took place in Canada, as well.
3.1.1.3 Curriculum and Political Ideology

Those who tell the stories also hold the power.
Plato

Recognizing the importance of historical context, Michael Apple (1990) states that the entire field of school curriculum “has its roots in the soil of social control” (p. 47). In the Canadian context, Ken Osborne (1995) states that the curriculum was immediately seen as an important instrument in the molding of the population. Privileged whites hoped that the masses would accept a set of social relations that granted certain groups more privilege at the expense of others. In other words, the elites viewed the curriculum to be a powerful hegemonic device. Plato’s quote above is succinct but instructive as to why this is the case. For example, if workers held the power in our society, the formal curriculum would look a lot different than it does today. It would most likely be replete with stories of labour’s battles with capitalists rather than an almost total omission of these struggles, as is especially the case with the most recent B.C. social studies curriculum (1997). Similarly, if non-white people held the reins of power, the curriculum would most surely reflect this. Undoubtedly, it would be less Eurocentric.

Tyack and Cuban (1995) claim that one of the biggest impediments to implementing a progressive curriculum in the United States is the long entrenched view that this is not what “real schools” do (p. 88). Osborne (1991) concurs that this is also the case in Canada (p. 80). But should “real schools” be used for social control? Is this a better role for schools and the school curriculum rather than the Dewey prescription of developing critically thinking citizens? My position is that it is not. Obviously, there are conflicting ideologies here. This is understandable, especially if one considers the curriculum to be a microcosm of the clash of cultural values in Canada as a whole.
As mentioned in chapter 2, each political ideology socially constructs its own knowledge. By corollary, school knowledge is not objective and value-free either but is a social construction tied to the interests, experiences and perceptions of those who produced and negotiated its meaning. As Ann Manicom states (1995), the school curriculum is “the result of conscious and unconscious ideological choices, exercised within an explicitly political arena and mediated by the state” (p. 51). Stated more bluntly, the official knowledge in the formal curriculum or IRPs is political and most often serves the interests of those with the power to decide what gets into these documents.

Michael Apple (1990) points out the irony in recalling that during the Cold War it was common to hear the American refrain that communist ideology was embedded in Soviet school curricula; yet, very few bothered to ask how political ideology was influencing American curricula (p. 8). In both societies it is the selection and organization of knowledge that is most influenced by the dominant political ideologies. This is a crucial point for my own research. R. W. Connell (1993) explains how and why the selection and organization of knowledge is hegemonic:

a) it marginalizes other ways of organizing knowledge (and other perspectives)
b) it is integrated with the structure of power in educational institutions (and in society)
c) it occupies the high culture ground, defining most people’s common-sense views of what learning ought to be.

(Connell, 1993, p. 38)

Connell calls for the curriculum to be altered to reflect the “standpoint of the least advantaged” (p. 43), or that educational matters be considered from the perspective of the oppressed rather than the privileged. I agree with Connell’s position; yet, I cannot see how they would be implemented, given the conservative backlash to Gary Nash’s (1994) attempt to create national standards for teaching high school history in the United States (see chapter 2 for a more indepth discussion).
In the textual analysis of chapters 5, 6, and 7, I will explore the dominant discourses in the curriculum about race, class, and democracy and make connections with the ways in which these discourses work to entrench power in the ranks of the already privileged social groups in British Columbia. Apple (1990) claims that “education [is] not a neutral enterprise” (p. 1). By corollary, I contend that the curriculum is not an apolitical or neutral document. Indeed, I maintain that the formal social studies curriculum can be viewed as a set of discourses, or a discursive formation, connected to power. Epistemologically, this notion assumes that knowledge is socially constructed, of course, and that school knowledge has a political dimension. With this assumption, I am clearly positioned, along with Apple, within the radical ideology. In fact, the ideas in Michael Apple’s *Ideology and Curriculum* (1990) have been especially important in shaping my analysis of the B.C. social studies curriculum.

Apple’s method of relational analyses focuses on the ways in which the content of the school curriculum, seen as official knowledge, supports the economic and political interests of the most powerful people in our society. What gets told, who gets to tell it, and how everyone else is represented are crucial factors in the social relations of any society. Apple calls for research to study the relationship between curricular knowledge and power. The data analyses in chapters 5, 6, and 7 attempt to do just that in the context of British Columbia.

Apple’s theory about the relationship between curricular content and economic and political interests is straightforward. Schools do not exist in a social vacuum. They are inextricably linked to the values of the surrounding communities. An example of Apple’s theory in a historical context can be seen in chapter 4, the focus of which is on how whiteness came to be imposed on the region now known as British Columbia. It describes the entrenchment of the conservative ideology from the beginning of its public education system in the 1870s through the nation-building phase that ended in
the 1920s. A major part of this research is to discern the ways in which the social studies curriculum was influenced by conservatism and, in turn, worked to further entrench it. How were the discourses of white supremacy, Christianity and capitalism employed in the curriculum? This way of looking at curriculum and ideology will be applied to subsequent versions, as well.

A liberal school curriculum is less overt in the way social relations are presented. From the discussion in chapter 2, it is clear that the individual is the main social unit of the liberal ideology. It should not be surprising, therefore, that a liberal-influenced social studies curriculum would focus on the individual rather than any notion that hints at our social interdependence. As Michael Apple (1990) states, the curriculum “does not situate the life of the individual, as an economic and social being, back into the unequal structural relations that produced the comfort the individual enjoys” (p. 10). If we can assume that the curriculum does, indeed, influence society, then this aspect of the curriculum can only help to create a legion of individual consumers who despise the social redistributive aspects of progressive taxation. Moreover, we are not able to clearly see how our comforts are produced, or who is producing them. Consequently, we get situations of race/class intersections in which sweatshop labourers abroad produce goods cheaply that we use, and when some of these exploited workers attempt to escape to North America, as with what occurred when boatloads of Chinese migrants appeared off the B.C. coast in 1999, we respond with outrage (Klein, 1999). By rendering the connection between material production and consumption invisible, unethical aspects of capitalism also remain hidden. In this way, the liberal-influenced curriculum acts as a hegemonic device.

A social studies curriculum influenced by a radical political ideology is undoubtedly a most rare occurrence in North American public education systems. If we assume that Althusser (1971) was correct in labeling the school as part of the ideological state apparatus, this situation is understandable, especially from the standpoint of the privileged. That said, it is still possible to articulate what a radical
social studies curriculum might look like based on the tenets of socialism and postmodern criticisms of it. Ken Osborne (1988, 1991, 1995) and Bob Connell (1993) and others have written on this very topic.

I would suggest that if, for instance, Canadian history was taught as a series of conflicts between social groups, a better understanding of our present tensions and hostilities throughout the entire population would result. As Gerald Graf (1994) states, "[w]hen a country is little known, fabulous and monstrous tales readily circulate about it" (p. 4). In present-day Canada, many white people see the all-Native fisheries as blatantly racist in their apparently preferential treatment of First Nations people, rather than as part of a small concession Europeans "gave" Natives in 1763 under the legal concept of Aboriginal Title. Similarly, a near absence of the history of labour struggles and class antagonisms, such as a liberal curriculum would look like, puts all the gains made by the struggles of working-class people in jeopardy. Not surprisingly, both Canadians and Americans are currently experiencing a concerted attack on the vestiges of the social welfare state. We can only speculate about how much more difficult this would be for today's neoconservatives if the majority of people were aware of past struggles. A radical social studies curriculum would rectify this omission.

In order for a radical social studies curriculum to be accepted and implemented, however, large segments of society must recognize the legitimacy of the numerous social struggles. Protest, and civil disobedience have been productive avenues of dissent in the Canadian past. Yet, conservative and right-liberal elements do not support schools to become involved in these struggles. It is ironic that the mainstream media considers race, class, gender, and sexuality conflicts to be understandable in our contemporary society and legitimate topics for popular culture and public hearings to address. These same media outlets, however, will produce catastrophic visions and help to create a public backlash should the public school social studies curriculum attempt to address similar topics. Part of the problem is the widespread belief that the role of the school is not for these purposes. My position is that this
belief has become so widespread because of vested interests in maintaining the status quo. A radical curriculum would go far to help sway the public in understanding how power is involved even in the dissemination of views around the role of the school in general and the curriculum in particular.

Before there can be a serious call for a radical social studies curriculum, however, there must be a case made as to how either conservatism and liberalism, or both, have been at the root of each social studies curriculum in British Columbia. In other words, a careful examination of each curriculum necessarily had to be undertaken, specifically looking for indicators of ideology in the ways race and multiculturalism, social class and economics, and democracy and citizenship have been represented. I will now discuss the actual methodology I used for examining political ideology in the social studies curriculum itself.

3.2 METHODOLOGY for the ANALYSIS of the CURRICULUM

[The] critical study of the relationship between ideologies and educational thought and practice [is] one of the most neglected areas of educational scholarship.


The formal curriculum is considered to be authoritative “official knowledge” by the majority of the public (Apple, 1990; Osborne, 1995). Not so well understood is Michael Apple’s assertion that the official knowledge found in the curriculum most often supports the status quo in ways that are difficult to detect. Yet, as Apple suggests in the above quote, very few educators have endeavoured to undertake an examination of how political ideology influences the various aspects of public education. In this section, I will elaborate on my claim in the previous section that political ideology is at the root of the social studies curriculum. But this time the focus will switch to how I will analyze the data, namely, the social studies curriculum. In chapters 5, 6, and 7, I will demonstrate the ways in which
this occurs. This section discusses key words and concepts I focused on in the textual analysis of the formal B.C. curriculum.

The first official B.C. high school social studies curriculum appeared in 1941. Revised versions appeared in 1949, 1956, 1968, 1980, 1988, and the one that is used today, published in 1997 (B.C. Ministry of Education archives). Prior to the B.C. government developing and mandating curricula, it used to publish annual reports. Included in these reports were suggested year-end examination questions for the core subjects such as social studies. I was able to locate copies of these year-end exams only for the years 1926 to 1933 (B.C. Department of Education). Although not as comprehensive a data source as a curriculum, the annual reports allow a glimpse into the content teachers were expected to cover in social studies. The teachers taught with these exam questions in mind, questions that both indicated and shaped social attitudes toward what kind of knowledge was considered important during those years. For the purposes of this analysis, they also make possible a discussion of how political ideology was at the root of what students were expected to know.

There is another important reason I am interested in understanding the social studies curriculum, and in particular, its history and influence: an understanding may help to politicize public discussion about the curriculum itself. So often media control of the discourses around schooling today are ahistorical, a situation that is in itself political, concealing the workings of power to the extent that privilege is maintained or even extended further. By focusing on the ideologies in the curriculum itself, discussions about it have a better chance of becoming politicized and capable of emphasizing how power is implicated. An examination of the evolution of the B.C. social studies curriculum will go far to illuminate these processes and related ideologies. Concern for space, however, restricted me to pulling the relevant statements from the documents and analyzing them in a somewhat decontextualized format.
Chapter 5 begins with a discussion about the ways the three major ideologies of modernity conceive of race and racial issues. In examining how the B.C. Department of Education Annual Reports for 1926 to 1933 and the B.C. social studies curricula from 1941 to 1997 represented racial issues, I noted every mention of the following words or terms (and their derivatives) in their context: Empire, imperialism, colonization, British, European, French, German, Indian, Eskimo, Moslem, Muslim, Asia, India, Japan, China, Aboriginal, Inuit, Native, First Nations and multiculturalism. Any of these statements that were useful to this part of my project, namely, to determine the political ideology underlying curricular representations of race and social class, were part of the overall analysis.

There are too many statements to analyze all of them, of course, so I have pulled the most representative ones that are indicative of how issues of race were represented. It is difficult to explain precisely what the decision rules were that led to some statements being pulled while others were not. After a comprehensive and systematic reading of the documents, the main criterion in choosing which ones were most representative was simply in using any salient statement emanating from an ideology. Of course, the issue of "salience" comes to the surface, best illuminated by way of example. The 1956 curriculum has a grade 11 unit called The Path to Nationhood (pp. 80-82). A reference to the Royal Proclamation of 1763 focused on English and French relations with no mention whatsoever of any Aboriginal concerns. Yet, for the past 30 years this document has been at the root of Aboriginal land treaties and Title negotiations. Students in the late 1950s would have had no idea that much legal effort had been devoted to relations between Europeans and First Nations people. This omission from what counts as official knowledge is a hegemonic device that serves to further entrench the essentialist discourse of white supremacy and the conservative ideology. The discourses pertaining to race and multiculturalism are the on-the-ground tools I used in this critical discourse analysis. I will discuss
these discourses and the various forms of multiculturalism in the first section of chapter 5. The following section of chapter 5 will be the actual textual analysis addressing how the various political ideologies are involved in the representation of race.

In chapter 6, I analyze how issues of social class are represented in social studies. For the textual analysis section, I studied all of the Annual Reports and curricula for any reference to the following list of words: working class, middle class, capitalism, economics, trade unions, corporations, workers, and immigrants. By taking each reference within its context, I was able to determine the influential ideologies by using the major discourses that will be discussed in the first part of chapter 6. As well, I have included a brief textual analysis of the individual versus the community in this section. Although not always pertaining to economic issues, most often they are. These concepts are related through the tension of the well being of all citizens versus a few.

The final chapter of data analysis is chapter 7. Its focus is on the related concepts of democracy and citizenship. After all, this is a study of how race and class are portrayed in the social studies classroom. Democracy and citizenship are notions of inclusiveness, of acceptance into a society, of being allowed to engage in the distribution of power. This involves enfranchisement, of course, as well as other aspects of democratic citizenship in our society. There was only one reference to democracy or citizenship in the Department of Education Annual Reports from 1926 to 1933. Therefore, the seven versions of the curriculum are the main data source for the textual analysis. To determine which political ideology was influential, I looked at the entire documents, from the introduction and rationale to the learning objectives and suggestions for teachers. In examining the curricula, anytime I came across the words democracy or citizenship (or any derivatives such as democratic or citizen), I took note of it and the context in which it was written.
This examination of the evolution of the B.C. social studies curriculum across most of the past century will at least partially address how the curriculum responded to different social and ideological pressures, at least in terms of race and class. In order to accomplish this examination, the categories under study are imperialism and representation of the racial Other (chapter 5), struggles within capitalism (chapter 6), and democracy and citizenship (chapter 7). To help with the curricular analysis, I will show how the different ideologies and related discourses are involved. These discourses will be described at the beginning of each of the data analysis chapters.

The curricular documents were only one data source for this research project. Another source of data were the interviews I conducted with ten social studies department heads in Vancouver secondary schools.

3.3 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES with the INTERVIEWING of TEACHERS

Schools are sites of contestation between differing political ideologies. I believe that most teachers, indeed most people, are influenced by more than one ideology. This part of the research explores the degree to which each of the major ideologies influences the social studies teachers about how they think, and by corollary, teach about race and class. It is also about which discourses they are using when they speak about how they teach about these issues. After all, discourses can be viewed as the ideas and practices in support of the various ideologies. As Michel Foucault (1970) reminds us, discourse is always connected to power. Consequently, identifying the discourses that the teachers use is a significant part of determining how ideology is influencing their ways of viewing issues of race and social class.

As discussed in chapter 2, I do not view conservatism as containing the blueprint for a socially just society. Why am I so strongly opposed to the conservative ideology? Why do I support
certain aspects of liberalism and not others? It is time for me to explain more clearly what my own views are and the reasons for these views. In short, it is time for me to explain how political ideology influences the way I see and move through the world. After all, I am a veteran social studies teacher who interviewed other veteran social studies teachers, a clear example of studying sideways. I am aware of the many pedagogical choices a teacher faces. This awareness sensitized me around which areas to probe and which probing techniques to employ, at least most of the time. Although my intentions were to engage in good and respectful research, inevitably there are issues that remain when engaged with the interview method.

3.4 ISSUE WITH THE INTERVIEW METHOD

The issue of power is a concern with all qualitative research. The interview method is no exception as there is a potential power differential during an interview between the interviewee and the interviewer. Feminist approaches to interviewing have highlighted the role of power in the process, particularly on the part of the researcher (Roman, 1992). To this concern, I had no interest in deceiving the teachers who are sharing their experiences with me; rather, my goal is to ascertain how political ideology influences the ways they see issues of race and class. The approach I used is what Kvale (1996) refers to as a “hermeneutics of suspicion” (p. 203), which I will speak to in the next section on analyzing the data from the interviews. Although it might be argued that there is an ethical concern about not informing each participant that I am attempting to ascertain influential ideologies, they were each aware beforehand that I was interested in the ways they thought about issues of race and class. As Kvale explains, by employing a hermeneutics of suspicion approach, I was better able to ascertain the dominant ideology without that specific concept entering into the conversation.
A power differential was not the case with these interviews as every one of the participants was a white, male veteran teacher, as I am. As a veteran teacher myself, I consider the ten department heads to be my peers, although I am not quite sure how they saw me in professional terms. Most of them are aware that I have been a teacher for a significant length of time. I perceived the relationship in this part of the research to be one of *studying sideways*, rather than *studying up*. There is no question that my status as an *insider*, as someone who has experienced the trials and tribulations of teaching youth, helped in developing a rapport with the participants. It allowed the participants to be more relaxed and perhaps more open than they might have been if I was not a teacher. There were several occasions like the one in which an interviewee responded to one of my questions with, “Well, you know how it is, Paul. You’ve been through this, too.” They would then proceed to give their views on the question asked.

Yet, I do have one serious concern in interpreting and analyzing the data from these interviews: this part of the research did not include any *triangulation*. By triangulation, I am referring to the qualitative strategy of corroborating what has been found in one data source by testing it in different settings or data sources. How closely did the teachers’ descriptions of how they think and teach about issues of race and class match what they actually do and say in the classroom? As Hollway and Jefferson (2000) ask, “[w]hat is the relation between the word and the world?” (p. 32). In addressing this concern, I had to make some assumptions. I assumed that the teachers tried their best to describe what they think they are doing in the classroom. In order to answer the research question itself, I assume that the data generated from the interviews was sufficient to help me explore the ideologies influencing their views and their pedagogical strategies. In other words, the data allowed me to determine and claim that, at the least, this is how the teachers think about their teaching about issues of race and class. Many of the questions I asked were open-ended, designed to
provide ample space for the participants to describe their own experience as a teacher. The question posed by Hollway and Jefferson of what meaning to apply to these descriptions is an important one. Yet, Silverman (2001) points out that triangulation does not necessarily translate into more validity. This position supports my rejection of the postpositivist notion of objective truth.

Acknowledging the social construction of knowledge in the curriculum also applies to what is being created during interviews. In other words, I disagree with traditional research models that state the positivist notion that knowledge is objective (Kvale, 1996; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). James Joseph Scheurich (1995) takes the argument to the other extreme. He theorizes about the ambiguities of interviewing, effectively arguing against the positivist and postpositivist assumption that “reality is knowable” (p. 240). According to Scheurich, change the interviewer, and the content of the “conversation” changes. Moreover, the relationship between language and meaning … [is] subject to endless interpretation.” In other words, bias is always present and, therefore, reality is not knowable. I am only in partial agreement with Scheurich’s line of reasoning, however. I agree that another interviewer might ask different questions and probe in different areas and with differing intensity.

Yet, to me there is no question that, at the least, a partial description of reality was created during the interviews and the subsequent data analysis. For example, if a teacher claims that poverty exists because the poor have “weak genes,” as one said during an interview, then I can assume that he has been influenced to some degree by conservatism, at least in regards to the poor. But before I describe the data analysis process and address other issues with analyzing interviews, I wish to explain the actual recruitment of participants, as well as describe some of their characteristics.
3.4.1 Recruiting Participants

The process of getting ten veteran teachers to participate in this study was not as straightforward as one might assume. For one thing, for the past 3 years the neoconservative B.C. government has been engaged in a political struggle over public education, which has resulted in more work for teachers, increased class sizes, and a decrease in their morale. As a teacher myself, I am very aware of time constraints all of the participants were under. This is the prime reason for conducting only one interview with each of the teachers, between 60 and 90 minutes in length.

Rather than selecting participating teachers at random, I opted for a purposive sampling strategy. I chose to interview ten head teachers of social studies departments, also known as teacher leaders, to be chosen from the eighteen public high schools located in the Vancouver School District. There are several reasons for recruiting department heads. First, I cannot be criticized with bias in the selection process as easily (i.e., I cannot be charged with loading the sample with too many radical teachers, or with too many conservative teachers, etc.). Second, and more important, department heads are veteran teachers who often act as mentors to their more junior colleagues. Moreover, they often have the last word on what extra resources the cash-strapped departments purchase. In addition, as veterans they are well positioned to speak about educational matters relating to curriculum from a professional perspective (e.g., mass testing) and pertaining to the local context (i.e., student racial and class background). In other words, department heads are best positioned to understand how curriculum is context shaped, or what Catherine Cornbleth (1990) calls the "structural and sociocultural" aspects of pedagogy (p. 6).

I received permission to do this research from both the UBC ethics committee and the Vancouver School Board in the late autumn of 2002. Shortly thereafter, I sent out a letter of initial contact to each of the department head teachers in the eighteen Vancouver high schools. Of the 18
department heads, all were white and 17 were male. (This, of course, may be the result of systemic racism and sexism. It may also speak to the power of patriarchal and white supremacist discourses.) Two of the teachers, both of whom worked with me at the same schools in previous years, phoned to accept the invitation. I received one written response, a brief note from the one female teacher, explaining that she was finding herself increasingly busy with the changes occurring in B.C.'s public education system, too much so to participate in the study. No one else responded to the letter. I decided that the letter of initial contact might not have been enough to recruit ten department head teachers. Through use of the telephone, I was able to convince eight more teachers to participate.

I believe that focusing on my own role as a teacher was instrumental in recruiting the needed participants. Of the three refusals, two of them were close to retirement. It is noteworthy that both of them cited past academic studies in which they had participated that had led to a sense of betrayal—the researcher had taken their quotes out of context and, according to the teachers, painted them in a less than flattering light. I accepted their refusal, of course, and the logic behind their decision. Their reasoning, however, forced me to reflect on the degree to which I was forthcoming with these potential recruits. I was frank about wanting to talk with them about issues of race and social class as well as aspects of teaching for social justice. The teachers were also aware that I would be focusing on their thoughts about the curriculum and restrictions they felt from its representations of race and class issues. The discussion around their responses will be in the data analysis sections of chapters 5, 6, and 7. At this point, I will introduce the ten participants.
3.4.2 The Participants

Ten teachers participated in the study, each one a white man. (See Table 1.) It is significant that eight of the ten participating head teachers had British surnames. (One had a German surname and another had a Dutch name.) I consider this significant because the entire study is an exploration of how issues of race and class have evolved ever since the first 500 British settlers came to set up a British colony on Vancouver Island in the 1840s. I have attempted to create ten teacher pseudonyms that reflect this ethnic breakdown. (To avoid any identification of the participants, the school names have also been changed.)

Although I was by no means wedded to the idea of equal representation from the east side working-class schools and the west side middle-class and upper middle-class schools, this happened to be how the sample turned out. (I knew I needed some from both parts of the city, of course, but I thought it would be too difficult to ensure a symmetrical outcome.) This proved to be fortunate in that I could make comparisons about the importance teachers place on social class, for example, in the identity construction of their students. The class backgrounds the teachers grew up in were 5 working class, 3 middle class, and 2 unknown. (Note: I did not ask for this information, but it came out during the interviews.) Knowing the class backgrounds of the teachers allowed me space to better understand why they thought about class issues the way they did.

Six of the ten teachers were older than me. The age range was from their late 30s to their late 50s. Two of the teachers were in their final years before retirement, both having already taught for over 30 years. The teacher with the least experience was in his ninth year. The rest had between 13 and 23 years of teaching experience each. (On average, the teaching experience of the group was 20 years.) One was in his sixteenth year of being a head teacher. (The Vancouver
Table #1: Participating Head Teachers of Social Studies Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>School</th>
<th>Yrs Teaching</th>
<th>Yrs Dept. Head</th>
<th>Student Demographics</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Craig Evans</td>
<td>Victoria Park</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>- 90% working class</td>
<td>- Christian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 80% East Asian</td>
<td>- working-class upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Graham</td>
<td>Turner</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- 95% working class</td>
<td>- middle-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- most racial groups</td>
<td>- upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hal Nagel</td>
<td>Hedley</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>- 80% working class</td>
<td>- taught on a reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- most racial groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Nelson</td>
<td>Larson</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- 70% working class</td>
<td>- working-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 80% East Asian</td>
<td>- upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carl Tragas</td>
<td>Wilson Heights</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>- 85% working class</td>
<td>- working-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- over 50% ESL</td>
<td>- upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- geography major</td>
<td>- middle-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Side Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dave Carson</td>
<td>Hudson</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>- equal groups of working, middle &amp; upper middle classes</td>
<td>- geog/PE major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- middle-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Hitchcock</td>
<td>Kipling</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- mostly upper-middle class</td>
<td>- music/history major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 70% Asian</td>
<td>- working-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barry Kelvin</td>
<td>Chamberlain</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>- mostly upper-middle class</td>
<td>- MA in curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 50% Asian, 50% Euro</td>
<td>- under-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- upbringing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Patterson</td>
<td>Greenway</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>- mostly upper-middle class</td>
<td>- middle-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 60% East Asian, 40% European</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Quinn</td>
<td>Warner</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>- mostly upper-middle class</td>
<td>- Christian, middle-class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- 70% East Asian</td>
<td>- class upbringing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
School Board instituted head teaching positions 16 years earlier.) The rest had been head teachers for between 3 and 12 years. (The participant group average for being the social studies department head was 7 years.) Eight of the ten were history majors, while the other two majored in geography. One of the history majors was also a music teacher, while one of the geography specialists also majored in physical education.

It is significant that while we were setting up for the interview, usually in the teacher’s actual classroom, unsolicited views came to me from eight of the ten participants around provincial politics. All eight claimed that they supported the New Democratic Party, a social democratic party opposed to the neoconservative policies of the current Liberal government in the province. Yet, even from this group of eight, they often espoused views consistent with conservative notions of race and social class during the interviews. In fact, this contradictory consciousness is consistent with what I found throughout the entire analysis of the interviews, namely, that most people were influenced by more than one ideology. The most influential ideology depended on what aspect of life was under consideration (see Lakoff, 1996).

3.4.3 Data Analysis Issues

As I have mentioned in chapter 2, discourse is always connected to desire and power, connections that are to remain hidden if desire and power are to manifest themselves in the public debates. In Text and Discourse in Education: An Introduction to Critical Discourse Analysis (1995), Australian educator Allan Luke focuses on the relationship between discourse and power. Luke calls for sociologists of education to focus on power in the same manner that Michael Apple (1990) wants curriculum researchers to focus on it; that is, the link between discourse and larger social formations. In other words, both Luke and Apple want researchers to ask who benefits from the various
discourses. More specifically, Luke’s work provides the basis for a particular version of critical discourse analysis, which combines discourse analysis with ideology critique. My project fits in well with Luke’s version of critical discourse analysis because it has been my intention to “document how larger patterns of social reproduction and cultural representation occur” (p. 7), as Luke puts it, especially on issues of race and social class. In other words, it is not my intention to engage in a microanalysis involving semiotics in linguistics; rather, my goal in this part of the study is to see which large-scale discourses the teachers are using in their responses to my questions.

In the same manner that the curricular analysis of my research is a response to Apple, this part of the study is at least a partial response to Luke. Yet, the actual details of the data analysis methodology are based on the work of Steinar Kvale (1996). In *Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing* (1996), Kvale provides a detailed “seven stages of interview investigation” (p. 88) that provided much of the guiding framework for the data analysis of the ten interviews I conducted. Indeed, Kvale’s first three stages include “thematizing” (the rationale for my research questions), “designing” (basing the interview questions on what I want to know), and “interviewing” (building rapport and being able to effectively probe). I have discussed much of the thematic reasoning already in chapter 1. In the next section I will provide some of the reasoning that went into the design of the interview questions. (See Appendix 1.)

Kvale examines the role of transcribing, his fourth stage, in a detailed fashion that proved to be helpful to this study. All ten interviews were audiotaped, although this did not seem to be a distraction. For each one, I took copious notes as the interviewee spoke. These notes occasionally helped with the transcriptions, especially where there were some inaudible moments in the tape. Note-taking also helped me with active listening, and the ability to effectively probe as I listened to the teacher’s responses. Although I used three transcribers, including myself, I gave the others the
same instructions for transcribing that I used, a safeguard that improves reliability, according to Kvale (p. 170). Yet, despite these precautions, Kvale reminds researchers to be careful with the rules governing written speech from what was originally spoken: “Transcripts are not copies or representations of some original reality, they are interpretative constructions that are useful tools for given purposes” (p. 165). To use a helpful cliche, Kvale wants us to bear in mind that the map is not the territory. For instance, visual discomfort on the part of the interviewee during questioning does not appear in the transcript. Nor does sighing, as one teacher began to do when he figured out that I was not interested in his vast knowledge of military history. In order to maintain rapport as best I could, his sighs of disappointment led me to probe differently. (Yet, the sighs appeared in my notes.) Kvale’s point is well taken in that the comfort level of the participants often affected the way I probed. I indicate some of these effects in the analysis sections of chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Kvale’s fifth stage is on the data analysis itself. He emphasizes that the statements made by the participant during the interview have not been merely collected; rather, they have been co-authored with the interviewer (p. 183). If the researcher forgets the co-authoring aspect, a “biased view of the interview as merely reflecting the interviewee” may result (p. 183). It is much better to consider the “analysis of the transcribed interviews [as] a continuation of the conversation that started in the interview situation” (p. 184). For me, this was a very enjoyable part of the research as I was able to use my knowledge of political ideology and my experience in the act of teaching to engage in an “imagined dialogue with the text, unfolding its horizon of possible meanings” (p. 184).

Before the imagined dialogue occurs, however, there are some ways for the analysis to develop during the actual interview itself. An example of this occurred when one of the participants, Dave Carson, remarked during my probing around teaching about social class issues, “Geez, I really don’t teach anything about [class]. But I think I should.” Several minutes later he added, “The reason
why I don’t teach anything about the underlying reasons for poverty is because I really don’t understand enough about it myself. And I’m too busy to spend time teaching myself about it.” Carson was able to make these connections himself, free of interpretation on my part. Yet, my own political perspective is clearly influencing the interview, as well. Traditional researchers are less likely to be inquisitive about social class issues in public education.

Another example of spontaneous analysis occurred during the interview with Ed Hitchcock, a teacher at an upper middle-class west side school, only this time my own political ideology influenced the co-authoring. We were discussing why Aboriginal students graduate from B.C. high schools at lower rates than other students. Hitchcock suggested that perhaps it has to do with their physiology and their inability to use alcohol appropriately. I suggested that it has more to do with their experience with colonialism rather than their physiology, to which he agreed that this alternative explanation might have some merit. (See analysis of teacher interviews in chapter 5.) My suggestion also indicates that the radical postcolonial perspective has influenced my personal politics on this issue.

Analysis can also develop during the interview when the interviewer “condenses and interprets the meaning of what the interviewee describes, and ‘sends’ the meaning back” (p. 189). This “self-correcting” aspect occurred several times during the interviews. I attempted this during the interview with Ed Hitchcock. This time, we were discussing the meaning of multicultural education. Hitchcock’s perspective was a preamble of experiences he has had with “visiting Japanese officials and students” and appropriate behaviour. (See analysis of teacher interviews in chapter 5.) My response involved what Kvale calls condensing and interpreting the meaning of Hitchcock’s description. I suggested that what he was describing was “an appreciation of different cultures.” Hitchcock was able to clarify his point further, “self-correcting” my interpretation.
Once the interview is over, of course, the researcher is alone with the data, especially as in my case in which there were no further plans to go back to the interviewees with the findings. I would have liked to have had a chance to meet with the teachers a second time. Member checks might have strengthened the data analysis. Yet, almost all of the teachers voiced the same comment: they were simply too busy to revisit the ongoing research. I completely understood their reluctance.

Finding myself alone with the data, I turned to Kvale for help. In *Interviews*, he describes five approaches to interview analysis: condensation of meaning, categorization of meaning, structuring of meaning through narratives, interpretation of meaning, and ad hoc methods for generating meaning (pp. 187-204). Although I employed the first three techniques to some degree, I used the last two approaches extensively. I will therefore explicate each of them here, particularly as they pertain to this project.

With *meaning condensation*, there are two main goals (p. 194). The first is to ascertain the major thematic purpose for this part of the study, which for me is to determine how political ideology influences the ways social studies teachers view issues of race and class. The second is the methodological aim. In analyzing the transcripts, I am using a type of critical discourse analysis to aid in the identification of the influence of the various political ideologies with each of the participants.

The second approach, which Kvale calls *meaning categorization* (p. 196), is to help the researcher develop the "main dimensions" and "subcategories" for analytical purposes. Of course, this approach is most helpful with quantitative studies with large sample sets. Yet, it is still helpful with qualitative studies such as this one. I was able to do meaning categorization by referring to a series of sources that included educational literature and previous interviews I have conducted with Deirdre Kelly's Teaching for Social Justice research at UBC. The main dimensions represent the
concepts best suited to help me answer the research questions. They are representation of and attitudes toward race, social class, and democracy and citizenship. Not coincidentally, all three of the main dimensions constitute the content of chapters 5, 6, and 7. The subcategories break down the main dimensions. The first step in the process is to design a few interview questions with each of the main dimensions in mind, followed by the creation of numerous categories that arose from each of the questions. For example, several questions of the interview schedule pertain to the main dimension about social class. From the teacher responses to these questions, I conceptualized the following subcategories: social class as identity marker, poverty and graduation rates, labour issues, the teaching of conflict, curriculum relevance, mass testing, meritocracy, and streaming. As well, several more subcategories arose that demonstrated an axis of intersection between issues of race and social class. This process of categorizing made it possible to investigate differences among the department heads in how they view the class structure of Canadian society. Similar processes occurred with the other two main dimensions.

I used the approach that Kvale calls *meaning structuring through narratives* (p. 199) several times throughout the data analysis. For instance, one of the teachers vehemently supported a pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps philosophy in response to my questions around poor students not graduating and curriculum relevance. Later on in the interview, this same teacher spoke of his own upbringing in which he lived in a family with mental health issues and welfare dependence. At one point, he began to cry. The tears quickly dried up when he finished by stating how proud he was to be a successful educator with a Masters degree in education from UBC. I was able to put both stories, as well as a few others he told, into a “richer, more condensed and coherent story” that made connections from his childhood to his conservative political convictions around issues of poverty.
Throughout the analysis of all of the interviews, meaning structuring through narratives proved to be a useful approach.

Kvale calls the fourth approach to data analysis *meaning interpretation* (p. 201). He describes the meaning interpretation approach as follows:

*The interpreter goes beyond what is directly said to work out structures and relations of meaning not immediately apparent in a text. This requires a certain distance from what is said, which is achieved by a methodical or theoretical stance, recontextualizing what is said in a specific conceptual context.*

(p. 201)

As I already mentioned, none of the participants were aware of my analytic focus, namely, to ascertain how political ideology influences issues of race and class in social studies. In other words, the data analysis was focused on the relations of meaning, or the discourses connected to political ideologies, on which the interviewee's ideas were based. Moreover, I was able to do this because of the theoretical stance with which I entered the project. As I have mentioned in the section on my own social positionality, this theoretical stance would best be described as based in an anti-racist democratic socialism. As an example of this, eight of the ten participants gave me unsolicited information about where they position themselves on the political spectrum, as I mentioned earlier in my brief descriptions of the teachers. They told me that they were either "left of centre" or always voted for the NDP, Canada's social democratic political party. Yet, from their own words, all eight actually exhibited conservative or liberal tendencies toward issues of race and class. Only one teacher, Steve Graham, consistently offered progressive responses to all of the questions. I was often surprised when they would mention how they vote, given their views toward the Other. My theoretical stance enabled me to not take their self-described political leanings at face value.

Meaning interpretation is often based on a "mistrust toward the meanings directly expressed" (p. 203). As an example of this, several of the social studies teachers who expressed sympathy for the
plight of First Nations students were strongly opposed to the implementation of First Nations Studies 12 (FNS 12), a course that addresses, among other things, post-contact history from an Aboriginal perspective. Some of these same teachers called this course “an apologist’s approach to history” and a wrong-headed “attempt to correct the wrongs of history.” For these teachers, Eurocentrism has long been rooted out of social studies curriculum. One of these participants remarked that even though the curriculum does not address First Nations issues enough, he is opposed to FNS 12 counting as a social studies credit. Another said he is opposed to the course because the situation for First Nations people in Canada has always been a lot better than in the United States, so “why should we do this course if it’s not even happening in the States?” Consequently, when a teacher claimed sympathy for the plight of First Nations students, I did not accept their attitudes at face value.

In this study I tried to look for the underlying meaning of what the participants actually said. This is what Kvale means by the term “the hermeneutics of suspicion” (p. 203). Consistent with a neo-Marxist analytical approach, I often viewed the words of the teachers, especially those most influenced by conservatism and liberalism, as “manifestations of an ideology concealing the basic contradictions of the social and economic forces at work” (p. 203). After all, the majority of them saw themselves as progressive educators. Yet, it is my understanding, coming from a more radical perspective, that for the most part these teachers were furthering the entrenchment of discourses that work to maintain the status quo. This is consistent with the concerns of Michael Apple (1990), who wanted these basic contradictions illuminated in the struggle around the curriculum.

The fifth approach to data analysis, what Kvale calls *ad hoc meaning generation*, is a combination of the previous four approaches. As such, I used this approach, as well. Kvale discusses thirteen tactics within this ad hoc approach. Many applied to what I did, but none so much as the twelfth and thirteenth: “building a logical chain of evidence” and “making conceptual/theoretical
coherence" of the data (p. 204). Both tactics, as Kvale refers to them, will be demonstrated in the interview data analysis in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Kvale states that a major issue of analysis is the "theoretical presuppositions" with which a researcher enters a study (p. 206). I based this entire study on my understanding of the three main political ideologies emanating from modernity and asked how they influence social studies education in British Columbia today. I am asking why it is so difficult to implement social justice aspects around issues of race and class in the social studies classroom.

I have already mentioned that it is the "unconscious meaning" rather than the "expressed meaning" (p. 211) of the words of the teachers that I am looking for. Kvale emphasizes the need for researchers to address the issue of a "plurality of interpretations" that can arise from the same body of data. I do not believe that there is only one correct interpretation of the data, a position that allows me to negate the importance of interpreter consensus. Yet, from my background reading on political ideology, I do believe that the manner in which I determined which political ideology was at work on each teacher as he gave a response was based on a consensus about these ideologies in academic circles. Although a careful reading of the interview data analysis sections in chapters 5, 6, and 7 might suggest otherwise, I am confident that there is some basis for the conclusions I have drawn and stated in chapter 8. I will now briefly address the reasoning that went into the design of the interview questions.

3.4.4 The Interview Questions

I will briefly discuss each of the questions on the interview schedule. (Please refer to Appendix 1.) Although it was my intention to ask each teacher the same questions, it did not always work out this way. The main reason for this was to maintain rapport, an aspect of interviewing (and
of qualitative research in general) that I find most crucial to its overall success. With the mostly open-ended questions in this schedule, I had to often rearrange the order of questions during the interview itself. This occurred in order to maintain the flow of the conversation. It was also a conscious decision on my part to mix up the topics I wanted to discuss with them. For example, I would not ask consecutive questions about aspects of social class; rather, there would be two or three questions about other topics between each one pertaining to social class.

In advance of the interviews, I tried to determine the possible answers the teachers might offer to my questions. At the least, I had worked out some of the possible responses from each of the three major political ideologies for the questions. My purpose was to prepare myself to probe thoroughly during the interviews so that I had the richest possible data to analyze. For example, question 14 reads as follows:

Why do you think children of poor families leave school before graduating at a much higher rate than middle-class children?

A teacher influenced by the conservative ideology might respond from an essentialist perspective, namely, that poor students possess inferior genes. They also might invoke the term meritocracy by insisting that these students do not work hard enough. Of course, this rationale takes any obligation away from mainstream society to alter the ways that schools act as a gate-keeper to various positions in the adult world of paid employment. Liberals might also respond to this question by using meritocracy, of course, but they would be more likely to point out that students of poverty might be latch-key children as a parent may have to work at more than one low-paying job in order to pay the bills. In other words, the liberal might exhibit more compassion for the plight of poor students. A teacher influenced by the radical ideology, on the other hand, might point out that the curriculum has a middle-class bias, that there is very little mention of the plight of workers or the unemployed, that
there is a tacit assumption in the curriculum that poor people have no one to blame but themselves for their misfortune. A radical teacher might also mention that many colleagues have attitudes that hinder poor students through a lack of understanding of their experience. Of course, these are but a few of the responses that the teachers might offer. Yet, it is indicative of the type of analysis I hoped to, and eventually did, employ on the data. I will now briefly outline the thinking that went into the interview schedule.

The first two questions were simply to gather required background information about the teachers and the students whom they teach. They also allowed both the participant and myself to get used to speaking with each other. Questions 9, 10, and 14 were designed to elicit answers that would indicate how ideology influences their views toward race. I decided against asking a specific question about how the teachers teach about racism. I opted instead to attempt to get at the question as a probe to my query about their thoughts on multiculturalism. My reasoning for this decision was that this approach would be more likely to garner their core attitude toward racial matters. After all, race and racism are seen as motherhood issues that people want to be seen as holding progressive views toward. I did probe teachers with whom I felt I had a good rapport. As well, questions 7 and 8 gave more space for the teachers to discuss the importance of racial issues in the past and present.

The probes in all of these same questions were also designed to find out how the teachers thought about issues of social class, as well. This makes sense, of course, especially with the description of critical multiculturalism articulated by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), a version of multiculturalism that emanates from a radical ideology. It examines how the various cultures relate to each other in a way that incorporates social class, as well. The various forms of multiculturalism will be described in chapter 5.
Question 13, which focuses on streaming, is an attempt to elicit views around class (Curtis, Livingstone & Smaller, 1992). It is also, however, a question designed to learn something about how the teachers see the issue of race. As many scholars point out (Banks, 1988; James, 1990; Kelly, 1992; Ladson-Billings, 1994), modified classes in North America are often filled with students from visible minorities, especially Aboriginal and Black students. Question 12 is clearly about finding out the degree of importance the teachers placed on issues of social class.

As I explained in the first part of this chapter, part of the focus in this study is on the ways democracy and citizenship are considered by the teachers. Questions 4 and 5 relate to this line of inquiry. As will be shown in chapter 7, there is a major emphasis on the importance of democracy and citizenship education in many of the B.C. social studies curricula. What is less clear, however, is that I have designed many of the remaining questions to explore the ways that teachers think about how to be as inclusive as possible. After all, democracy can be seen as one of the pillars of liberalism, as a progeny of the Enlightenment. Its thrust has focused on an ever-growing sense of inclusivity.

Questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 15 were included in the interview questions to help me determine the extent to which the teachers consider democracy and citizenship in this progressive way. This set of questions also served the purpose of allowing me to analyze the degree to which veteran social studies teachers consider their position to be a vehicle in the construction of a socially just society. As I have mentioned earlier, there are many who consider the role of the school to be nothing more than an instrument used to further entrench the status quo. Proponents of this perspective are most likely to be people who have benefited from the current power arrangements. These people are likely to adhere to conservative notions of democracy and citizenship, although they may agree with the liberal idea of participating citizens (Westheimer & Kahne, 2003). The ideological distinctions between conservative, liberal, and radical conceptions of democracy and citizenship are articulated in
3.4.6 On Language

Critiques of modern appraisals of the Other have raised sensitivities about the words we use to describe people who inhabit social locations different from ourselves. I had to make some decisions about what terms to use for the various cultural groups throughout the study. For example, the word Indian has posed problems for many anthropologists and other scholars for a long time. In this study, I use the terms Indian, East Indian, or Indo-Canadian to refer to people whose ancestry is in India. The terms Aboriginal, Native, and First Nations are used to describe Canada’s original inhabitants. White and European I use interchangeably, while the term British is used to describe the first group of White people to settle in British Columbia in the second half of the 1800s and the early 1900s. These people may have come to B.C. from Britain, Ontario, the Maritimes, or the United States. Their original lineage, however, would have been British. David Roediger (1991) describes how the “wages of whiteness” benefited all people who looked as though all of their ancestors came from Europe. In B.C., these same benefits were mostly extended to anyone who could demonstrate a British background (Perry, 2001; Harris, 1997; Barman, 1991). Consequently, I sometimes used the somewhat awkward term Britishness in a similar way that other scholars use the term whiteness. It is not clear to me whether Irish and Scottish Catholics living in British Columbia had the same access to these wages of whiteness.

I had to think about whether to use the term white or use White. On the one hand, using the lower-case fits with my political stance on acknowledging the dominance of whiteness. Yet, I often
describe the social relations in British Columbia as supporting a type of Britishness. I could not see much difference in using a capital B for British or a capital W for White. Hence, I used the term White.

There is one last issue pertaining to language that I wish to address here. In Chapter 2, I outlined the three major political ideologies that emanated from Modernity: conservatism, liberalism, and socialism. Critiques of Marxism have correctly asserted that Marx and Engels paid little attention to gender and race concerns, focusing almost solely on class. The contributions of critical theory, feminist thought and postcolonial scholarship in recent decades have brought to light the initial flaws in socialist thought. My study is primarily about how issues of race and class are represented in social studies education. Consequently, I use the term radical in place of socialist in the data analysis chapters (i.e., 5, 6, and 7). This, too, is problematic because the term radical also refers to a version of feminism, a particular philosophy within environmentalism, and various other forms of social protest. Yet, I consider the need to be consistent with the massive body of recent academic research about issues of class and race to supercede any concerns of appropriation of the term radical. I began the discussion around political ideology in chapter 2 using the term socialism to refer to the critique of capitalism in a similar manner as Marx and Engels used the term. Yet, I make the switch to radicalism when discussing aspects of the curriculum and the present-day attitudes of the teachers toward issues of race and class in a critical and progressive way.

The original White society that settled in British Columbia was mostly driven by a conservative ideology. In order to provide context for the subsequent data analysis, I will describe how the predominantly British settler population managed to construct a pro-British middle-class conservative identity in a region populated by significantly larger numbers of First Nations people who were later joined by legions of labourers from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds. This
is the purpose of the next chapter. This chapter will also focus on the power of discursive formations to mold a society so that certain groups gain privilege at the expense of others.
Chapter 4 British Conservatism and the First School Curriculum

In British Columbia today, the public is repeatedly thrust into struggles and debates that involve groups of people vying for recognition and what they perceive to be their rights. Aboriginal people demand that the land question be settled; a Catholic bishop tries to defend himself on charges of rape by suggesting that he was seduced by the young Aboriginal females; people of Chinese ancestry want to be redressed over the federally-imposed head tax of a century ago; White people believe they are victims of unfair affirmative action programs; this same group fears the infinite hordes of Chinese migrants who wait to illegally enter the province; capitalists and their friends in the media lament the union power of the working classes, while these same labourers call for better working conditions, wages, and job security.

Yet, a study of the history of this region that historian Jean Barman calls “the West beyond the West” reveals similar sets of struggles between similar social groups have already occurred. The purpose of this chapter is to give historical context to the main body of research that follows, specifically in terms of how race and class relations melded to form the social hierarchies still in evidence today. The main goal is for understanding the past so that the future is comprehensible, possibly leading to more understanding among the various social groups. After all, as Canadian educator Ken Osborne states in In Defence of History (1995), “either we understand our past, or we let it control us, with untold consequences for the present and the future” (p. 3). In the opening paragraph, I mentioned only a few of the numerous examples that demonstrate the validity of this assertion.

The relations between the Aboriginal peoples, Whites, and various Asian groups became seriously strained almost immediately following the decision of British White settlers to turn Vancouver Island into a British colony in 1849. Yet, the initial experience between Natives and
Whites were not necessarily so bad. In the late 1700s, when Europeans first appeared in the area, they also brought sets of attitudes that greatly influenced the relationships – in social, economic and political realms – with the indigenous peoples. The beginning of the relationship between these two groups came with the fur trade, a business arrangement that to some degree benefited both groups, although from this “partnership” the seeds were planted for more powerful discourses to hold sway in the relationship. The discourse of the fur trade gave way to several discourses that were so intertwined and powerful that the province has been and continues to be shaped by them.

Imperialism, the dominant discourse, is based on cycles of exploitative relationships and negative representations of the Other, a process not unique to British Columbia. In fact, this story has similarities to all the other places where Europeans ventured en masse to dispossess the original inhabitants of their lands, and in the case of the British, to further the imperialist project of Empire-building. Yet, in the context of British Columbia, the day-to-day relations of people from the various groups were governed by imperialism and nation-building and, of course, related discourses such as capitalism, White supremacy, anti-miscegenation, the dying race, the yellow hordes, corrupt unions, to name but a few. These have spawned a host of others, often in gender/racial intersecting constructs – the discourse of the Aboriginal woman as prostitute, the discourse of the White woman as a beacon of purity and saviour of the empire are but two of many. Of course, throughout the history of this region, as elsewhere, the discourse of Christianity has been extremely potent in its support of patriarchal White supremacist capitalism.

Beginning with the fur trade, I will outline the discourses that influenced social and political relations that led to the colonial period of 1849 until 1871 and the nation-building period that ended in the 1920s. It will become clear why one scholar claims that by 1925, British Columbia had been made into a White supremacist society (Stanley, 1995, p. 39). More to the point, it will be evident
how Whiteness and a conservative ideology came to underlie much of the school curriculum in British Columbia. This can only be understood with an understanding of the context of the period and the discourses that were influencing the minds of the settlers.

4.1 THE PRECOLONIAL PERIOD

The arrival of the first European trade ship in 1785 marked the beginning of a proto-colonial period throughout what is now British Columbia, a contact period created for the most part through the trading of furs. These early traders came by sea and land to make deals with an Aboriginal population hovering between 300,000 and 400,000, according to sources cited by historian Adele Perry (2001, p. 10). Aboriginal society throughout the region was varied and complex, with 34 distinct languages and vastly differing models of social organization, including slave-owning tribes to the north.

Although it is difficult to assess the long-term impact of the fur trade on the land west of the Rockies, geographer Cole Harris (1997) claims that the seeds for two discourses were planted as soon as Europeans from different nations arrived in the late eighteenth century (p. 32). A “discourse of sovereign power” attempted to hold sway over Aboriginal peoples and their lands, itself laying the groundwork for the colonial discourse that was soon to follow. Spain, Russia, Britain, France and the young nation of the United States all vied for control of the fur trade, particularly in sea otter, in the coastal region. Yet, it was a non-sovereign entity, the Hudson’s Bay Company, that was inadvertently instrumental in creating the groundwork for year-round White settlement, albeit on a tiny scale. Historian Jean Barman (1991) claims that a positive aspect of the fur trade, as far as the First Nations were concerned, was that “[t]he traders’ presence gave Indian peoples some breathing space before having to face mass European settlement” (p. 50).
According to Harris, this “discourse of the fur trade” promoted the values of hard work and reliability in a similar way as industrial capitalism was doing simultaneously in Britain. The Metis scholar of history, Olive Dickason (1992), contends that the effect of the fur trade on the First Nations of the Pacific Northwest “at first intensified existing cultural patterns rather than [cause] a major reorientation in their way of life” (p. 207). For example, the material goods involved with traditional ceremonies such as the potlatch increased at the same time that art flourished — many began to carve in new materials. Although there is much evidence to suggest that the initial fur trade was beneficial for both Aboriginal and European peoples, there soon came to be a demonstration of power that was to grow into the colonial project of empire-building. The origins of social hierarchies along lines of race, ethnicity, gender and social class were being formed in the region.

One early example of how ethnic divisions advantaged the capitalist class was the common practice of dividing the living arrangements of the work-force up so that very few men in a sleeping quarters spoke the same language (Harris, 1997, p.44). The reasoning was to curb labourers from collectively demanding better conditions or acting against violent superiors. This strategy in particular evolved into a very effective method as capitalists learned to play one race or ethnic group off against another in efforts to increase profits throughout the colonial and nation-building phases of the region.

The European fur traders built forts in order to have safe and familiar spaces, as well as trade and communications centres. The forts also allowed the White newcomers to demonstrate power to the surrounding Native peoples in the same way that castles had done in Europe during an earlier period. Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) officers began conjugal relationships with Aboriginal women, both groups hoping to build alliances through these unions. Ironically, as the discourse of the fur trade died out, it was replaced by a more powerful one, namely, imperialism. The discourse of
imperialism gave great impetus in the discouragement of intimate liaisons between White men and non-White women.

4.2 **THE COLONIAL PERIOD: 1849 to 1871**

When Britain declared Vancouver Island to be a colony of the empire in 1849, the official colonial period of the region began. This was a clear demonstration of British arrogance, since there were only 500 or so British settlers on the island, compared to tens of thousands of Aboriginal people. These numbers also demonstrate the power of the imperial discourse, as the small number of Britons attempted to assert what they believed to be their right to control the original inhabitants of the land as though it was natural destiny. Historian Adele Perry sums up the imperial discourse as it pertained to the small number of White settlers in mid-nineteenth century British Columbia:

> They were a civilized and White people surrounded by savage Indians in an empty and undeveloped place that could be transformed into an exemplary British colony.

(2001, p. 194)

The imperial discourse, so prominent wherever Europeans wanted the land and resources of other peoples, included other discourses that served European interests. Christianity, capitalism, race theories and spinoffs such as White supremacy and anti-miscegenation, all of which also included other discourses, constituted a *discursive formation* that justified, maintained, and even further entrenched White privilege and interests. This discursive formation led to social hierarchies that became the backbone of the conservative ideology, vestiges of which can be seen in British Columbia even today.

Yet, as discussed in Chapter 2, European thought during the Enlightenment also spawned a liberal ideology, which included humanist discourses like the equality of man and Aboriginal rights. Both of these discourses continue to exert influence in the sociopolitical relations of British
Columbians today. One man who embodied many of the struggles during the colonial period was Governor James Douglas. A man who Barman claims "exercised almost total authority" in the region (1991, p. 72), Douglas exemplified the tensions between conservatism and liberalism.

From 1851 until his retirement in 1864, James Douglas was governor of Vancouver Island. The former Hudson’s Bay Company employee was also named the first governor of mainland British Columbia when it became a colony of Britain in 1858, a direct consequence of the Fraser River gold rush of the same year. The mercantile capitalist system that HBC officers had overseen for decades, a system in which distribution of goods and profits were easily controlled, became untenable with the new conditions, namely, the arrival of tens of thousands of men with no ties to Britain, immediately leading the British to expand the empire by turning mainland British Columbia into a colony. As Barman points out, “[t]he contribution of James Douglas in shaping the future province should not be underestimated” (1991, p. 97). Douglas had to negotiate between power brokers like the middle-class colonists and missionaries from Britain, the HBC officers, many of whom had developed strong familial ties to First Nations communities, the White working-class newcomers and the huge numbers of Aboriginal people who, despite having never changed locations, now found themselves living in a British colony.

The lack of White settlers did not stop Douglas from clearing the way for future settlement, which was one of the mandates imposed by the HBC. Between 1850 and 1854, he negotiated fourteen treaties with Salish bands on Vancouver Island, apparently paying attention to preferred land for the Whites (Barman, 1991, p. 58), as well as land used by the Natives for homes, burial grounds and fishing stations (Dickason, 1992, p. 243). The salient point of these treaties, however, is that the imperial discourse, which included the discourse of White supremacy, was powerful enough to
convince a small set of White settlers that they had the right to contain the original inhabitants of the land to 3% of the island.

After 1854, there were no more treaties made with the First Nations and the colonists, most probably because the racial theories of European “science” were becoming part of the dominant discourse in the new colony, a “science” that determined Aboriginal people to be “savages, the alter-ego of civilized Europeans” (Harris, 1997, p. 34). Political scientist Paul Tennant points out that the settlers were quick to draft laws that enabled those who could claim to be White certain privileges and power (1990, p. xi). In this aspect, many settlers who were excluded from the class of propertied men in Europe were able to benefit materially in British Columbia. After all, the conservative Christian discourse, so influential with the elite of the British settlers, urged men to “have dominion” over the land and its creatures, to work the land and change it from its natural state, a concept quite antithetical to Aboriginal cosmology. Indeed, the new commissioner of Crown Lands, Joseph Trutch, claimed in 1864 that Native people “had no more right to the land than a panther or a bear” (Dickason, 1992, p. 261). With the arrival of Trutch, the conservative ideology became further entrenched in the settler society of the region. Trutch immediately set about taking away most of the land allocated by Douglas to the First Nations (Barman, 1991, p. 153). Indigenous families were only allowed to have land on the reserves and even then the plots could be no larger than ten acres. Individual British men, by comparison, “could pre-empt 160 acres and then purchase up to 480 more” (p. 154).

The colonial period of 1849 until 1871 coincided with other newly emerging discourses, mostly emanating out of Britain, around both race and gender. These discourses became influential throughout the British Empire, of course, but they were not always able to create and maintain the desired societies. The unique situation of British Columbia, a mountainous land located half-way
around the world from the so-called “centre of civilization,” is a case in point, its history a clear
demonstration of the massive gap between imperialism in theory and imperialism in practice.

In the 1850s, the HBC became involved with mining, beginning with coal in the Nanaimo
area of Vancouver Island. Around this time, logging became a major activity. Both of these industries
required a labouring class to do the actual work and especially after gold was discovered around the
Fraser River in 1858, the workers arrived, most of them coming from the United States and almost
every one of them male (Perry, 2001, p. 10). In fact, “[w]omen hovered at somewhere between 5 and
15 percent of the White population on the mainland between 1861 and 1865” (ibid., p. 17). The
fragility and vulnerability of the colony became blatantly obvious for all. Yet, the call for middle-class
farming families to come to the new colonies met with little response; work camps “in the
‘wilderness’ and a line of industrial transportation to the outside world appeared instead” (Harris,

These backwoods work camps allowed a White, male “homosocial culture” to develop and
even flourish during the colonial period. The working-class men who had come to the region in search
of employment, even wealth, developed tastes for drinking alcohol, gambling, and spending time with
other men except when they went to the dance halls to socialize with Native women (Perry, 2001, p.
38). Adele Perry (2001) persuasively argues that these all-male social arrangements can be seen as
resistance to the dominant form of British masculinity (p. 38). According to Perry, “British Columbia
created a broader male culture that fostered same-sex social, emotional, and sometimes sexual bonds,”
(p. 28), a development that in turn, spawned a White middle-class reaction that promoted temperance
(p. 80), Christianity (p. 82), and the use of alternative sites of masculinity such as the YMCA (p. 84).
These reformers were worried that the “poor moral habits” of the White working classes “threatened
colonial progress” (p. 88). Instead of attempting to convert the “othered ‘savage,’” the Anglican
Columbia Mission changed its focus to saving “Britain’s errant sons, in ensuring that the ‘self’ did not become the ‘other,’” (p. 91).

The White labourers became particularly incensed at the way the Anglican missionaries represented them to British audiences, even questioning the Church’s assumption that it had the right to describe their lifestyles as “a hotbed of immorality” (ibid., p. 96). Through the British Colonist newspaper in 1861, these men resisted imperialism’s attempts of representing them as something other than what was desired. Indeed, they disputed the way in which the imperial project produced its knowledge. It was becoming clear that, despite their European lineage, the right of the predominantly male working classes of British Columbia to claim membership in being White was in jeopardy. Missionary attempts to “civilize” them were not all that different from attempts to “civilize” indigenous peoples, in British Columbia as well as anywhere else the British Empire set out to conquer.

The strongest reaction from the colonial elites and middle classes was elicited by the tendency of White working-class men to become romantically involved with Aboriginal women. This was because mixed-race couples went against a set of discourses sweeping across all the societies in which White people had gained power over the Other. Despite the noble words of emancipation and equality that were part of the Enlightenment’s liberal project, a discursive formation that included White supremacy, Christianity, anti-miscegenation, and the construction of White woman femininity as a beacon of civilized purity, worked to ensure that oppressive social hierarchies were the norm in the colonies that Perry calls “at the edge of empire.” This discursive formation was powerful enough to position the conservative ideoloogy as dominant in British Columbia. Moreover, these discourses became extremely difficult to disentangle, making the conservative ideology almost immovable for over a century.
Nineteenth-century European writers became involved in numerous debates around issues of race, racial origins, nation and culture. Nicholas Dirks has made a case that “culture as a colonial formation” was the catalyst that spurred on such debates (1991). As a corollary, the cosmological view of indigenous peoples, namely, that they were the stewards of the land for those yet to be born, was completely at odds with the Christian notion of Man having dominion over the Earth and all its creatures. According to the postcolonial scholar Robert J. C. Young (1995), this same biblical idea was at the heart of the monogenesis versus polygenesis debates that finally ended in the early twentieth century (pp. 64-67). Many supporters of the polygenesis thesis considered non-Europeans to be of entirely different species. Even when this argument was proven wrong, the discourse of White supremacist racial hierarchies worked to maintain hegemony. Consequently, the arguments put forth by Aboriginal peoples toward ownership of the land were not considered in any serious way by the colonial powers. Vestiges of this conservative line of thought can be seen in Aboriginal/White relations in British Columbia today.

In Racial Theories, sociologist Michael Banton (1998) argues that European racial attitudes, which began more or less as an ethnocentric response, shifted to more overtly racist ones as the “Needs of Empire” required. By the mid-1800s, “new attitudes towards the self and social status [were] emerging within British society” (p. 78). Racial classification systems were developed by Gobineau and other scholars, causing, at least in part, extremely strong anti-miscegenation attitudes throughout White populations, in Europe and its colonies. Various taxonomies arose that incorporated aspects of social Darwinism as they served the interests of Empire: Spencer’s cultural evolutionism, Gobineau’s racial classification system, and Nott and Gliddon’s Types of Mankind were some of the most influential works in the field of science that supported White supremacy. As Banton points out, these philosophers were making the same flaw as the naturalists of the 1700s, namely, “they assumed
that to classify was to explain" (p. 80). Unfortunately, this flawed logic still managed to instill a belief in racial hierarchies within the collective European consciousness, justifying both the theft of lands worldwide and the organizing of social relations that granted privilege to White people while oppressing the indigenous peoples. It was no different in the remote far-off corner of the British Empire on the northwest coast of North America.

Robert J. C. Young contends that the strength of the anti-miscegenation discourse was so powerful in the British Empire that it even superceded concerns over homosexuality. In Colonial Desire (1995), Young makes the claim that despite rampant homophobia in British society, such liaisons remained “silent, covert and unmarked” because they produced no children (p. 26). The real threat to imperialist aims was mixed-race children, open proof that polygeneticists were wrong and that racial hierarchies were vulnerable. In the new British colonies of the Pacific Northwest, hybridity challenged the socially constructed colour-line hierarchies more than anything else. It also threatened the British rationale for colonizing various peoples across their empire. Moreover, in Race and the Education of Desire (1997), Ann Laura Stoler claims that the “dangers of a homosexual rank and file were implicitly weighed against the medical hazards of rampant heterosexual prostitution” (p. 181). And to many among the British colonists, the relationships between White labourers and Aboriginal women were akin to prostitution.

According to Adele Perry, “First Nations women were represented as overtly sexual, physical, and base. White men were simultaneously attracted and alarmed by what they saw as Aboriginal woman’s sexual availability” (p. 51). In the History of Sexuality, Michel Foucault (1979) hypothesized that nineteenth-century Europe’s sexual fascination was not intended to repress sex at all; rather, it was meant to arouse in all but the bourgeois family. In other words, sexual practices became a marker of social class. Although Foucault focused solely on Europe, his insight spawned a legion of scholars
to study the connections between sexuality and imperialism, including Robert J.C. Young (1995), Ann
Laura Stoler (1997), Jean Barman (1997/98), and Anne McClintock (1995). Young has painstakingly
argued that the revulsion of mating with the Other had to compete with the colonizer’s desire for
sexual intimacy with the colonized. As a result, social pressures for anti-miscegenation often held
sway over physical and psychological attractions between people of different races. In the backwoods
of British Columbia, however, this dynamic was often reversed.

The race theorists fused pseudo-science and Christian morality into one powerful discourse
that explained the presence of mixed-race people throughout the empire: although men from the
dominant race might succumb to the immoral seductions of females from the inferior races, the “laws”
of permanence of type, the infertility of hybrids, and the limits of acclimatization determined the
ultimate outcome in race relations. In Taming Aboriginal Sexuality (1997/98), Jean Barman
persuasively argues that Aboriginal women were misconstrued to be sexually available because they
were judged through a White, Christian, patriarchal lens (p. 239) in which the taboos that were
normalized in nineteenth-century European societies had no counterpart in Aboriginal societies (p.
243). Moreover, the race and gender dynamics in colonial British Columbia made it possible for “men
in power to condemn Aboriginal sexuality and at the same time, if they so chose, to use for their own
gratification the very women they had turned into sexual objects” (p. 240). The same discourse was
rampant in the United States. Speaking to the American Freedmen’s Inquiry Commission about the
“repugnance” of amalgamation of the races, Louis Agassiz, a Professor of Zoology at Harvard,
blamed “the easy morality of ‘half-breed’ servant-girls, combined with the naivety of young White
gentlemen” (Young, 1995, p. 149). Patriarchy and White supremacy formed a powerful discursive
alliance that allowed White men to have their way with non-White women without any recourse
whatsoever for the latter group.
Much of the discourse around Aboriginal women and sexuality negates the agency they employed in order to shift power in the social relations of the times and the resistance they put up when they became victims of violence (Perry, 2001, p. 65). After all, these racial and religious discourses were major parts of the underpinning of the conservative ideology. Jean Barman (1997/98) contends that these conservative discourses still resonate today in some British Columbian circles. Yet, during the colonial period, there were virtually no avenues open for counter-hegemonic discourses to take root.

The major source of resistance to these mixed-race couplings came from the privileged British colonists. In On the Edge of Empire (2001), Adele Perry points out that despite attempts by some “to assimilate White-Aboriginal relationships to European sexual and social norms” (p. 97), the majority of settlers tried to discourage them (p. 106) or, if they continued to occur, segregate them from the more respectable all-White Christian neighbourhoods (p. 110). In 1861, future premier Amor de Cosmos, formerly named William Smith, summed up the growing sentiments of the colonists toward Aboriginal people in an editorial he wrote in the British Colonist:

Shall we allow a few vagrants to prevent forever industrious settlers from settling on the unoccupied lands? Not at all ... Locate reservations for them on which to earn their own living, and if they trespass on White settlers punish them severely. A few lessons would enable them to form a correct estimation of their own inferiority. (Cited in Barman, 1991, p. 153)

With the help of the newspapers, racist conservatives put increasing pressure on James Douglas to pass legislation that would, in effect, force the Aboriginal people to live and work only on their reserves. Yet, the governor responded in an ambivalent way to the demands for segregation. Douglas wished for assimilation and even a type of biracial society between the two races. The governor was in an awkward position – his wife Amelia was of Aboriginal/White ancestry, as were his children.
Moreover, although the majority of colonists considered Native people to be “untrustworthy,” Douglas considered most to possess an “essential good will” (Barman, 1991, p. 151).

In 1858, Douglas further complicated matters of race in the colony when he gave permission for over 700 African American men, women and children to sail to British Columbia from California in order to make their homes in Victoria and on Saltspring Island. The newcomers faced discrimination, especially from the White Americans living in the colony, but had “found immediate employment and entrepeneurial opportunities” (Walker, 1985, p. 11). The Black communities were among the first groups to form a militia, known as the African Rifles, to protect the British colony from those who wanted it to join the United States (Barman, 1991, p. 76). Despite this, Black settlers found they were not treated the same way as their White counterparts: some Victoria barkeepers refused to serve them alcohol (Perry, p. 40), the local YMCA excluded them from membership (ibid., p. 84), the African Rifles were barred from participating in parades and public ceremonies (Walker, p. 11), and many churches and theatres would only allow them to sit in segregated sections (p. 11).

Yet, most likely because of their large numbers, Aboriginal people had to endure the most consistent forms of White racism. Calls for their segregation in colonial British Columbia were reminiscent of the situation in the segregated southern United States. Adele Perry describes these racist demands as a patriarchal response toward the notion of communal integration with non-White people:

Men evoked the chivalric duty as husbands and fathers bound to protect White women and children from threatening non-White peoples, and missionaries and politicians alike promoted Aboriginal relocation and containment as a benevolent means of saving the benighted savage.

(p. 113)

Despite this widespread patriarchal, White supremacist conservatism, White opposition to segregation appeared out of the business community. Victoria merchants wanted to ensure that some
of the rough and tumble backwoods labourers would come to town to spend their money, and if that meant their Aboriginal partners would be by their side, then so be it. But despite this opposition, the segregationists were going to get their way: an extremely deadly smallpox epidemic swept through the First Nations communities of the Northwest coast.

It has become fairly well known that one of the major ways in which Europeans wreaked havoc on indigenous populations throughout the imperial world was by transmitting diseases to people who lacked immunity to them. Cole Harris (1997) has concluded that “smallpox reached the Straight of Georgia in 1782 and that its effects were devastating” on the Coast Salish people (p. 4). Yet, the worst was still to come: in 1862, First Nations communities living on the borders of Victoria contracted the deadly smallpox virus. This gave segregationists the rationale they needed to demand that the authorities get rid of all Aboriginal people from Victoria. The police began to burn all of the dwellings that housed Aboriginal people and escorted them by gunboat up the east coast of Vancouver Island, having to go further north than intended as the White settlers of Nanaimo “prevented their canoes from landing” (Perry, p. 114). In Perry’s opinion, the response of the White settlers was so extreme that it can only be explained by “White fears of sexual and social contact with the Aboriginal community” (p. 111). In scenes reminiscent of the responses to the AIDS crisis by B.C. authorities in the 1980s and 1990s, colonial missionaries and journalists attempted to link the deadly disease to “promiscuous and deviant sex” (p. 111).

The forced evacuation of Native people from White urban settlements resulted in the disease spreading up the north coast throughout the Aboriginal communities. All told, the smallpox epidemic of 1862-63 killed over 20,000 Aboriginal people in the region, the population decimated by 62% (Perry, p. 111). The smallpox epidemics had made life for Aboriginal peoples in colonial B.C. nothing short of hell, as the survivors, themselves weakened by the disease and the grieving of their
loved ones’ deaths, had to cope with little resources, lost trading partners and even lost oral histories. It is very significant to this research that this tragedy does not even get mentioned once in any of the B.C. social studies curricula.

Aboriginal populations continued to shrink until the 1920s in British Columbia and elsewhere, giving support to the new discourse that had arrived from south of the border, namely, that of the “dying race” (Perry, p. 116). This discourse also worked to justify the continued takeover of Aboriginal lands and the continued oppression through the residential school system and the Indian Act (both of which will be discussed below). In 1865, the British Columbian newspaper summed up the prevailing attitude among White settlers when it stated:

Colonization necessarily involves the contact, and practically the collision, of two races of men - one superior, and one inferior, the latter being in possession of the soil, the former gradually supplanting it. The history of every civilized country illustrates the truth of this supposition. Everywhere, in obedience to what appears to be a natural law, the uncivilized native has receded before the civilizer. (cited in Perry, 2001, p. 125)

Obviously, it was very difficult for counter-hegemonic discourses to take hold and displace these dominant racist discourses of imperialism within the settler populations of British Columbia. Renewed calls for White immigration, particularly from Britain, became more frequent. Through manipulations of generous land laws and immigration policy, many of the colonists still hoped to fashion a replica of Britain. In 1860, new land regulations gave the opportunity for “any British subject or foreigner swearing allegiance to the crown ... to stake up to 160 acres” (Barman, 1991, p. 87). In a clear demonstration of White privilege, these laws forbade Aboriginal or Chinese people from doing the same.

Not all of the White settlers were in favour of these schemes, however, as Americans who had moved to the colonies to work in the burgeoning logging and mining industries were reluctant to
welcome more Britons to the region. Nevertheless, the pro-British settlers used active promotional campaigns to attract desirable British immigrants. Yet, these efforts more or less failed. Often, single working-class men found their way to the colonies, but they were often from an ethnic group deemed undesirable by the authorities. Even worse, as far as the pro-British authorities were concerned, sometimes these single wandering male labourers were from an unwanted race.

In 1858, British Columbia underwent a massive influx of immigrants, most of them men who had come in search of gold. Jean Barman estimates that approximately 30,000 immigrants passed through B.C. that year. “British subjects suddenly found themselves jostling native-born Americans, Blacks, Chinese, Germans, Italians, Jews, and Spaniards on the streets of Victoria” (1991, p. 66). It was the arrival of the Chinese miners, most of whom had traveled north from California to pan for gold on the Fraser River, who elicited the strongest response.

In *White Canada Forever* (1978), W. Peter Ward explains that the anti-Chinese “yellow hordes” discourse was kickstarted when “Napoleon had warned of the sleeping giant of the East” (p. 6). Galvanizing “the twin themes of race war and Asian inundation” (p. 6), this discourse gained acceptance during the 1800s throughout the western world (p. 4). This view contributed to the racist Chinese stereotypes that had arrived with the White miners from California in 1858 (p. 24). Almost immediately the majority of White settlers in British Columbia accepted without question the racist view that the Chinese “would always remain an inferior, alien presence in the community” (p. 5) because they were unclean, they “thrived in overcrowded houses” (p. 7), they brought diseases wherever they go (p. 8), they were opium fiends, and they were a “grave source of lawlessness” around petty theft, gambling, and serious crime (p. 9).

Ward makes the point that these stereotypes of Chinese social life in British Columbia stemmed from the fact that the Chinese community was virtually “transient and overwhelmingly
male” (p. 18). Most were forced to leave China because of an economic crisis that had swept across many provinces during the mid-1800s. Many Chinese labourers looked to North America, or “Gold Mountain” as they called it, as their only way out of poverty. Yet, their arduous journey across the Pacific did not end on a welcoming note. In one of the most enduring statements of anti-Chinese sentiments in B.C., the White settlers “believed that the Chinese threatened the economic status of the west coast workingman – his wages, his job, and his stable economic environment” (p. 10). Even Governor James Douglas described the Chinese migrant labourers with unease when he addressed colonial officials in London in 1860:

They are certainly not a desirable class of people, as a permanent population, but are for the present useful as labourers, and, as consumers, of a revenue-paying character.


It appears as though Douglas had the Chinese below the Aboriginal people in his own version of a racial hierarchy. It is also significant that the Governor considered the Chinese labourers as only temporary residents of British Columbia.

Although the economic plight of the Chinese worker and the White worker in British Columbia were similar, the former was treated as an inferior, compared to the latter. In *The Wages of Whiteness* (1999), historian David Roediger makes a strong case that working-class Whites in the United States allowed solidarity to form along lines of race rather than social class. This was because of the “pleasures of Whiteness” that paid dividends in terms of a “public and psychological wage” rather than money (p. 12). For example, they could travel freely in any public area, could become police officers, were treated better by the same police and the judiciary, and had much better educational opportunities for their children.

Although Roediger is describing race relations in nineteenth-century America, the situation in British Columbia was much the same during the colonial period. In fact, in order to hold a position of
authority in colonial British Columbia, a man must have possessed a “respectable social background and education, preferably at one of the two established English universities, Oxford or Cambridge” (Barman, 1991, p. 84). As another example of how Whites enjoyed privilege over the Other, Britain appointed a new judge for British Columbia in 1858, Matthew Baillie Begbie. Between 1858 and 1872, Judge Begbie presided over 52 murder trials with a jury. Of the 27 who were hanged, 22 were Aboriginal while four were White and one was Chinese (ibid., p. 77). These numbers are a stark indication of what can be included in the “wages of Whiteness.” The disproportionate numbers of Aboriginal inmates in British Columbia’s prisons today indicate that a similar dynamic along racial lines is still in effect.

Authorities in the two colonies attempted to persuade more British people to emigrate from Britain. The name of the region, British Columbia, was thought to be somewhat of an incentive. As John Willinsky points out in Learning to Divide the World (1998), empire-building has often relied upon the strategy of naming things far from home as a way of making the colonizers comfortable. It is as if giving British names to a region already named by the indigenous people gives Britons the right to colonize it. For example, the major rivers in British Columbia were named Thompson, Fraser, and McKenzie, after the early fur-trading adventurers. Willinsky posits that this way of “honouring the heroes of empire” (p. 36) is a blatant example of how power and knowledge are intertwined, of how geography in general, and naming in particular, became important tools for serving the political economy of empire. Naming became an essential way of entrenching White hegemony in the minds of all, as maps of the empire were sold to the people of the empire.

Concern over how to lure more White people, especially Britons, to emigrate to the increasingly racialized colony reached a fever pitch in the 1860s. Attempts to attract middle-class British families had mostly failed, so the subsequent strategy was to lure single women from Britain
in the hope that they “would compel White men to reject the rough homosocial culture of the backwoods” and help make British Columbia a respectable society with the acceptable norms of masculinity constructions (Perry, 2001, p. 140). In 1865, the situation was that White males outnumbered White females by a 9 to 1 ratio (p. 13). The White colonists also wanted White women to become servants in the homes of the privileged so that they would not have to rely on the help of “the untrustworthy” Aboriginal or mixed-race people (p. 141). Finally, it was common opinion that in order to save the colony White women must be brought to its shores to stop “the widespread practice of White-Aboriginal conjugal relationships” (p. 144).

Between 1849 and 1871, there were four major recruitment efforts on the part of the White settlers to attract British women to British Columbia (Perry, p. 166). Many of those who did arrive became wives to White working-class men and servants to White middle-class families (p. 164). Although many accepted their fate and role in Empire, there were others who resisted the power of this discourse that described White women as “beacons of purity” and a “panacea for imperialism’s ills.” According to Perry,

[w]hite women made their own history, but not in circumstances of their own making ... Much like their male counterparts in the backwoods who tormented reformers by living a vision of White manhood that departed significantly from that promoted in mainstream nineteenth-century Anglo-American culture, White women in mid-nineteenth-century British Columbia frequently failed to live up to the roles colonial discourse assigned for them.

(2001, pp. 199-200)

The independence of the White working-class women surprised and alarmed the colonists. Some of the newcomers remained alone by choice; others left their husbands because of domestic violence, which was more or less acceptable in the imperial context; others became the partners of women or, even worse, non-White men. These acts of resistance to White feminine ideals within the imperial
discourse led some colonists to complain that the efforts to recruit White women to British Columbia had created immorality, and therefore racial pride was in decline as the imperial project had lost something precious (p. 192).

This feminine ideal is a strong indicator of how White women were gendered. In similar processes, Aboriginal people were racialized and Aboriginal women were doubly oppressed through both their gendered and racialized representations. Indeed, as Stoler points out, recent scholarship has “been able to show how discourses of sexuality at once classified colonial subjects into distinct human kinds” (1995, p. 4). The representation of Aboriginal women as sexually available is a stark symbol of the inhumanity that underlies much within the imperial discourse and its offspring, that of White supremacy. According to Barman, “[b]y the time British Columbia became a Canadian province in 1871 Aboriginal women had been almost wholly sexualized,” while their White counterparts had been constructed to be almost at the other extreme (1997/98, p. 249). Although there is plenty of evidence to demonstrate the acquiescence and support of White women for White supremacy, they were for the most part almost as powerless as the non-White population, themselves having been racialized, as well.

In the late 1860s, conflicts arose among the White men in power as to what course British Columbia should take. Some wanted British Columbia, which amalgamated Vancouver Island and the mainland into one colony in 1866, to join the young Canadian Federation to the east; others wanted British Columbia to become part of the extremely powerful American neighbour to the south; others wanted the colony to become a nation in its own right and go it alone. Once these power struggles subsided, British Columbia joined Canada in 1871. By this time, Aboriginal peoples had been relegated far below White settlers on the racial hierarchy, most of their lands having been taken
from them. The Black settlers and Chinese labourers who had found their way to the colony were also excluded from the wages of Whiteness, of course.

After Confederation the struggles multiplied in number and in intensity, as British privilege was under attack from other White groups on many fronts, especially concerning class issues like public education and working conditions. Workers from the United States, and from various ethnic groups and races increased in number and fought each other and the capitalists who employed them. The discourse of imperialism, so important in the project of building the British Empire, had to give way to another discourse, one that would bolster the nation-building efforts across the new country of Canada.

4.3 **BRITISH COLUMBIA and the NATION-BUILDING PERIOD: 1871 to the 1920s**

Many of the discourses that influenced social relations in British Columbia during the colonial period continued to exert influence after the colony transformed into a province in 1871. Some even became more influential. For instance, as smallpox continued to decimate the Aboriginal population, the *dying race* discourse was heard more frequently, invoked as it was to justify the theft of their lands. Similarly, as more and more Chinese male labourers came to the region, the *yellow hordes* discourse became commonplace. Moreover, constructions of White femininity contrasted greatly with those that represented both Aboriginal and Chinese womanhood. And the discourse of anti-miscegenation, connected as it was throughout all lands conquered by the British with its corollary, namely, White supremacy, rose to such prominence that White privilege was ensured in the new province.

There is no doubt that the majority of British colonists had little difficulty accepting the dominant discourses emanating out of Europe. Like the colonists themselves, many of the discourses
had British origins, as well. Imperialism, White supremacy, and Christianity worked in concert to
entrench the conservative ideology in the new province. Any liberal notions toward First Nations
people, such as what former Governor Douglas sometimes demonstrated, completely disappeared by
the time British Columbia became part of Canada. Any idea about land treaties between the races was
dismissed as ridiculous. For the White settlers, land represented status, wealth, and power.
Eventually, this notion attracted enough immigrants from the desired background: by 1901, 60% of
British Columbians were of British ancestry, while the First Nations population had dropped to 16%,
the smallpox epidemic obviously being a factor (Barman, 1991, p. 379).

In *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1991),
Benedict Anderson locates the nation as the key marker around which identity is formed. Anderson’s
analysis is international in scope and focuses on how those in authority generate national images. For
my purposes, these representations became powerful markers of status and respectability in the
fledgling nation. The British colonizers, as well as others who wanted in on the wages of Whiteness,
joined the chorus of nationalism that swept across the country in the 1880s. Soon enough, the Union
Jack, more or less on loan from Britain, became associated with Canada through its representation on
the flag.

In the Canadian context, and in British Columbia in particular, nation-building was still part
of empire-building. (This connection is clearly evident in the early versions of the B.C. social studies
curriculum, discussed in the next chapter.) This should not be too surprising, given the long history
Britain has had throughout the region. Yet, according to Cole Harris (1997), the type of “Britishness”
that appeared in British Columbia was different from anywhere else – those who could claim
membership came from a variety of backgrounds such as the British Isles, Ontario, the Maritimes,
and the United States (p. 263). As Simon Gikandi states in *Maps of Englishness* (1996), the
imposition of the English language was instrumental in creating a "false totality" of "British" people. Furthermore, although British colonists had already used legislation and education to enshrine Whiteness within the region, once British Columbia joined Confederation, both were overwhelmingly effective as hegemonic devices. These instruments of domination, the law and the school, gave support to a conservative ideology that worked to join White people across class lines, excluding others in the process.

4.3.1 British Columbia, Nation-Building, and Social Class

Historian Eric Hobsbawm argues in *The Age of Empire: 1876-1914* (1987) that the entire imperialist project was part of "the conquest of the globe by the capitalist economy" (p.14). Hobsbawm explicates the process by which the "invented traditions" of monuments, ceremonies and education are historically-constructed. Education in the western nations, according to Hobsbawm, positions middle-class ideals as the norm. This creates a contradiction, because middle-class sensibilities require a stratum of people to exploit, either in terms of labour or land or both. The racial hierarchies that were popular with European social theorists in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were the perfect accompaniment to capitalism’s search for labour. Beginning with explanations of human difference as essentialist categories, European race theory evolved into social scientific conceptions of race as a form of status. In other words, to spread the imperialist project across the globe, the racial hierarchies were exactly what the capitalists required. These imperialist racial theories ensured that there was a working class large enough to fulfill the needs of both the nation and the empire.

There was another motivation for the colonization of other peoples’ lands, one related to capitalism and notions of hierarchy, of course, but also involving the class relations of Europe. In a
particularly telling passage, Robert J. C. Young (1995) paraphrases the French linguist Ernest Renan who wrote in 1871 that "a nation that fails to colonize is irrevocably doomed to socialism, to a war between the rich and poor" (p. 69). It is quite possible that British capitalists in the new province thought that the exploitation of a new labouring class, one that couldn’t resist as effectively, would further both their profits and the aims of nation-building. Moreover, the restlessness of the working classes in Europe was quelled by the psychological wages of Whiteness. As Young repeatedly points out, European elites made sure that working-class Whites understood that they were not on the lowest rung of the human ladder: the Other was made into a savage or barbaric "spectacle" through carnivals and museums. This campaign appears to have been extremely successful. Yet, these same inferior beings were in great demand for capitalism’s labour requirements.

Migrant labour was specifically used for nation-building purposes, as well as for "the consolidation of political and economic power by the Anglo-Saxons and Scots in English Canada" (Ng, 1993, p. 55). When British Columbia joined Confederation in 1871, one of the conditions politicians in British Columbia demanded from their federal counterparts in Ottawa was the construction of a railway across the country. Despite protests from British Columbians, the federal government allowed migrant labourers from China to be brought to Canada in order to complete this "herculean" task (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 7). Roxana Ng (1993) has described the indentured labour system that resulted in thousands of Chinese men being brought to Canada to build the railway system in the 1870s and 1880s, a project that would enable the new Canadian nation to expand from the Atlantic to the Pacific. In order to maintain White hegemony in Canada, the Chinese men were forbidden to bring their wives or children. Moreover, they were not allowed to engage in "sexual relations with White women, for fear of spreading the ‘yellow menace’" (p. 56). Apparently, White authorities on both sides of the 49th parallel approved of anti-miscegenation sentiments.
Anti-Asian sentiments, however, were strongest in British Columbia (Leier in Laut, 2003; Barman, 1991). White labourers in particular feared for their own well-being by competing against Chinese labourers. Yet, some capitalists were aware that profits could be significantly increased by pitting one race or ethnic group against another. For instance, the extremely virulent anti-unionist, Robert Dunsmuir, ran most of the coal mines on Vancouver Island in the 1870s with his sons. He was also adeptly opportunistic in exploiting White working-class racism. According to Barman (1991):

> The Dunsmuirs' total concern with profit extended to their treatment of employees ... Dunsmuir & Sons sought workers least likely to rock the boat. Chinese were hired at the lowest possible wages ... Knowing no English, newcomers could not communicate with other employees to fight against poor working conditions.

(p. 121)

One example of the Dunsmuir attitude to profit by exploitation will illuminate the complex tensions between the White (mainly) British capitalists and the different groups making up the working class. According to labour historian Bryan Palmer (1992), when the Chinese miners tried to improve their situation through collective action, they received no support from their White colleagues (p. 123). Moreover, when management demanded increased productivity, the White miners decided to use the Chinese as “beasts of burden” to increase their own pay cheques. This arrangement, which was nothing short of a Faustian agreement between White labour and White capital, was doomed to be temporary.

As class conflict between these unlikely bed-fellows erupted in the mines during the late 1870s, Dunsmuir hired the Chinese to do the bulk of the mining. This relentless drive for profit resulted in the Chinese being branded as scabs, a label that had the effect of fragmenting worker solidarity for over half a century in British Columbia. The Dunsmuirs continued to exploit White racism and Chinese need by increasing the number of Chinese miners each time the White miners
attempted work stoppages throughout the 1880s. In 1883, the Knights of Labour came to the B.C. mines to help stop the Chinese workers from doing “White man’s work,” invoking what David Roediger (1991) and others refer to as a herrenvolk labour system, especially common in antebellum America (p. 84). Fortunately for the Dunsmuirs, the discourse of White supremacy seemed to blind White labour groups to class concerns.

Even as the trade union movement grew across Canada during this period, most White workers were opposed to Chinese memberships in the unions. White labour blamed the Chinese workers for their decreasing standard of living rather than put the blame where it belonged, namely, on White capital. (This same dynamic exists in contemporary British Columbia.) When Robert Dunsmuir’s son James became the premier of B.C. in 1900, “his mines continued to maintain their justly deserved reputation as the most dangerous in the world, with a death rate of three to four times that of elsewhere in the British Empire” (Barman, 1991, p. 122).

An estimated 15,000 to 17,000 Chinese came to British Columbia from either China or San Francisco between 1881 and 1884 (Barman, 1991, p. 107; Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 7). Most came to do the dangerous work of building the Canadian Pacific Railway. When it was finally completed in 1885, connecting British Columbia to the rest of Canada, the railway immediately became the great symbol of national pride. Yet, it is sadly ironic that the people who laboured to make the railway a reality, with significant numbers dying in the process, became the victims of racist legislation almost from the day the railway was completed. The discourse of White supremacy aided in the passing of legislation that would force Chinese immigrants to pay a head tax as they arrived in Canada. (I will discuss this more fully in a subsequent section.) Those Chinese workers who re-entered the labour market with the completion of the railway in the mid-1880s had to contend with the Knights of Labor, whose “history” on the west coast is … interwoven with a racist working-class attack on Oriental workers” (Palmer,
1992, p. 124). The appearance of a different labour group in British Columbia caused an even bigger ruckus, especially among the owners of big business.

In the year 1906, B.C. capitalists got a serious scare: the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), sometimes called the Wobblies or One Big Union, moved up from Chicago and became active in British Columbia. According to historian Mark Leier (2003), the IWW “fought for immediate improvements in working conditions and organized visible minorities and recent immigrants, women, and ‘unskilled’ workers” (in Laut, p. iii). This was the first significant appearance of the socialist ideology in British Columbia. Moreover, the IWW seemed to be an extreme threat because of the radical insight they had developed – that race should not be an issue in who can join a union – thereby negating the best strategy capitalists in British Columbia had for increasing profit margins.

This ideological clash between conservatism and socialism was not taken lightly by the capitalists. IWW members practiced non-violent civil disobedience; the B.C. government responded by removing the strikers at rifle point (Laut, 1912, p. 31), putting many away in the “overflowing prisons.” According to Leier (2003), another common scenario was “[w]hen workers resisted, capitalists hired thugs or had the government send in the police to smash strikes and heads” (in Laut, p. vi). Even the middle class in British Columbia was becoming concerned at the presence of the growing working class. After all, the workers “did not share its ethnicity, race, views or mores” (ibid., p. vii).

Support for the crushing of the Wobblies came from eastern Canadian capitalists and its pro-British middle class, both groups being terrified at the prospect of losing power to an organization led by “uneducated” eastern Europeans who also spoke of the rights of Asians, Aboriginals, and Blacks. After the IWW led a strike of 8,000 railway workers in 1912, the capitalists used all their power,
including hegemonic instruments like the media and the school, coupled with the physical force of the police and strike-breaking "thugs," to stamp out this radical threat that attempted to join the working classes across race and ethnicity (Leier in Laut, 2003). Shortly thereafter, the IWW and its progressive agenda for class over race had all but disappeared in British Columbia. It would be quite some time before a worker-based radical ideology turned into a sweeping social movement in British Columbia.

4.3.2 Conservatism, Race and the Law: 1871 until the 1920s

It was during the nation-building period that the Canadian government officially racialized people, conferring varying amounts of privilege and oppression to each person on the sole basis of race. Proof of this racializing process can be found in the categories used in the 1901 Census of Canada, whereby for the first time each individual was identified by their race: "w" for White, "r" for red, "y" for yellow, "b" for black. In accordance with White supremacist conservatism, mixed-race people were to be classified as any race except White, reminiscent of the one-drop rule used in similarly racist American classification schemas. In the making of the category of pure White, the state is shown to be complicit in the construction of race and the cultivation of racist attitudes in its nation-building project.

The power of the White supremacist discourse led to institutionalized racism written into Canadian law during the early years of the twentieth century. Once the census gave some authorization to racial categories, other hegemonic devices went into operation to enshrine White supremacy and further entrench the conservative ideology. In Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada from 1900-1950 (1999), Constance Backhouse explains how this process progressed:

[T]he designation of race by colour was ubiquitous in early twentieth-century Canada. Everyone - from novelists and poets to politicians, public commentators,
and historians - commonly portrayed racialized peoples in the luminous hues catalogued by the census officials. (p. 4)

The entire weight of the power brokers in Canadian society was in favour of setting up a White-first nation. Yet, even White was a contested term. For instance, several decades after Confederation, many British Columbians still considered White to mean having British rather than European lineage. In 1911, a school board member visited the school in the Swedish-Canadian settlement of Silverdale. In full hearing of the children, the teachers was asked, “Have you no White children in your school, only Swedes?” (Howard, 1992, p. 94).

The social construction of Whiteness is also clearly demonstrated by the example of the Kanakas, a people who came to the west coast of North America from Hawaii in the 1800s. For the most part, the thousand or so Kanakas were men, coming over either as “seamen, fur trade labourers, or adventurers” (Barman, 1997/98b, p. 12). In the United States, the Kanakas were considered to be Black people and, as such, were treated in the same manner as Blacks. White racism in the United States pushed the Kanakas to move north to British Columbia, joining with those who had arrived straight from Hawaii. The decision proved to be a good one as the Kanakas “possessed the same civil rights as did White males” (p. 14).

Aboriginal and Chinese people had lost the right to vote in federal elections in 1874. In British Columbia, both groups were disenfranchised in 1872 (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 7). The Japanese were blocked from voting in provincial elections in 1895, while Indians lost their voting rights in 1907. Laws specifically pertaining to Black people were few because most left British Columbia and returned to the United States after the Civil War and the abolishment of slavery in 1865, perceiving the racial climate to have improved for them (Magocsi, 1999, p. 144).

By the end of the 1800s, most full-blooded Aboriginal people had become wards of the Canadian government and were living on reserves. In British Columbia, politicians even refused to
acknowledge Aboriginal Title and the responsibility to engage in treaty negotiations, despite the contents of the Royal Proclamation of 1763 and the British North America Act of 1867 (McKee, 1996). Under the guise of assimilation, the Indian Act of 1876 prohibited the land’s original inhabitants from engaging in any business without the consent of the government-appointed Indian agent, who was always a White man. More importantly, the Indian Act took the responsibility of educating Aboriginal children away from their parents, something that would be totally unacceptable among conservative ideologues if the families to be separated were White. A variation of the dying race discourse appeared – *kill the Indian to save the man* – in the name of developing a restricted form of assimilation.

Although assimilation was the federal government’s rationale for its racist policies, in effect, Aboriginal people could only expect to reach the bottom rungs of the Canadian social and economic ladders (Milloy, 1999). Besides the poor quality of education in the residential school system, which will be discussed further below, public attitudes toward miscegenation and other examples of systemic and institutional racism ensured that the racial hierarchy was maintained. Amendments to the Indian Act in 1884, encouraged by Christian missionaries, made the practice of traditional ceremonies such as the potlatch of the Northwest Coast nations illegal (Dickason, 1992, p. 286). All of this was just the beginning of the troubles Aboriginal people would face in the new nation called Canada and the new province of British Columbia. Olive Dickason explains:

Toward the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, missionaries were also campaigning to remove totem poles as symbols of an undesirable belief system and way of life. Not only was their continued presence regarded as encouraging resistance to the adoption of Christianity, but the 'give-away' aspect of potlatches was held to be incompatible with Western economic practices and inimical to the concept of private property.

(p. 286)
The church-state alliance within the conservative ideology of early Canada worked to thwart the original inhabitants of the land to maintain their cultural practices; indeed, even their languages and their familial relationships were under attack. In 1927, further amendments to the Indian Act forbade Aboriginal people from obtaining legal services to deal with the land question. After all, a major objective of the imperial and nation-building projects was to dispossess indigenous peoples of their land. Common attitudes were such that if laws were required to aid in this endeavour, then so be it.

The common-sense racism of many White Canadians was now legitimated more than ever, enabling the political process to institutionalize racism with little public outcry. The yellow hordes discourse now included a patriarchal lens since significant numbers of Chinese women had entered British Columbia during the early 1880s. In a similar process that portrayed Aboriginal women as sexually available, “[a] further assumption common in British Columbia ... was that most Chinese women were prostitutes and concubines” (Ward, 1978, p. 8). Debates around creating an annual Chinese head tax in British Columbia began in 1872. Although it was defeated in the B.C. Legislature, the *British Columbian* newspaper added to the discourse:

> [The tax] is based on the assumption that the Chinese do not now contribute their fair quota toward public revenue ... The Caucasian laborer keeps a house, raises a family, and does his part toward maintaining all institutions of a civilized Christian community. The Mongolian laborer emerges from his sardine box in the morning, consumes his pound of rice and puts in his day’s work, baiting naught from his earnings, save the veriest pittance he subsists on. No wife and children to feed and clothe and educate, no church to maintain, no Sunday clothes to buy, he saves nearly all he earns ... and finally carries with him all his hoardings home to China.

(cited in Morton, p. 37)

Both discourses, White supremacy and Christianity, are intertwined in the above quote. With the authoritative support of the newspapers, this racist discursive formation eventually resulted in the provincial government imposing a $10 head tax on all Chinese, as well as denying them the
opportunity to purchase Crown lands in 1884. This was followed by the federal government imposing a $50 head tax on all Chinese entering Canada after January 1st 1886, or as soon as the Chinese railway workers were no longer needed (Tan & Roy, 1885, p. 8). Some Chinese labourers became the victims of White working-class racism when rioters attacked land clearing crews in 1887 (ibid., p. 10). In 1904, the authorities raised the head tax to $500, virtually ensuring that immigration from east Asia was brought to a standstill. In the early 1880s, the Chinese population was over 20% that of the White population, shrinking to less than 6% in 1921 (Ward, 1978, p. 15). The Chinese Exclusion Law of 1923 shut the door completely to Chinese immigration to Canada. Ironically, this racist act took effect on July 1st, leading a generation of Chinese-Canadians to call what others called Dominion Day or Canada Day the poignant “Humiliation” Day (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 13).

The Chinese were not the only group that White British Columbians tried to oppress through violence and legislation. In the fall of 1907, Vancouver was the scene of an extremely violent riot of mostly working-class Whites in which the victims were Asians of Chinese, Japanese and Indian descent. Under the moniker of the Asiatic Exclusion League, the White workers paraded through Asian neighbourhoods, “singing ‘Rule Britannia’ and shouting anti-Oriental tirades” before they wreaked havoc upon the area (Barman, 1991, p. 146).

British Columbia’s unique political situation during this period baffled the elites of eastern Canada. There was more tolerance toward Asian immigration in Ontario than in British Columbia. Capitalists across the country wanted the radical IWW out of British Columbia, the only province in which this anti-racist, socialist organization had appeared. In 1912, the Toronto-based Saturday Night magazine sent a popular historian and novelist, Agnes C. Laut, out west to British Columbia to investigate and write about why these two problems seemed almost simultaneously out of hand. Her five articles were so popular that the magazine reprinted them in 1913 as a 50-page pamphlet entitled
The I.W.W. and the Hindu. In the articles, Laut displays much ignorance about labour and the ways of capital, as well as issues of race, which was probably commonplace at that time (Leier, cited in Laut, 2003).

Laut’s oft repeated phrase “Am I My Brother’s Keeper?” was frequently heard at the time she wrote her essays in 1912, a term used to “criticize socialism and the political left in general” (Leier cited in Laut, p. viii). This was an example of privileged conservatives fighting against radicalism through one of its more powerful hegemonic devices, namely, the corporate media. Throughout the fifty pages, several discourses are repeatedly used to turn Canadians against the anti-racist IWW. Consider the following example. After pointing out to readers, “British Columbia pays the highest wages for skilled and unskilled labor in Canada. Yet labor agitation is the most acute in that province” (p. 23), Laut suggests that the saloons take much of the higher wages (p. 24), while the rest goes into the pockets of I.W.W union leaders (p. 33). Her use of the corrupt unions discourse is ubiquitous.

In general, Laut is representative of eastern Canadians in her ambivalence toward Indian immigration to Canada. She praises the moral superiority of British Canadians over Indians, stating to her readers: “Thousands, hundreds of thousands of children in India age from 9 to 12 are wives actually living with their husbands; and the husbands are in many cases from 30 to 80 years of age; unions, that Anglo-Saxons for physical reasons regard as criminal” (p. 51). Yet, earlier in the essay she equates the Indian people with a lower class of White Canadian: “The vices of the Hindu are no worse than the vices of the low Whites” (p. 47). By using the term “low Whites,” it is unclear whether Laut is referring to members of the working classes or if she means Canadians whose lineage is from the less desirable parts of Europe such as Italy and eastern Europe. In any case, the vast majority of southern and eastern Europeans living in Canada would have found work as labourers.
Throughout the entire set of articles, the *Saturday Night* historian cum journalist appears to be saying that the best of the Asians may be on a par with the worst of the Whites, namely, the radical elements who belong to the IWW. It may be mere speculation, but the conservative Laut’s reasoning seems to be how to solve all of British Columbia’s race and class problems with one fell swoop. In other words, if the “low whites” are the dreaded union organizers, then why doesn’t British Columbia allow Indian immigrants to solve the labour shortage problem there and have a better chance of ridding themselves of the radical labour element?

These eastern Canadian solutions fell on deaf B.C. ears, however. Indian passengers on the ship the *Komagata Maru* were denied permits to step onto Vancouver’s shore in 1914, despite Commonwealth laws to the contrary (Barman, 1991, p. 147). Provincial politicians also lobbied the federal government to eliminate the Japanese from the fishing industry in the 1920s, an action supported by White and Aboriginal fishermen alike.

These social problems that seemed to be unique to British Columbia, at least in the Canadian context, during the first two decades of the twentieth century appear to still have a lingering effect in the province. Although labour unions have long abandoned any exclusion based on race (Palmer, 1992), there seems to be a profound mistrust between working-class Whites and Asian immigrants. How else to explain the angry White reactions to the four boatloads of poor Chinese migrants (Klein, 1999) during the summer of 1999?

All of the examples of institutional racism that occurred during Canada’s nation-building phase were, for the most part, supported by the elites of British Columbia. According to Cole Harris (1997), this “small group of White, Protestant men, most of whom knew each other, who dominated the government, the courts, the churches, and the commercial economy” found British Columbia
during this period “exceedingly agreeable” (p. 158). It is no wonder that politics in the B. C. Legislature was focused on maintaining British privilege in the province.

4.3.3 Party Politics and Race in B. C. During the Nation-building Years

The authoritarian leadership of James Douglas eventually gave way to a representative legislative assembly, still based in Victoria (Barman, 1991, p. 60). After joining Confederation, political tensions around entrepreneurial opportunities continued to arise between the Britons living on Vancouver Island and the Canadians living on the mainland, especially after 1876 when the vote was awarded to all White men, regardless of social class. Almost every B.C. politician from the 1860s until the 1910s acquired huge tracts of land and wealth through their political office (ibid., p. 127).

The British men who governed British Columbia did not belong to political parties until 1903 when voters became “tired of being governed by a small clique” (ibid., pp. 373-374). The political fray in British Columbia was dominated by the Conservatives and the Liberals, two parties who saw their main role as promoting the discourse of capitalism. The much smaller Socialist Party of British Columbia, by contrast, used its few MLAs to persuade the government to lower the length of the work day to eight hours (ibid., p. 213).

The yellow hordes discourse was so pronounced in the west coast province that all of the parties sought to further oppress Asian people. This discourse that painted Asians as alien, inferior, and unassimilable was so prevalent that “between 1878 and 1899 the B.C. Legislature passed 26 statutes aimed at restricting or preventing the settlement of Asians” (Palmer, 1991, p. 9). The suffragist movement in British Columbia exploited White racism as well, claiming that White women could help eradicate the “menace” of the “occupation of these shores by hordes of dark-skinned
immigrants from the Far East” if only they were given the vote (Howard, 1992, p. 93). In 1917, White women were enfranchised in British Columbia. Women’s rights activists, such as Helena Gutteridge, called for jobs in the service industries to be filled by White women rather than anyone of Asian extraction (ibid., p. 113).

It was not until the 1930s that the leftist Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF), the forerunner of the New Democratic Party (NDP), sought justice for women and men regardless of race. Yet, when they took a position on enfranchising Asians, the Liberals exploited this as anti-CCF propaganda during the 1935 federal election, revealing the depth of anti-Asian hostility (Palmer, 1991, p. 11). These racist actions of the federal Liberal party also indicate that the Enlightenment discourses of emancipation and democracy were not yet powerful enough to dislodge overt institutional racism in the mostly conservative new nation of Canada. The irony is that the political party leading the charge against the CCF’s progressive position on Asian enfranchisement went under the liberal label. (The B.C. Liberal party today is similarly misnamed.)

This discussion has demonstrated that race, racialism and racial hierarchies are social constructions that have had immense influence in Canada’s nation-building period. Why was the agenda to position the British into privilege so successful? It is easy to point to military might, missionary zeal, and political clout. But to really understand how the White supremacist racial hierarchies came to be seen as natural and normal, how they became part of White hegemony, we must look at one of imperialism’s greatest instruments of domination: we must examine the role of the public education system.
4.3.4 Race, Nation-building and the Role of Education in British Columbia

It is not surprising that in the social context of British Columbia, beginning in the colonial period and continuing through the nation-building phase, the conservative ideology with its key features of White supremacy and capitalism, became entrenched and enshrined in all of its public institutions. Public education was no exception, of course, as these discourses had a massive effect on what was going on in the schools. In turn, the schools reflected what was expected of them, namely, to inculcate youth from various backgrounds into accepting these social hierarchies as the way things should be.

4.3.4.1 Education During B.C.'s Colonial Period

In 1851, while the officers' progeny were schooled in British-style private boarding schools, Douglas requested the construction of a couple of elementary schools “run by individuals of strictly religious principles” and offering “a good sound English education and nothing more” for the “children of the labouring and poorer classes” (Barman, 1995, p. 16). This was the first attempt in British Columbia to usurp the institution of the school in order to help construct and maintain British privilege within the day-to-day social relations of everyone who lived within the two colonies.

The gold rush of 1858 caused a huge influx of White and Chinese people into the region. It also resulted in intense public debates regarding educational prospects for the younger generation. The missionaries called for denominational schools, an idea that ran into much opposition from many of the settlers, both new and old (Barman, 1995, p. 21). Issues of race and social class dominated most of these debates. The schools supervised by the Anglican Church “resisted pressure by White American Southerners settled in Victoria to exclude the offspring of ‘colored’ families” from attending (ibid., p. 20). White families who could not afford the fees to send their children to school
called for free public education, a position that the conservative Governor Seymour was against. Seymour had “the powerful support of a class-based denominational system of schooling” (ibid., p. 23). As the colony entered Confederation in 1871, there were still no free, non-denominational schools in British Columbia.

4.3.4.2 Education During the Nation-building Period

As Canada turned from a British colony into a nation in its own right, people had been simultaneously racialized and placed in a stratified social class system that was mostly based on race and ethnicity. British Protestants (male) students most likely felt that their particular story was told by teachers in a fair manner. After all, curriculum was also reinforced by the discourses of White supremacy and Christianity and their representations in media and in law, making it extremely difficult to articulate counter-hegemonic discourses. For students who were not of a British background, schooling and the curriculum gave them a completely different experience. First Nations people, as well as the Chinese, Indians, Irish, Jews, Italians, Slavic Europeans among others, were virtually absent from the content being taught across Canada.

Moreover, labourers and labour struggles among various ethnic and racial backgrounds were rarely represented in the classroom. The reasons the elites allowed a free public school system for the progeny of labourers was so that “working-class children could be better equipped to contribute to national prosperity and social harmony” (Axelrod, 1997, p. 110). In other words, it was seen as a potential vehicle to decrease labour strife, inculcate future workers with the right set of values, and satisfy the needs of capitalism. The elites believed the public school could be used to transform the ethnically diverse working classes from potential rabble rousers into useful and skilled labourers in line with capitalism and its social hierarchies through what became known as vocational schooling.
“In British Columbia, ... vocational schooling was designed to promote ‘socially efficient citizenship,’ and to stream its lower-class students into menial and manual labour.” (T. Dunn cited in Axelrod, p. 111). This should not be surprising, according to Roxana Ng (1993), because “in Canada formal education has always served as an assimilationist tool” for the purposes of maintaining the status quo (p. 54).

In 1872, the B.C. government opened elementary schools that were free, apparently non-denominational, and based on the school systems in eastern Canada (Barman, 1991, p. 103). By the end of the 1800s, however, there were only four secondary schools and no universities (p. 127). Moreover, there was no such thing as teacher training in British Columbia until 1901 (Barman, 1995, p. 189). Significantly, all of the province’s teachers during its first fifty years were White.

The residential school system for Aboriginal children appeared in the late nineteenth century. As I mentioned earlier, this form of education was created under the auspices of assimilating them into mainstream Canadian society. Jean Barman states that this system was flawed right from its outset, as the policy was “not for assimilation but for inequality” (1995, p. 57). A lack of understanding of Aboriginal cultures, inadequate funding and inferior instruction doomed this educational project to failure. The state’s policy on Aboriginal education “made possible no other goal than Aboriginal peoples’ absolute marginalization from Canadian life – a goal schools achieved with remarkable success” (ibid., p. 75).

John Milloy (1999) outlines the philosophy employed to set up the residential school system and maintain it from 1879 until 1920. The underpinnings for this educational project were based on biblical interpretations of the White supremacist discourse. According to Milloy, the Canadian government wanted Native people to assimilate, at least as farm workers and domestic servants, because they were fearful of violent conflict and “Indian wars,” such as was occurring in the United
States. The bands initially agreed to this form of education “as a method of mediating between
themselves and the White communities growing around them” (Milloy, 1999, p. 26). This apparent
agreement did not last long, however, as the schools embarked on a philosophy of “kill the Indian to
save the man.” The moral support of the various Christian churches did nothing to alleviate
Aboriginal fears around what these schools were doing to their children. Even if White authorities
had some good intentions, the mandate to rid Aboriginal languages and traditions led to a culture of
violence within the schools in which the pupils had no one to protect them – parents were forbidden
to visit their own children. At best, government intentions were to train Aboriginal people to
assimilate into mainstream society as members of the lowest part of the working classes. White anti-
miscegenist attitudes would ensure that Natives would know their place and that White supremacy
would be maintained.

The residential school system was not the only education institution that worked to entrench
racial hierarchies. Timothy Stanley (1995) describes how “[s]tate-controlled schooling was integral to
the construction of supremacist hegemony in B.C.” (p. 39). As the labour of both First Nations people
and Chinese people became less necessary for both nation-building and capitalism, both groups
became even more socially marginalized. Chinese students became segregated from other students, as
well.

By segregating students according to ‘race,’ schools insulated White students
from the common humanism of non-whites, thus facilitating their indoctrination
in the ideologies of dominance: imperialism and racism. Meanwhile, racist notions
of innate differences among whites, Asians and First Nations people justified
school segregation. (Stanley, 1995, p. 41).

The school system became a major source of indoctrination in White supremacist racist ideology,
leading Stanley to conclude that the notion that British Columbia was a “White man’s province” was
standard fare in its classrooms by 1925 (p. 50). Thus, the school became a most powerful tool for the creation of the Other, further entrenching racial hierarchies and the imperial project in the minds of White British Columbia. From this discussion, it is clear that from its inception the school was an instrumental hegemonic device in the service of a pro-White conservative ideology in British Columbia and remained so throughout Canada’s nation-building period.

4.4 Conclusions

This chapter attempts to show how White settlers were able to impose a White supremacist conservative ideology on the region now called British Columbia. Shortly after the fur-trade began, certain discourses arose that gave power to the new arrivals over the region’s original inhabitants. The major discourse, of course, was imperialism, one effect of which was to make the British newcomers feel they had the right to re-name many of the geographical features with British names, either after heroes or after places back home in Britain.

Imperialism was supported by a powerful discursive formation that included White supremacist racial hierarchies, capitalism, Christianity, and patriarchy, of course, a set that was common throughout the imperial world. In the context of British Columbia, specific threats required specific discourses to thwart them. These included discourses of the dying race, the yellow hordes, and corrupt unions.

British authority used several powerful hegemonic devices to maintain British privilege. These included the law, the media, the political system, and various forms of schooling, including the residential system for Aboriginal children. All of these institutions only worked in the English language, of course, which was as powerful a tool for domination over the Other as any. Overt force and violence were used to quell both Aboriginal resistance and working-class resistance, especially
when the anti-racist radical movement posed by the International Workers of the World almost took hold in British Columbia. As well, the tragedy of the small pox epidemic that decimated Aboriginal populations in the 1860s aided in the imposition of a British-supremacist conservatism on this part of the world.

The focus of this research will now be on public education in British Columbia, specifically looking at the ways issues of race and class, as well as democracy and citizenship, have been represented in the social studies curriculum throughout its evolution from the 1920s until the present. The data also includes an analysis of the ways that veteran social studies teachers think about these same issues. Political ideology is the main analytical concept in this analysis.

The first of the three data analysis chapters is chapter 5. It is an examination of the ways the curriculum represents issues of race and the ways that the veteran teachers think about issues of race and multiculturalism. Chapter 6 will do a similar analysis with the central category being social class. The final chapter of data analysis is chapter 7. This chapter will determine how political ideology has influenced both the curriculum developers and the veteran teachers in the ways that democracy and citizenship are considered. Throughout the entire analysis, it will be assumed that the school and its curriculum do not exist in a societal vacuum, that they reflect the values of the surrounding dominant society. At the same time, it is also understood that the school is a site of competing ideologies, as is the case with the surrounding society. The autonomy of teachers suggests that it is quite possible for some of the more progressive-minded ones to help develop effective, counter-hegemonic discourses in the classroom. Further speculation leads to the possibility that some of these discourses might one day form into a discursive formation capable of fostering resistance to the oppression existing within a society dominated by a combination of the liberal and conservative ideologies.
Chapter 5  Race: From Unabashed White Supremacy to Insidious Eurocentrism

The larger framework within which this project rests, namely, the representation of the Other in social studies education, requires a few words of clarification. I use the term *representation* in the same way that Cameron McCarthy describes it in *After the Canon* (1993). It is not merely about the “presence or absence of images of minorities” in the curriculum (p. 295); rather, this usage of the term involves how “power resides in the specific arrangement and deployment of subjectivity,” in both the formal curriculum and in the thoughts of the teachers. I interpret McCarthy’s use of the term *subjectivity* to refer to the ways in which the ruling relations are placed within text-mediated social relations that work to subjugate certain groups to the benefit of others. In other words, how marginalized groups are represented has all to do with relations, namely, how they are represented compared to representations of White, Christian, privileged groups.

Before any analysis of how the social studies classroom represents issues of race can proceed, a theoretical discussion of racial discourses, forms of multiculturalism, and their connections to political ideology is required. Theories around issues of race and racism are abundant because of the salience of these issues in the past and in present-day global relations. In North America, intense racial issues are not subsiding; rather, they seem to be on the increase (Orlowski, 2001a). Other than the claim by some conservatives that matters of race have been dealt with, the vast majority of scholars agree that there is much progressive work that still needs to be done (Omi & Winant, 1993).

5.1  Ideology and Racial Discourses

In *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness* (1993), Ruth Frankenberg describes the three competing discourses on issues of race and ethnicity in North America
since the late 1700s. In action, each of these discourses further entrenches or destabilizes political ideologies. Frankenberg calls these three discourses essentialist, colour-blind, and race-cognizance.

The first discourse in Frankenberg’s taxonomy, which she refers to as essentialist, ascribes an overall superiority to a race because of a supposed biological birthright. Ever since the European imperialist agenda formed, essentialist racial hierarchies developed that positioned Europeans on top of all other racial groups. As I described in chapter 4, this was clearly the mainstream hegemonic discourse in British Columbia as it turned from a colony into a newly formed nation. In British Columbia, White ethnic groups were also positioned in relation to each other, with the British almost always atop the others. This discourse influenced European attitudes toward each other and the racially marginalized Other, eventually forming a system of social relations that privileged White people at the expense of everyone else. The essentialist discourse dominated public debates in Canada throughout the colonial period and its nation-building phase. This discourse can be seen in Agnes Laut’s articles for *Saturday Night Magazine* (1912) which in 1913 was published in a booklet format entitled *Am I My Brother’s Keeper?*

The essentialist discourse, steeped in the entrenched social hierarchies of conservatism, justified the theft of Aboriginal peoples’ lands and the enslavement of African people, destroying much of these indigenous cultures in the process. According to Frankenberg, there was no reason for a White person to hide racist attitudes during this period because it was in keeping with the norm. In other words, the essentialist discourse had a normalizing and regulating effect that enabled White supremacy to go, for the most part, unchallenged. Aspects of this discourse were present everywhere Europeans set out to conquer other people during the empire-building period of European expansionism (Young, 1995; Stoler, 1997).
The second racial discourse in Frankenberg’s taxonomy is referred to as colour-blind. Its major tenet is that beneath the skin, everyone is equal. This core assumption was born out of the Enlightenment; yet, it wasn’t until around 1948 that it rose to prominence, primarily with the *United Nations Declaration of Human Rights*. The colour-blind discourse and meritocracy work in concert to form the underpinnings of the overall public education assessment of students. In other words, an individual’s lack of success in school can be explained by a lack of talent or work ethic, or both. In North America, the colour-blind discourse is still the most dominant one in the mainstream media, although it is currently being challenged by an angry White backlash on the right as well as a more race-sensitive discourse coming from the left.

The third discourse, according to Frankenberg, emerged out of feminist debates by socialist feminists and scholars of colour during the 1980s. Called *race-cognizance*, it is a reaction to both of the other more dominant discourses, acknowledging that the amount of privilege or oppression people receive is dependent on their skin colour as well as other factors such as their social class and gender. People who adhere to this perspective consider the colour-blind discourse based within the liberal individualist paradigm to be power-blind because it overlooks the effects of historical factors and societal structures and institutions. It has been unable to displace the colour-blind discourse, however, as the dominant discourse in public debates today. The main reason for this is that this discourse stresses society’s structural and institutional inequities as being major root causes of racism, sexism, and poverty. In other words, the elite feel the most threatened by the ideas within the race-cognizance discourse.

In chapter 4, I mentioned that the labour organization called the International Workers of the World (IWW) first appeared in British Columbia in 1906 (Leier, 1990). Although the IWW did not bring with it the race-cognizance discourse per se, their belief that all members of the working class
regardless of race should receive equal treatment in the one big union represented a massive threat to
those positioned in the upper echelons of White privilege. Wobbly radicals wanted to change normal
race relations in British Columbia and across North America. They understood that racism was an
obstacle that needed to be overcome in order to realize a society in which working families would
enjoy job and social security, as well as a better standard of living. They also understood that the
alternatives allowed the capitalist class to exploit White working-class racism to further their own
interests at the expense of all workers in much the same way that Robert Dunsmuir had done with
Vancouver Island coal miners. The race cognizance discourse, which calls for institutional and social
change, is most closely related to justice-oriented conceptions of citizenship and the radical ideology. I
will discuss this connection further in chapter 7.

This taxonomy is also an approximation of the discourses describing racial and ethnic relations
in North America today, of course. Yet, it serves to illuminate the power within these hegemonic and
counter-hegemonic discourses, especially around issues of race relations, in the past as well as the
present. Up until the end of the Second World War, White Christian supremacy remained unchallenged
because of the essentialist discourse based on European race "science." Not surprisingly, conservatism
was the dominant ideology. Since then, hegemony around White privilege in North America has been
strengthened by the liberal colour-blind discourse and its offspring, meritocracy.

Throughout most Western nations, the liberal ideology is dominant, although there is clear
evidence that conservatism is making a strong comeback in the present-day United States and, to a
lesser extent, Canada. Within this dynamic, conservative ideologues are calling for a return to a
Eurocentric curriculum for the schools, rather than what they consider to be a multicultural curriculum
promoted by liberals (Granatstein, 1999; Cheney, 1994; Hirsch, 1987, 1996). The first part of the
analysis in this chapter attempts to answer whether the current social studies curriculum is Eurocentric
and, if so, to what degree and in what ways. Yet, the curricular analysis must be put aside for the moment in order for one more theoretical discussion to take place. This one looks at multiculturalism and how the various political ideologues view it.

5.2 Ideology and Multiculturalism

There is a vast amount of literature within the field of multicultural education, too much to assess here. Yet, multiculturalism in its various forms is an extremely important concept for this research. Representation of the Other and of the image of the ideal individual, especially in terms of race and social class, are central to this project. As with so many other terms within the field of cultural studies, multiculturalism is contested and has multiple meanings. Ideology is at the root of these various interpretations of what multiculturalism means.

In *Changing Multiculturalism* (1997), Joseph Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg have identified five different forms of multiculturalism from the enormous amount of scholarly research in the field. Their taxonomy was extremely useful in helping me determine the influential ideologies underpinning both the formal social studies curriculum and the attitudes and thoughts of social studies teachers on issues of race and social class. I will summarize the five forms Kincheloe and Steinberg have described and make connections to the political ideologies I am using.

*Monoculturalism* is within the ideology of conservatism, promoting a “return” to a mythic period in our past in which there was a “common culture.” Conservatives such as Canadian historian Jack Granatstein (1999) and, south of the border, educator E.D. Hirsch Jr. (1996, 1987) speak from this perspective. Assimilation into the dominant culture and its social arrangements, under the guise of a common Eurocentric curriculum, are the cornerstones of monoculturalism. Yet, for the majority within oppressed groups, assimilation is only for the lower rungs of the dominant western culture.
Monoculturalism promotes the notion that North American society is based upon a Judeo-Christian-Hellenic heritage. It enables conservative ideologues to blame non-European individuals and groups for their academic, economic, and social troubles. Family values and excellence, concepts often heard from today's conservative pundits, are nothing more than codes for race and social class, reasons to continue the oppression of marginalized groups. Conservative rhetoric, such as with popular talk radio hosts like Rush Limbaugh, isn't about oppression or justice as much as it is about blaming the victim for their plight.

Rather than emphasizing the false consensus of monoculturalism, *liberal multiculturalism*, by contrast, "glorifies neutrality." Its basic premise is that individuals from all cultures, taking into account different racial, class, and gender backgrounds, share a common humanity that includes, among other things, festive rituals and religious holidays. There is nothing inherently wrong with this except that liberal multiculturalists also stress that everybody has the same opportunities for schooling and employment within a western capitalist framework. Past struggles are not part of the liberal multicultural discourse, a trait that enables it to work as an effective hegemonic device. In a similar fashion, although it is supportive of participatory democracy, it never focuses on forces such as the corporate-owned media that work to undermine rather than strengthen democracy. In fact, power is effectively hidden in the colour-blind, class-blind, and gender-blind discourses within liberal multiculturalism.

Although the third multicultural paradigm in Kincheloe and Steinberg's taxonomy stresses difference rather than sameness, *pluralist multiculturalism* has major similarities with its liberal counterpart. Both versions ignore history and the workings of social, political, and economic power, enabling them to claim that in Canada and the United States, it is possible for anyone to make it on their own initiative, supporting the liberal notion of meritocracy. Moreover, both liberal and pluralist
multiculturalism encourage tolerance between the various racial and ethnic groups. The major difference between the two is the actual focus: while liberal multiculturalism emphasizes commonalities across the human spectrum, its pluralist cousin highlights difference between the various groups. As will be shown in the last section of this chapter, all of these points were in evidence in the views of the veteran teachers. This should not be surprising because, as Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) point out, pluralist multiculturalism has become the dominant form of multiculturalism in schools and in popular culture in recent years.

The popularity of pluralist multiculturalism may be the result of the struggles of identity politics within the recent culture wars in western nations, an appeasement of the calls for serious change from the Other. It may also in part be related to the notion that pluralist multiculturalism has a vital role in furthering capitalism's global interests. Capitalism can benefit from pluralism by commodifying difference, making it exotic, a latter-day offshoot of what Edward Said described in *Orientalism* (1978). Furthermore, pluralist multiculturalism subtly supports the liberal notion of individualism because it works to build group pride by celebrating the achievements of the few, a strategy employed by many teaching colleagues of mine over the years.

Kincheloe and Steinberg's descriptions of liberal and pluralist multiculturalism suggest how the unified subject of liberalism and the differentiated subject of pluralism can work toward the same ends, namely, effectively hiding power in a decontextualized, ahistorical public discourse or, for our purposes, school curriculum. Moreover, both versions completely ignore working-class issues, except perhaps to celebrate the exceptional individual who can succeed despite humble origins. In this way, both liberal and pluralist multiculturalism clearly support meritocracy, which, as I have mentioned already, is one of the cornerstones of the liberal ideology.
Left-essentialist multiculturalism, however, focuses on the strengths of marginalized groups almost to a fault. According to Kincheloe and Steinberg, this version fails to acknowledge the historical aspect of cultural difference, thereby ignoring the social construction of knowledge. Left-essentialists believe that the moral high ground position is always with the oppressed group and that their perspective is closer to the truth than the mainstream perspective. This radical version of multiculturalism has the capacity to acknowledge social class as a significant marker of difference. Yet, as it does with aspects of race, left-essentialist multiculturalism also has a tendency to hyperbolize attributes of working-class culture.

The final form of multiculturalism identified by Kincheloe and Steinberg, critical multiculturalism, is also part of radical political ideology. Critical multiculturalists want each individual to understand the influence the dominant discourses have on their thoughts and feelings, including their political opinions, their racial self-images, and their class and gendered positions. In short, they demand that people comprehend how “power shapes consciousness” (ibid., p. 25). Within this paradigm, social class is a central organizing principle, especially with how “it interacts with race, gender and other axes of power” (ibid., p. 26). By emphasizing the importance of class, this form clearly differs from the others. Moreover, critical multiculturalism, like critical theory in general, is grounded in the belief that everything about teaching is political, a belief firmly rooted in radical ideology, and one that I adhere to.

Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy is vital to the data analysis I employed with both the textual and the interview analysis. Yet, it might be seen as a potential weakness to this part of the study that a White researcher such as I am used a taxonomy on forms of multiculturalism developed by two White scholars. There are two reasons why I was drawn to the work of Kincheloe and Steinberg. First, the concept of social class was ever present throughout their taxonomy; even the absence of class was
highlighted in some of the forms. Their description of critical multiculturalism in particular, with its emphasis on class concerns, is what I perceive to be the most effective multicultural approach to teaching for social justice. Second, and of vital importance to this particular study, their taxonomy was done in such a way that mapping corresponding political ideologies was clear and straightforward. No other work on multiculturalism offered these strengths, both of which were required for this study.

I want to briefly mention one more contribution to the field of multiculturalism, however, because although it overlaps with critical multiculturalism, it is clearly connected to radical American educators such as George Counts (1932) and Harold Rugg (1921) who I mentioned in earlier chapters. Education that is Multicultural and Social Reconstructionist (1994), according to Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant, “deals with oppression and social structural inequality based on race, social class, gender, and disability” (pp. 209-210). Both Sleeter and Grant’s and Kincheloe and Steinberg’s paradigms stress the need for societal structural and institutional change, clearly positioning themselves within the radical political ideology.

The taxonomies I have described above were instrumental in helping me determine which political ideologies – conservative, liberal, or radical – have been influential in how race is represented and thought about in social studies education in British Columbia. The racial discourses and the forms of multiculturalism were used in the analysis of both data sources. It’s time to begin the discussion of the analysis of the first of these sources, specifically, how issues of race are represented in B.C.’s social studies curriculum.

5.3 Ideology in B.C.’s Social Studies Curriculum and Issues of Race

The examination questions included in each of the B.C. Annual Reports from 1926 until 1933 indicate that, during this period at least, social studies was used to further entrench conservative values
and attitudes about race. This should not be surprising when one considers how a Christian and capitalist White supremacy came to completely dominate social relations in British Columbia, as I described in chapter 4. Moreover, the version of White supremacy that became the cornerstone of B.C. society during this period posited the British at the top of the racial and ethnic hierarchies. Sometimes this Britishness was obvious, as with Rudyard Kipling’s quote in the 1933 Annual Report about imperialism being the “White man’s burden”. At other times, the ways in which the curriculum supported British privilege was more subtle.

Almost any mention of the British and Empire was associated with progress. By contrast, only reified representations of First Nations people were used. For example, the Annual Report from 1928 has a short essay question for students to answer that reads as follows: “Describe Indian life under the following headings: (i) tribal organizations; (ii) homes; (iii) methods of warfare” (1928, p. 144, #1). In fill-in-the-blank questions, the few times First Nations peoples were mentioned were either as allies of the British Empire (e.g., Tecumseh, 1927, #6-15; Joseph Brant, 1928, #5-2), or as mentally inferior (e.g., “Sailors exchanged trinkets with the Indians for valuable furs,” 1930, #1). Aboriginal peoples were represented as if they did not have a history of their own. By contrast, almost all of the many references to the British, linked to the greatness of Empire, emanated from the essentialist racial discourse. Moreover, in every match question on the exams, in which the student was expected to match the name of a “great” person to a “great” contribution to Canadian society, the person was invariably a White male of British ancestry.

Throughout all of the social studies and history exams from 1926 to 1933, there was only one reference to Asian countries or people, despite the fact that Asian people made up a significant proportion of the people living in British Columbia. This reference can be found in the 1931 social studies exam, a short essay question that reads as follows: “What important changes have taken place
in India under British rule?” (p. 155, #1c). This subtly reinforces the idea that Britain was more important than other nations and that it was capable of exacting massive changes in places considered to have too much inertia to change but were in need of change. It is clear that the conservative ideology, including its support of the British Empire, was extremely influential in what the social studies and history teachers were expected to teach.

The conservative ideology was also a major influence in the first B.C. social studies curriculum, which was published in 1941. White supremacy, or more specifically, British supremacy, was an influential discourse throughout this document. Moreover, there are no positive references about Aboriginal, Asian, or African histories. Once again, the essentialist racial discourse of traditional European conservatism dominates. This is clearly evident in a unit devoted entirely to imperialism that includes the following statement: “To show how the more backward peoples of the earth became subject to the more advanced nations” (p. 165). The intention underlying this statement is most likely for students to take in the perspective that imperialism actually brings the Other to a more advanced way of living than what they would have without British or European intervention. It is noteworthy that British colonizers were using the same rationale as southern White slave-owners in this regard. (See Hale, 1998.) Europeans are associated with the notion of progress, while all other cultures are considered to be, at best reified, and at worst, “backward.” The 1941 social studies curriculum, with statements like the one above, supports the notion of White supremacy and White privilege at the expense of the Other. Yet, the characterization of indigenous peoples as “backward” indicates that the conservative ideology had itself evolved to a more progressive position. According to Robert J. C. Young (1995), social evolutionism had displaced the earlier dominant view that primitive people were an “irredeemably different species altogether” (p. 50). In other words, the essentialist aspect of the inferior Other was now focused on culture rather than physiology. This was a necessary step in order
for the “more liberal view of cultures as indigenous, distinct entities” to become the accepted view (Ibid., p. 50). This liberal representation was not to be reflected in the B.C. social studies curriculum, however, for at least another half century.

Conservative triumphalism of European achievement is still very much at the core of the 1949 curriculum document, as well. Although the British Empire was at this time in the twilight of its earlier power, there is absolutely no mention of this or any negative aspects of empire and imperialism. Moreover, despite the fact that in 1948 the federal government had granted the vote to all adults except Aboriginal people, Asian people are virtually absent from the entire curriculum. There are, however, two sample units on the contributions of the “Hebrews” to “our civilization” (pp. 42-43), very possibly the result of agency on the part of Jewish Canadians and Christian guilt over the recent Holocaust in Europe.

Representations of Canada’s First Nations peoples indicate that the racial hierarchies developed in Europe in the nineteenth century were still very much at the root of the 1949 curriculum. The depictions of the 1949 curriculum continue the reified conceptions of First Nations people as part of a distant past. Louis Riel, who led rebellions against the federal government in 1869 and 1885 fighting for the rights of Metis and Aboriginal people, makes an appearance in a Social Studies 8 unit euphemistically entitled “Mischief, Metis, and Mounties” (p. 59). Moreover, the curriculum developers demonstrate a conservative contempt for Canada’s indigenous peoples with a learning objective that reads: “An appreciation of the responsibilities of both private enterprise and government in the fair treatment of native peoples” (p. 69, emphasis mine). During the previous year, federal legislators had worked to remove racist laws against all groups except Native people, who were still banned from engaging in any of their traditional ceremonies, such as the west coast potlatch or the prairie sundance. By omitting these examples of institutional racism, the curriculum developers were able use the
curriculum to promote the propagandistic notion that White Canadians had treated First Nations people fairly. Any difficulties Aboriginal people were experiencing could then be attributed to their own shortcomings, rather than to the actions of the dominant race. This is an example of how the curriculum can act as a normalizing and hegemonic device. It is also a strategy that supports cultural-deficit theory. In a later section of this chapter, I will show that elements of this theory still affect the ways teachers today view First Nations students and their communities.

Although more progressive than its predecessor, the 1956 curriculum continued the misrepresentation of the people who had suffered the most from the effects of colonialism. One of the better examples is in Social Studies 20, a grade 10 course. It asks students to consider how the democratic principle of dignity for all individuals did not occur for the individual who was either colonized, a slave, or part of a racial minority (p. 65). (This will be discussed further in chapter 7.) Similarly, the following quote comes from the Suggestions for Development of Social Studies 30, a grade 11 course:

Students may discuss the question, "Should Native peoples (Indian and Eskimo) be given full equality with White people in Canada?" (1956, p. 88)

If a teacher were to use this question in a certain manner as a topic for discussion, it could provide room for a more progressive view toward First Nations people to emerge. At least, the potential is there. It is also possible to use this suggestion to reinforce the racial hierarchies inherent within conservatism. This would depend on how teachers would facilitate the discussion, or whether they felt that they should attempt to remain neutral, take a stance, or play the devil’s advocate.

Not all references in the 1956 curriculum to Empire and imperialism leave the same room for open discussion, however. In a unit entitled Economic Imperialism, the second learning objective is stated as follows: “How the industrially backward peoples of the earth have become subject to the
more advanced” (p. 121). At best, this statement may be seen as an attempt to rationalize the colonial project. At worst, this statement invokes the general assumption of the nineteenth-century conservative French linguist Ernest Renan that “‘inferior races’ must disappear ... when confronted by superior peoples” (cited in Young, 1995, p. 71). Disappear is exactly what happened to First Nations people in a unit entitled *The Path to Nationhood*. In a section entitled “The Early Problems,” the Royal Proclamation of 1763 is discussed as an issue between only the British and the French (p. 80). This document, however, has provided the legal basis for current negotiations around land and resource questions between First Nations people and the federal and provincial governments (McKee, 1996). The notion of progress is associated with those who hold the power, namely, the European imperialists.

Moreover, the Social Studies 10 unit on the British Empire is entitled *Great Britain: How and Why She Became Great*, while the new unit on Asia is called *Nations of the Far East* (p. 50). The suggested time allotment for students to learn about the British Empire is “7 to 9 weeks” while the unit on Asia is to take only “2 to 3 weeks.” Once again, the essentialist discourse can be seen in the curriculum, this time in concert with the discourses of imperialism and capitalism. The discourse of Christianity appears in a unit entitled *Imperialism and New Empires*. In a section named the “White man’s burden,” there is a suggestion for the teacher to refer to the “work of missionaries and the desire of westerners to introduce their civilization to other peoples” (p. 65). Clearly, there is a conservative cultural hierarchy at work here.

Overall, it appears that the 1956 social studies curriculum was developed in the context of an ideological struggle of sorts – some aspects of it are still firmly rooted in the conservative ideology, while others imply a liberal perspective. This ambiguity makes sense when one considers world opinion on recent events at the time. The Holocaust served to demonstrate the dangers in promoting racial hierarchies; simply put, racism can lead to genocide. The newly-formed United Nations released
its Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, an important political document intended to promote racial and religious tolerance. At the same time, the Cold War was moving into high gear, as the competing political and economic systems of capitalism and communism brought social concerns to the surface. The Cold War would make it too difficult to completely expunge conservatism from the 1956 social studies curriculum. Hence, there is evidence of both conservatism and liberalism in its content. Yet, despite these struggles for recognition and power, both in Canada and in international arenas, the whole notion of conflict between racial and cultural groups is absent from the entire document. It is this absence of struggle that helps to conceal power (Apple, 1990; Frankenberg, 1993; Graf, 1994).

By the time the next social studies curriculum was published by the B.C. government in 1968, the colour-blind discourse had become more prominent, a reflection of the wave of liberalism that was spreading across western nation states during this period. Moreover, this document was the first to acknowledge Canada’s diverse racial and ethnic population. The 1968 Social Studies 8 curriculum includes the following two Generalization Statements:

**Distinctive cultures develop distinctive artistic, religious and aesthetic characteristics which reflect their distinctiveness.** *(p. 89)*

**Knowledge of Canada’s cultural groups may help to resolve issues involving the future of Canada as a multi-cultural society.** *(p. 90)*

Both of these statements are examples of pluralist multiculturalism, according to the taxonomy developed by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) that I summarized earlier in this chapter. Teachers who focus on this approach to multiculturalism may be successful at increasing certain kinds of knowledge about other cultures. The first statement may have the intention of allowing people who are not from dominant British backgrounds the opportunity to celebrate aspects of their traditional cultures. The second statement suggests that increased knowledge of non-mainstream cultures among the general
public has some positive value. As long as this knowledge did not include anything about negative experiences with colonialism, however, it was unlikely to “resolve issues involving the future of Canada as a multi-cultural society.” It is inconceivable that this sort of apolitical knowledge can alleviate sociopolitical tensions, in the present or in the future. It is possible, however, that the 1968 curriculum developers believed that pluralist multiculturalism could help. After all, when situated historically, an argument could be made that this belief made sense. Yet, a curriculum that addresses various cultures in a decontextualized, ahistorical manner is incapable of solving complex social problems that arise around issues of recognition and redistribution. As I mentioned earlier, pluralist multiculturalism is part of the liberal political ideology. In short, despite its celebration of difference, this version of multiculturalism is a hegemonic device that effectively conceals power much like liberal multiculturalism.

Another example that liberalism was dislodging conservatism from the social studies curriculum by 1968 can be seen in the following Generalization Statement:

*Canadians, both past and present, have interacted and co-operated in the development of the Canadian nation.*

(p. 89)

This statement is part of the colour-blind discourse that Frankenberg (1993) has identified as a cornerstone of the liberal ideology. To begin, usage of the term “Canadians” effectively hides the fact that White Canadians were given much more opportunity than others to influence the development of the “Canadian nation.” This is an example of positioning White as the norm for a universal Canadian. Moreover, the use of the terms “interaction” and “co-operation” are clear attempts to conceal the more sordid parts of Canada’s early history. For example, students may assume that interaction and cooperation were at the root of race relations leading up to Confederation in 1867 and the subsequent nation-building project. Moreover, using derivatives of *interaction* and *cooperation* would in no way
lead students to understand the theft of First Nations’ lands and the subjugation and oppression of the indigenous peoples through the various amendments to the Indian Act from 1872 until at least the 1940s. Moreover, students are unlikely to become aware of White Canadian exploitation of people of Aboriginal, Asian and African backgrounds, some of which I outlined in chapter 4, if the teacher were to present race relations in Canadian history as acts of interaction and cooperation. This example suggests why Frankenberg considers the colour-blind discourse to be “power-blind.”

The 1980 curriculum uses the concept of *imperialism* as a similar hegemonic device. This is the case even though the actual term is not used. For example, the following statement is taken from the preliminary text to the teacher of grade 9 social studies:

*Grade nine focuses initially on the understanding that societies do not have sufficient human and natural resources to meet all of its (sic) desires.*

(1980, p. 98)

A statement like this subtly reinforces the notion that it is understandable, perhaps even laudable, that some societies possess the drive and determination to meet all of their desires, even if this requires using the resources and the labour of other societies. In terms of hegemony, it suggests that imperialism is a natural and necessary process. The empire-building nations of Europe, specifically Britain, France, and Spain, used the land and resources of the Aboriginal peoples of the Americas to build vast amounts of wealth. Furthermore, they used the labour, that is, the human resources, of African peoples and, to a lesser extent, Asian and Aboriginal peoples, to add to their already massive advantage in the distribution of wealth. This exploitation was often institutionalized as law, either in economic systems based on slavery or with indentured agreements. Yet, none of this is mentioned in the curriculum.

The curricular statement above also has the effect of concealing what was caused by the imperial project, namely, the human degradation and suffering experienced by millions of colonized
peoples. This is a classic statement within a liberal paradigm, rationalizing the achievements of the powerful and neglecting to mention the ways that power itself was used to exploit the already marginalized. In this respect, the western concept of progress continued to be firmly entrenched in the state-sanctioned knowledge of B.C.'s schools in 1980.

In a section of the 1980 curriculum entitled *Issues*, there is an interesting question that teachers are asked to address only if it arises in class discussion:

> **To what extent has the majority in a democratic state the right to impose its ideas etc. on the minority?**

(p. 109)

I have included this statement in the section on imperialism and representation of the Other as well as in chapter 7 on democracy and citizenship because of the current context in British Columbia's politics and race relations. For the past several years, both major political parties have taken opposing positions on holding a public referendum about Aboriginal rights and treaties. (In British Columbia today, approximately 4% of the population is of Aboriginal ancestry.) The left-wing New Democratic Party took a position adamantly opposed to putting the rights of a minority into the hands of the majority, while the neoconservative Liberal Party supported this. This question is an excellent example of how schools can be used to foster critical thinking in order to develop citizens capable of taking an informed stance on difficult social issues. Yet, it is significant that the teacher is instructed to address this only if it arises in a class discussion, “rather than … imposed only by the teacher” (p. 109). What is the reasoning behind blocking a teacher from creating a lesson plan around this issue? I speculate that the curriculum developers were concerned that too many students (and future citizens) might come to a position contrary to the interests of the privileged. In other words, a thoughtful teacher might easily make a case through a series of examples that democracy is inherently flawed if the rights of minorities can be controlled by the majority.
If the 1980 curriculum had been influenced by a more radical ideology, I suspect that a question about minority rights would have been front and centre of a unit, rather than as a suggestion for an only-if-it-arises scenario. If this were to be the case, however, the curriculum would be less of a hegemonic device and more of an illumination of how power can actually be manipulated. The next curriculum, published in 1988, was the first to do this around issues of imperialism, at least to some extent.

The 1988 B.C. social studies curriculum was the first to address problems associated with both imperialism and its offspring, nation-building. All but disappeared is the notion that every British Columbian has benefited equally from colonialism. In other words, the notion of the unified subject, to borrow a term from postcolonial scholarship (Spivak, 1987), has long been a crucial hegemonic tool within the colour-blind discourse of liberalism. By 1988, the unified subject had disappeared from the social studies curriculum. For example, two of the Sample Key Questions in the grade 9 social studies curriculum read as follows:

What kinds of cultural interaction take place when imperialism occurs?

What are the positive and negative effects of imperialism?

(1988, p. 47)

Both of these questions create the space for a teacher to address the differing experiences various groups had (and continue to have) because of imperialism. Students would most likely gain an understanding of the different experiences people had because of their race or culture during the imperialist project. The active political ideology would depend on how a teacher might explain these different experiences. A conservative might view the situation as an inevitable result based on racial or cultural superiority; a liberal could understand the problems as negative side effects or the social costs associated with the overall goal of progress; a radical, on the other hand, might raise ethical issues with
students around the central organizing principle of social justice. Of course, this last perspective raises
the question about seeing the past through the moral conscience of the present. Although this potential
criticism may hold some validity, these questions make space for radical educators to teach for social
justice, which is crucial to the notion of schools being used in the capacity of helping to solve society’s
social problems. And it is necessary to have the public understand that many of today’s social
problems are manifestations of our past, particularly around the effects of European expansionism. In
other words, despite the problems with judging past actions with current ethical standards, I would
argue that it is the best way to learn from past mistakes.

The Social Studies 9 curriculum has other numerous Sample Key Questions about imperialism
that a thoughtful teacher could use to stimulate critical thinking. Here are two more that are taken from
the same page as the previous two:

*Can a country industrialize without becoming imperialistic?*

*Does imperialism exist today?*  
(1988, p. 47)

In terms of the current global context, questions such as these would enable the teacher to bring into
the lessons issues such as globalization, international free trade agreements, sweat-shop labour, and the
current U.S. agenda for the Middle East. The grade 9 curriculum appears to give more space for these
discussions than the one developed for grade 11 social studies. The curriculum for the older students
has an emphasis based on a pluralist form of multiculturalism, namely, the promotion of tolerance for
diversity. This is in keeping with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau’s vision of a *cultural mosaic*, which
became institutionalized with his government’s Multiculturalism Act of 1970.

The most recent B.C. social studies curriculum was published in 1997. By this time,
postcolonial scholarship had provided the fundamental insight that experiences with imperialism
differed according to one’s race, a crucial category that resulted in placement at birth on one side of the
imperial divide or the other. In the present context, the effects of the imperial project are more complex, often but not always based on how a person’s country of origin intersects with race or ethnicity. For instance, a recent working-class immigrant from India most likely experiences Canadian life differently than a person of Indian ancestry whose family has lived in Canada for several generations. Yet, despite the increasing complexities of addressing issues of shifting positionalities, both in the past and in the present, all of the Sample Key Questions from the 1988 curriculum have disappeared from the 1997 document.

In fact, of interest are the changes to the layout of the curriculum itself. Where the 1980 curriculum had many teaching suggestions and the 1988 curriculum included several Sample Key Questions, the 1997 document provides numerous Prescribed Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Speculation leads me to conclude that the reasoning behind abandoning the more loose terms of suggestions and samples for what I consider to be prescriptions is a way to increase control over what is to be said and how it is to be said in the social studies classroom. In this way, official knowledge can be better controlled, increasing the hegemonic effect in the process. This notion will become clear with the analysis that follows.

In contrast to its predecessor, the entire 1997 curriculum rarely mentions the term imperialism. There is a PLO that states it is “expected that students will analyze effects of colonialism on trade and conflict” (p. 28). Another says that “students will define colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism” (1997, SS 9, p. 26). The corresponding Suggested Learning Strategy is for the teacher to divide the class into groups and to “consider either colonialism, imperialism, or nationalism in terms of the system’s power holders and its political and economic assumptions” (p. 26). Both PLOs are opportunities for the progressive teacher to make connections between the colonial/imperial past and inequality today, of course. Yet, most teachers will be unable to do so. This is because there is so little
direction in the document and, from my own teaching experience and research, there are very few teachers who seem to be aware of the ways that White supremacist racial hierarchies dominated social, political and economic relations in the Canadian past. Moreover, even fewer of them are aware of how power is imbedded in colour-blind liberalism, to my way of thinking an ideology incapable of eradicating systemic racism from Canadian society.

A tension arises out of this non-directed approach. On the one hand, I can understand the merit in allowing teachers to figure out the pedagogical strategies that would best meet the prescribed learning outcomes stated in the curriculum and increase real learning for the students. This perspective would negate the need for curriculum developers to provide detailed instructions for the teacher to accomplish these educational goals. Yet, on the other hand - especially with issues of social, economic and political power – most teachers might benefit if the curriculum were to provide at least some conceptual framework to help them engage in classroom discussions around issues of colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism. Most students would also benefit, especially if the curriculum developers based the framework on postcolonial scholarship. Because of the increasing demands on teachers, however, very few will find the time and energy to learn about deconstructing the colour-blind and power-blind discourse. Their focus would most likely be on ensuring that the Prescribed Learning Outcomes are covered in class, a pressure that might not have been as large when the formal curriculum made only suggestions.

Moreover, the Rationale Statement for the 1997 curriculum claims that it emphasizes the following four points: 1. developing understanding; 2. making connections; 3. applying knowledge; and 4. practising active citizenship. “Understanding what?”, “Connecting to what?”, and “Applying whose knowledge?” are questions that immediately arise. These lofty words are mere rhetoric if the
Prescribed Learning Outcomes are as vague as the one pertaining to imperialism discussed above. I will make the case that the 1997 curriculum is steeped in a liberal power-blind approach.

Outside of references to First Nations people, there are clearly not enough PLOs throughout the entire social studies curriculum pertaining to issues of ethnicity or race. One PLO asks students to “identify the contributions of immigrants to the development of Canada” (p. 34). This reinforces the notion that has grown into almost mythic proportions in both Canada and the United States, namely, that immigrants arrive poor, work extremely hard, and eventually move up the social and economic ladders. It is also an example of how the curriculum supports the notion of meritocracy, one of the cornerstones of liberalism. Students might wonder why so many immigrants today find it so difficult to adjust given that previously many had to overcome adversity yet were still able to contribute to Canadian society. This is even more likely given that the curriculum excludes any mention of the historical or contemporary exploitation of immigrants. In this way, by neglecting to include any negative aspects of the immigrant experience, the liberal-influenced curriculum ignores how economic arrangements leave immigrant workers in positions especially vulnerable to exploitation, extending privilege for the capitalist class in the process. This demonstrates how hegemony, discourse, and ideology work in tandem to influence how teachers and students think about race.

In the grade 11 curriculum, there are similarly banal PLOs which acknowledge the diversity of people in Canada in a simplified and unproblematic way. They read as follows:

**It is expected that students will:**
- identify elements that contribute to the regional, cultural, and ethnic diversity of Canadian society (p. 14)
- describe the role of cultural pluralism in shaping Canadian identity (p. 18)

Using words such as “identify” and “describe” often enable the teacher to cover these topics without ever addressing the unequal distribution of economic, social and political power among the various
racial and ethnic groups that comprise the Canadian population. Considering the rising tensions within the working classes, especially as the effects of free trade deals and globalization diminish the hopes for an economically secure future, these PLOs do not create enough space for students to understand the complex ways that race and class interact with other factors in British Columbia today. A document influenced by a radical ideology might expect students to explain why exceptionally high numbers of prisoners are of Aboriginal ancestry, or why so many non-White adults work at low-paying, dead-end jobs, or why almost all court judges are of European descent. In other words, they might be made aware of what historian David Roediger (1991) calls “the wages of Whiteness.” With a formal curriculum encouraging critical thought, students might better understand the negatives, as well as the positives, of a multicultural society. They might also begin to question meritocracy, a process possibly leading to social, economic, and political reforms. The strategies used in the liberal-influenced 1997 curriculum, however, are better able to conceal economic and political interests than any of its predecessors.

In sharp contrast to the scarcity of references to specific issues of race, there are a dozen PLOs specifically pertaining to the experiences of First Nations. In a very ambiguous manner, a few of them almost hint at the unfair treatment Aboriginal people have experienced in Canada. For example, one SS 11 PLO reads as:

It is expected that students will demonstrate understanding of the history and present status of Aboriginal land claims and self-government in Canada. (p. 20)

A teacher aware of the long struggles Canada’s First Nations peoples have had to endure in order to force federal and provincial governments to engage in treaty negotiations could turn this grade 11 unit into a teaching for social justice exercise. Yet, in my own research with social studies teachers, it is very rare indeed to find many who understand the implications of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, the British North America Act of 1867, amendments to the Indian Act, and the Calder Supreme Court
decision of 1973 for current treaty negotiations. Consequently, many non-Native students will be able to complete high school social studies courses without making the connections between the systemic and institutional racism Native people have experienced and the plight many of them live in today.

The numerous references to Aboriginal issues in the 1997 curriculum are from a liberal perspective: they exclude any references to power itself in race relations throughout time. For example, there is no mention of any institutional racism enacted by the government to thwart their agency in settling the land question, or engaging in traditional ceremonies. Despite this, the quantity and quality of references is a vast improvement over past representation. There can be little doubt that Aboriginal representation in this document is much more progressive than in earlier curricula; for instance, there are no more references depicting them as "backward." This is congruent with the findings of Sears, Clarke, and Hughes (1999), who claim that the curriculum has "reflected the larger political agenda, first presenting aboriginal people as 'savages' in need of the civilizing influences of western culture, then increasingly, in the last 15 years, as distinctive founding members of the Canadian family" (p. 126).

It is time to see how veteran social studies teachers view issues concerning First Nations people, as well as other non-White peoples.

5.4 Ideology and How Teachers View Issues of Race

As I mentioned in chapter 3, all ten social studies department heads were White men. This undoubtedly had some affect on their thoughts and attitudes around issues of race. I also have no doubt that had I as the interviewer been of a different race, the participants may have articulated their thoughts differently. This supports the claim made by the postpositivist E. G. Mishler that the interview data change if the interviewer changes (cited in Scheurich, 1995, p. 240). Despite this
ambiguity, I contend that the content of interviews between White educators discussing racial issues and multiculturalism is a source of important information.

There were over three hundred pages of transcripts from the ten interviews, much of it discussing racial matters, both in education and in society in general. Consequently, a great deal of condensing had to take place, sifting through for exchanges and statements of relevance, and performing what Silverman (2001) calls “comprehensive data treatment” (p. 240). This system of analysis involves using a “constant comparative method” of the teacher responses. Once all of the data was incorporated into the analysis and discourses based on the taxonomies developed by Frankenberg (1993) and Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) were identified, the most influential political ideology was determined. The beginning of this analytical discussion will focus on how the teachers viewed racial matters in general, and what discourses they used to express these views.

5.4.1 Racial Discourses Used by the Veteran Teachers

There was evidence of all three racial discourses — essentialist, colour-blind, and race-cognizance — in the ways that the ten veteran teachers chose to describe their thoughts on issues of race. Three questions on the interview schedule in particular led to usage of the various racial discourses. (See Appendix 1, Questions 9, 10, and 14.)

The essentialist discourse, which is part of the conservative ideology, was used in its traditional form by two of the teachers about why Aboriginal students are less successful than their non-Aboriginal peers at graduating from B.C. high schools. The manner that Frankenberg (1993) describes the essentialist discourse is of a ranking system that positions the various racial groups according to biological traits. So-called nineteenth-century race science claimed to determine that White people had a genetic make-up superior to that of the Other. The teacher interviews demonstrate that the essentialist
racial discourse is not confined to extreme right-wing racists. Indeed, it is still within our school system, albeit in a somewhat modified form.

Ed Hitchcock is the department head at Kipling Secondary, a middle-class school that is often highly ranked on the list of academic-inclined schools by the ultra-conservative, B.C.-based think-tank called The Fraser Institute. Kipling Secondary has very few Aboriginal students. Hitchcock answered the question about lower graduation rates among First Nations students by invoking ideas about physiology.

EH: Maybe [it's] their physiological make-up, the business of alcohol, alcohol abuse, substance abuse. That's another vicious circle and maybe it's something that through their race as it were, physiologically they can't handle alcohol as the others can and this is another ongoing problem. I mean, it's endemic!

This notion that the marginalization of First Nations people has been caused by their own physiology and actions is a classic example of the traditional essentialist racial discourse. By stating that First Nations people do not have the physiology to handle alcohol properly, yet many of them drink in abundance, serves to take the blame away from Canada's White colonizers. To be fair to Hitchcock, once I offered a different explanation, one based on postcolonial considerations, he expanded his thinking.

PO: What about the theory I've heard that really the abundance of drinking amongst many First Nations people today has everything to do with colonialism and the residential school system rather than their physiology?

EH: Well, it could be that, too. They're trying to get away from what happened in the past, to cover up the abuses of the past and the fact that they haven't got the education, they haven't got the options that others may have.

Hitchcock was open to accepting an alternative explanation for the discrepancy in graduation rates. My involvement is an example of why Kvale (1996) describes interviews as co-authored. This exchange also demonstrates how various political ideologies can simultaneously influence the thoughts of an
individual. Not all teachers were as open to accepting the alternative explanations that I suggested during the interviews, of course.

Carl Tragas is a veteran social studies teacher at an east-end school, Wilson Heights Secondary, who also spent over 20 years teaching at a west side school. Carl grew up in a northern B.C. community that has a significant Aboriginal population. He described the differences in teaching at an east side working-class school, primarily composed of East Asian immigrant students, and a west side upper middle-class school.

CT: One of the things that happened between my two schools, when it came government exam time with my Geography 12 classes, when I first came here my kids would bail out. "It's too tough. I can't do it. I'm giving up!"

PO: They'd drop the course just before the exam?

CT: They wouldn't drop the course. They just wouldn't study ... So I clued in on that and now it's a constant theme throughout the year. "Listen, don't sell yourself short." That being said, I think, in terms of the gene pool, I've dummied down the courses here.

PO: You've dummied down the courses from how you taught it at your old (west side) school?

CT: Yep. I can give the same exam, teach the course the same way. Well, I don't quite teach it the same way because I do more visuals here because so many of the students are ESL. And still, the students here get 10 to 15% less than the students at Greenway. So, is that genetic? Or is that socioeconomic? You can't be politically correct and say it's the gene pool. But I think it is. There's a little bit of that, at least. And also socioeconomic.

PO: So in terms of the old nature-versus-nurture debate, how exactly would you position yourself?

CT: I'm saying that I can buy the logistics that it's mainly socioeconomic. But I also think there's a genetic component.
PO: Do you think this is why someone ends up being a labourer rather than, say, a professional?

CT: I think, although I know it’s not popular to say, that there’s something to that.

Tragas seemed to become aware that I was surprised to hear his thoughts about the connection between genes, academic performance, and eventual station in life. As the exchange ensued, he leaned a little more on a socioeconomic argument for why the working-class students at his east side school, who are mostly children of East Asian immigrants, fare less well academically. It seemed as though Tragas perceived his view to be incompatible “with the socially organized ideology” in a reversal of the normal process (Anderson, 1989, p. 261, referencing Bakhtin, cited in Kelly, in press). Bakhtin’s term, “socially organized ideology,” is usually referring to a dominant ideology that imposes oppressive restrictions on segments of the society. In this case, however, Tragas’ conservative views are held in check by what he considers to be the dominant liberal view. I ended this exchange a little earlier than I would have liked because it seemed that the rapport between Tragas and myself, and therefore the remainder of the interview, would be jeopardized had I continued to probe.

Tragas and Hitchcock were the only two teachers to use the traditional essentialist discourse, emphasizing biological or genetic explanations to explain why some racial groups are less successful in school and in life. I doubt that either of them would come across as a racist. Both would most likely be shocked to learn that I have found them to be using the same discourse that Europeans used to justify the theft of indigenous peoples’ land and exploitation of labourers throughout the world during their empire-building era (and, some would contend, today, as well).

I did not expect to come across this version of the essentialist discourse in the teacher interviews. Rather, I was prepared for more contemporary versions of this discourse, ones that focus on culture rather than biological attributes on their own. Conservative sociobiological theories, originating
in the work of E.O. Wilson (1975), combine aspects of culture and physiology to support Social Darwinian policies and attempt to explain social inequities in American society from a blame-the-victim perspective. The other version of the discourse ignores biology altogether as it ranks the various cultures according to how well they are suited to modern (or postmodern) culture. In this way, it reminds us of the racist cultural ranking system developed by Herbert Spencer in the nineteenth century that led to the implementation of ideas based on Social Darwinism. Because of the resultant hierarchy, both in Spencer’s time and now, this discourse can also be considered part of the conservative political ideology. Yet, liberals also tend to explain academic and socioeconomic disparities by pointing out the cultural backgrounds of those at the bottom (Lewis, 2001, pp. 800-801). Its most frequent contemporary usage is in invoking the *cultural deficit discourse* to explain why certain cultural groups find themselves marginalized in contemporary societies.

There are three variants of cultural deficit theory. Although its original theorist, Oscar Lewis (1966), considered himself to be a liberal, conservatives have also used cultural deficit theory because it puts the blame for lack of success on the Other, thereby removing any obligation on the part of the privileged groups to help the less fortunate. Variants of this theory include a focus on values-deficit, a culture of poverty, and cultural capital (see Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992). Today, the cultural deficit discourse is used by both conservatives and right-leaning liberals. This overlap is what Sadovnik, Cookson, and Semel (1994) call a *traditional* perspective.

Half of the teachers used the cultural deficit discourse in the responses given about why Aboriginal students fare less well in school. Five teachers seemed to think that the lack of Aboriginal academic success is a cultural problem. In other words, they each suggested various aspects of what they knew of Aboriginal cultures to explain the discrepancy. Carl Tragas used the cultural deficit
theory in a narrative form to explain why First Nations students in particular don’t perform as well academically in school.

CT: Well, I went to school in a large Native community. And socially, the social interaction was great! You know, the fit was nice. I didn’t see a lot of racism there, other than the drunken Indians on the weekend kind of thing. But, by and large, it was a very positive experience. But all those years, as well as in all my years of teaching, which together is now close to 50 years, I see no success. I see no success for Natives in my whole experience. Sure, there’s a few more graduates at the universities. How many of those go back to the villages to help out? Some, but not many. There really hasn’t been much success.

PO: Why do you think that is?

CT: Well, you know, people would go back to the whole cultural indignity of [the] Europeanization of the New World. I don’t particularly buy it, that they haven’t been given the opportunities. Like, some of my good Native friends, they argue that they should just have been assimilated. They would have been better off.

PO: Do you think the residential schools tried to assimilate the Native students?

CT: They were bad news. No doubt about that, those schools were bad news.

PO: So do you think that the colonial experience, including taking the Native kids from their families to go to these residential schools, could be responsible for their lack of success in schools?

CT: I don’t know. You know, that would be the easy answer. It’s like breaking the poverty cycle. Somewhere, you have to combine a respect for education and dignity. That has to happen ... And there are some heroes. But boy oh boy, it’s tough to, on the weekend, go down to the reservation and the alcohol and the abuse that happens. We don’t even want to hear about it, it’s so bad in some instances. And for those students to have to handle that?

In this particular exchange, Tragas uses the culture of poverty discourse to describe an attitudinal flaw in First Nations cultures toward education and toward their own family members. It is interesting that
Tragas states that his Aboriginal friends wish that they had simply been assimilated into mainstream White Canadian culture. Assimilation was the stated goal of the residential school system upon its creation by the federal government in the 1870s. But as Jean Barman (1995, p. 57) explains, the residential school system never actually intended to successfully assimilate First Nations people into mainstream society for a variety of reasons.

At one point in the interview, I suggested to Tragas that perhaps the best way to help Aboriginal students was to offer a plethora of options such as Native alternative programs and band-run schools. His response to this was: “That’s certainly spoiling them a lot.” Tragas dismisses postcolonial explanations as “the easy answer.” He was one of a significant number of the participating educators not to accept alternative views from the radical left that I suggested.

Larry Nelson, a veteran teacher at Larson Secondary in Vancouver’s east-end, does not consider the colonial experience to have anything to do with the low graduation rates. Nor did he consider the problem to lie in the curriculum or the school system. Rather, Nelson seems to consider the problem to be with a kind of lack of suitability between First Nations cultures today and contemporary society.

LN: A [Native] kid just dropped out 3 weeks ago, out of grade 9, so he’s got a grade 8 education. And his big rationale was that dad’s got a grade 7 education and he’s making out okay, so therefore “I’ll be okay.” I think what comes around, goes around. The role models that they see I think sometimes maybe just aren’t in place enough. In this case, coming right out of the horse’s mouth, this kid was content doing what dad had achieved 20 or 30 years ago.

I was not quick enough to probe about the father’s occupation. Yet, the salient point is that Nelson used the culture of poverty discourse to point to a lack of positive role models around schooling within the typical Aboriginal family as the major reason for their low graduation rates. Moreover, he also insinuates that there is a misunderstanding with First Nations people about how the economy has
changed over the last 30 years. Consequently, Nelson speculates that the lack of Aboriginal success in B.C. high schools has to do with Aboriginal cultures themselves: a lack of positive role models and a misunderstanding of the way the economy works today. Throughout the entire interview, Nelson gave no indication that he considers the marginalization of Aboriginal students in mainstream secondary schools to be caused by the dominant White society.

Hal Nagel began his teaching career on a northern First Nations reserve. Since 1985, he has taught in Vancouver, mostly at Hedley Secondary in Vancouver’s east end. He uses the cultural-deficit version, which in this context appears to be a variation of the essentialist discourse, to explain the discrepancy in graduation rates based on his experience teaching in an east-end Vancouver high school.

HN: [The] Aboriginal kids there, they don’t really care if they pass or fail. They’re there. They like coming to school because it’s a community thing. It’s social. Like any kid, they want to come to school because their friends are here and learn about what other people are doing ... Maybe for the Aboriginal community, hey, [if] you show up and try your best, that’s great! If you learn something, great. If you get an ‘A,’ great. If you pass, great. If you fail? As long as you show up and do something, that’s fine. It’s an attitude, you know.

Nagel’s version of the cultural-deficit discourse emphasizes the attitude of First Nations people toward schooling to explain the plight in which many First Nations people find themselves. According to Nagel, the motivation for First Nations students to attend school is purely social. Any academic learning that may take place is purely a side benefit.

Nagel used the cultural-deficit discourse several times throughout the interview. Here he suggests two other aspects of First Nations cultures that work to hinder their academic success.

HN: The culture itself is more verbal than written. Story-telling is huge. So actually sitting and watching a video or writing an essay and then, you know, actually putting those stories and ideas down onto a piece of paper and constructing, well, I don’t know if culturally it’s in their mindset ... Some people
say it's like First Nations time, you know - whenever we get around to it. There's no such thing as a clock. When I taught on the reserve it was like, "Oh, I'm late? Oh, I didn't know that." No such thing as a clock. They work on their own time ... You know, the White-collar workman is out by 8 o'clock and gets home by 4 or 5 o'clock. That's your workday. There has got to be some structure. And maybe it's Aboriginal culture, that it's not their forte to actually pursue academic life.

Nagel's phrase that "it's not their forte to actually pursue an academic life" indicates that he does not believe that mainstream White society is to blame for the marginalization of First Nations peoples. The problem is clearly based within the Aboriginal cultures themselves, according to Nagel, because of their emphasis on "story-telling" over the written word and because they do not ascribe to a precise daily schedule around time.

In case I might have thought that Nagel considered poverty to be part of the problem, he added:

HN: Within the city, some people just say it's socioeconomics, their poor standard of living. But I don't know if economics has much to do with it rather than, I guess, the encouragement of the parents.

Nagel was consistent in pointing out that low graduation rates for Aboriginal students had everything to do with the attitudes of their parents and communities toward schooling. Pointing the finger at the parents was a common finding among the group of teachers influenced by a conservative or right-liberal ideology.

Tim Patterson teaches at a west-side school. Over the years he has taught many First Nations students.

TP: Some of the kids you get in a class, their parents are in varying degrees of sobriety. So I've got to think that, yeah, I think it comes from the home. I think that it is basically, like it's not about something like "I've gotta leave school to go work to pay the rent." I think it's more likely that they just don't see school as a vehicle to get ahead.
This explanation concurs with the story that Larry Nelson described about the recent grade 9 student who quit school, namely, that Aboriginal people do not understand how increased education will help them. In other words, First Nations adults are misreading how the economy has changed in recent decades. Eschewing any material or postcolonial considerations, the views of Nelson, Nagel, and Patterson were indicative of half of the veteran social studies. This group seemed to think that the main reason that so few students of Aboriginal ancestry graduated from B.C. high schools was because their cultures were not suited to academic success.

Eric Quinn, who teaches at Warner Secondary in another upper-middle-class neighbourhood, acknowledged that he has taught very few First Nations students in his 18 years as an educator. Yet, he also emphasized the role of the parents to explain their lack of academic success. The discourse used by Quinn, however, brought another element to the discussion:

EQ: I think there is a parenting issue. And I'm not sure if the parenting issue is just differences between parenting styles. Like if Natives were living with Natives in a community and did not have to go to a school set up by others, or did not have to participate in another’s economy, I don't know, maybe it would work out very well. Maybe parents are doing a good job within their own frame of reference. Or maybe there's a lot of parents, like an adult generation, that are still feeling the after-shocks and stress of the intense, cataclysmic family breakdown that comes from our colonial history.

I have described how participants can sometimes demonstrate different influential political ideologies depending upon the aspect of life under discussion. In the same manner, some of the teachers simultaneously exhibited more than one racial discourse, as Quinn did here. During the first part of the quote, he uses the cultural deficit discourse by focusing on the role of parenting to explain the low graduation rates. By the end, Quinn emerges from this more traditional explanation to suggest that perhaps White people can share some of the blame because of the suffering done to First Nations people through the process of colonialization.
Despite occasionally demonstrating that conservatism had influenced his views, Eric Quinn was the one teacher who utilized the clear-cut examples of the colour-blind discourse of liberalism several times throughout our interview.

EQ: It took us 75 years of teaching history to actually start deconstructing history and understanding a new way of teaching it in a way that is inclusive, that attempts to basically give a sense of equality of voice. Right? And now, for instance, this is what I have against doing a women’s studies approach or a First Nations approach. Basically, now we are reconstructing a monolithic window, like a mono-story, to teach our kids. I can’t agree with teaching history the way that we traditionally taught it because it just doesn’t work and it’s not true of our world anymore. But I can’t see going to the equal opposite extreme ... I personally couldn’t teach Socials 11 through a First Nations perspective.

Quinn is very aware that history used to be taught in an extremely Eurocentric manner. He approves of attempts to deconstruct it, although he said elsewhere that there are “real dangers to this [deconstructive] way of teaching.” When I asked him if he would alter the curriculum to address the social backgrounds of students in his class, he stood his ground by refusing to accept a perspective from social history.

EQ: I’m not sure that you would present it much differently. Let’s talk about it. What would be an example? The Chinese workers building the [Canadian Pacific Railway]? Now I designed a unit around that, specifically trying to get around the idea of “those are the bad guys and we’re the good guys,” or “these guys are the new heroes because they’re the victims” ... Like the Irish in Montreal that were building the canal. They were in the same situation as the Chinese labourers on the Railway ... Where is the meaning in the historical narrative? So there has been history. What does it mean? Who cares? What meaning do we get out of it? And how do we create a pluralistic view of history without creating victimization? That is the question for me. I’m not interested in teaching a victimized history of, you know, “Can you believe how shitty we were to this group and that group?” Teaching social studies would become a flaying exercise in hating ourselves.

Quinn was steadfast in his position of not teaching social history because in his opinion it is tantamount to “creating victimization.” In this regard, he agrees with the outspoken Canadian historian
Jack Granatstein (1999), who admonishes teachers for telling students of immigrant families who have struggled against all odds to get to Canada that we have a very sordid past. Quinn’s attempt at teaching in a way that he considers to be apolitical is why Frankenberg (1993) claims that the colour-blind discourse is also power-blind. In the next section on multiculturalism, however, we will see a clear ideological distinction between Quinn’s and Granatstein’s positions on teaching the past.

Dave Carson, who teaches in a west side, middle-class neighbourhood, was the only teacher to use part of the race-cognizance discourse.

DC: Well, to begin with, I don’t think the education system suits the majority of First Nations kids at all. I think the whole phenomena of the way the school runs and operates has time after time after time been shown to be unsuccessful for most First Nations kids.

PO: Are you suggesting that aspects of schooling like the regimented, structured schedule are contrary to traditional Native values?

DC: Yeah, partially, at least. I don’t think the curriculum helps either. Most of the curriculum is about White culture. How can they relate? They can’t relate. It’s just that. School is an exercise in perpetuating imperial White culture.

Although it might seem that the first part of Carson’s comments use part of cultural-deficit discourse, his wording refrains from using a blame-the-victim rationale. Rather, he puts the onus on the school authorities to rectify the problem. Carson also clearly believes that the social studies curriculum is Eurocentric to the degree that non-Whites are at a disadvantage. His reasoning uses the race-cognizance discourse, indicating that the radical political ideology has at least partially influenced the way Carson sees racial issues, particularly those involving First Nations people.

Throughout this part of the data analysis, the most significant aspect was not the discovery of the essentialist discourse or the preponderance of the cultural-deficit discourse. Nor was it the fact that only one teacher used the race-cognizance discourse. Rather, what was most surprising for me, as well
as the most disturbing, was the absolute refusal of the majority of the teachers to accept the race-
cognizance discourse in both the ways they see social relations and in their teaching of social studies.
Most were aware of what it meant but dismissed it as some sort of movement steeped in “political
correctness,” as one teacher put it. I have already pointed out an example of this earlier in this section:
Eric Quinn considered the race-cognizance discourse to be nothing more than “creating victimization,”
as though it is the discourse rather than past actions that caused much suffering within socially
marginalized groups. There were several other examples, as well.

I asked Barry Kelvin, a west side teacher at Chamberlain Secondary, if he thought that the
social studies curriculum fairly represents the contributions or experiences of First Nations people. I
also asked him if the teacher should compensate for any shortcomings.

**BK:** It’s quite a debate. I’m not sure where I stand on it either. I don’t like the
idea of usurping the land of the people who were here long ago. But then again,
when you study history throughout, you find that tons of people have been put in
that position. Is it fair? I don’t think so. But do you try and do an about-face and
correct all the wrongs in history? I don’t think you do.

Kelvin’s answer was very much in keeping with what his peers feel about social history or giving
voice to socially marginalized groups about their experience in Canada. He understands that the past is
filled with injustices, that it has been anything but fair. Yet, his view is that because there has always
been so much of this, it is best to wipe the slate clean, as it were, and carry on as if these events never
occurred. Kelvin demonstrates how the colour-blind discourse of liberalism ignores the historical
conditions that gave rise to certain racial groups at the expense of others, in the process effectively
rendering this discourse as power-blind.

All of the teachers were aware of calls for multiple perspectives and for teaching students about
past injustices. Some, such as Carl Tragas, understood that the race-cognizance discourse addressed
issues of power. Yet, he considered the ramifications of such discourse, such as affirmative action
programs, to unfairly reward these marginalized groups. Other teachers, such as Hitchcock and Kelvin, didn’t think that all “wrongs of the past” can be made right, so do not bother teaching about them. It is as if these teachers do not understand how past actions affect the social relations of today. Yet, had there been a set of second interviews where I pointed this out to them, they would most likely have responded with incredulity to this notion.

A few of the teachers, especially Hitchcock, seemed to be on the verge of being annoyed with my questions about teaching social studies from different perspectives. As the interviews carried on, several seemed to become aware of my own perspective on these matters. This sometimes curtailed probing, of course, as maintaining rapport between the interviewee and the interviewer is a crucial component in qualitative research such as this. Yet, I believe that important information was gleaned from these exchanges, especially in the discourses they used to discuss issues of race.

All three of the racial discourses described in Frankenberg’s taxonomy were used by the teachers in the interviews. Two variations of the essentialist discourse appeared: the traditional one based on biological differences, and a more contemporary version that posits cultural differences on a scale of suitability to schooling and, presumably, contemporary life. In fact, the cultural-deficit version of the essentialist discourse was the most commonly used discourse by the teachers. There was some evidence of the colour-blind discourse, as well as the race-cognizance discourse. For the purposes of this research, one of the most significant findings about how the teachers think about race is their resistance to the race-cognizance discourse. This resistance provides a major obstacle to a more radical political ideology entering into social studies education, at least in Vancouver secondary schools. At this point, it is informative to discuss the ways the teachers think about multicultural education.
5.4.2 Versions of Multiculturalism Influencing the Teachers

One of the questions I asked the teachers concerned their thoughts on multicultural education. (See Appendix 1, question 9). Earlier in this chapter I described the taxonomy of five versions of multiculturalism developed by Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997): monoculturalism, liberal multiculturalism, pluralist multiculturalism, left-essentialist multiculturalism, and critical multiculturalism. Based on this taxonomy, I have determined which version of multiculturalism best describes the views of the teachers. The type of multiculturalism that describes the way teachers understand the concept allowed me to determine which political ideology was the most influential, at least in this area.

Similar to the last section on racial discourses, noteworthy statements were made by the teachers around multicultural issues for questions that were not necessarily asking about their thoughts on it. For instance, the question about which “discoverers, adventurers and heroes” they chose to focus on in their classrooms elicited responses that allowed me to ascertain at least a partial view around multiculturalism for some of them. Across all ten interviews, four of the five types of multiculturalism in Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy appeared. The only one for which there was no evidence was left-essentialist multiculturalism.

There was very little evidence of monoculturalism, which is not really multiculturalism but the term Kincheloe and Steinberg use to describe a desire for a Eurocentric understanding of society and the world. Monoculturalism is clearly within a conservative paradigm. I mentioned in the last section that Larry Nelson, a veteran teacher at Larson Secondary, answered the question about multiculturalism in the following way:

LN: We’ve been fairly Western-dominant. In the last 30 years we’re coming to a point where I think we’re trying to be a little too overly politically correct... Is it all for the good? I’m still not absolutely sure.
Later on during the interview, I asked Nelson about the discoverers, adventurers and heroes he chooses to cover in the social studies courses he teaches.

LN: In the early days, we never did cover women, the heroines, very much. Now we’re including them in a more workable fashion. We’re finding more articles about them. You know, the women in World War I, and obviously the pioneer women, and people like that. We’ve had to search that out to make it more equitable.

Nelson has altered the traditional telling of the past, which in its usual form consists of listing the achievements of dead White males of privilege. He has supplemented the curriculum with some heroic stories of White women, a significant change, to be sure, but not one that challenges the dominance of the Eurocentric curriculum. Further probing revealed that Nelson did not incorporate the curriculum with any contributions or issues experienced by non-White groups in Canada. The addition of White Canadian women to Larry Nelson’s social studies curriculum destabilizes the universal subject in terms of gender, but not from a racial perspective. In fact, for the most part, Nelson’s view of teaching social studies would best be described as monoculturalist. Yet, his views were by no means the most clearly articulated within this conservative version of multiculturalism.

Craig Evans, the department head at Victoria Park Secondary in the east end, espoused views about multiculturalism that can only be described as Eurocentric and, by corollary, monoculturalist. His classes are filled predominantly with students whose parents had immigrated from Asia. The following excerpt is rather lengthy but it is also a classic example of the conservative call for a more Eurocentric base for our society.

CE: Multiculturalism has become political correctness. I want to teach world cultures, okay? I certainly don’t want to teach that Disney culture. The Disney culture upsets my stomach.

PO: What do you mean when you say the Disney culture?
CE: Let me give you an example of Disney culture. We took a group of students out camping. And I said to them, "For the campfire, I want you to have some campfire songs to sing. So I will provide you with some authentic folk songs. "No! No! No! We have our own songs. Can't we bring our own songs to sing?" So I naively said, "Sure, you can bring your own songs to sing." And the only songs they sang were songs from Disney films, right? The Lion King. Aladdin. This is the culture of those kids. Now I would be singing "She'll be Comin' Round the Mountain," right?

PO: Which is old Americana.

CE: North Americana. You know, it's cross-border. Or "Barrett's Privateers." They have no conception of these songs at all. When I sang "Barrett's Privateers," they were in awe of this historical kind of song. You know, it's a way of knowing your culture through song, folk songs. It was an interesting eye-opener for me to see that whole thing ... I think that what's come out of this whole multicultural thing is a desire not to be offensive. In trying to not be offensive, we've left the thing wide open and now we teach them nothing. Nothing's being taught. Instead of becoming multicultural, we've become Disney-cultural.

PO: Why do you say nothing's being taught?

CE: I mean by the general culture. We've been betrayed. We have been betrayed by the corporations, by the greed and the money-grubbing. We've been betrayed. The kids have been made into this fictional, artificial, pablumy kind of sugary culture that's just an absolute betrayal of what we do in the classroom. I mean, you know this. You've been teaching a long time. They have no comprehension, they have no way of decoding their own culture anymore. They just don't know. They don't get the allusions. They don't understand whether it's Odysseus and the Greek world or if it's the Judaic world or whether it's the world of Christianity, which, you know, all make up this great western civilization. They're not equipped. None of that stuff is in the mass culture anymore. Mass culture has betrayed the school system and then it bewails the fact that the kids can't read and write. But there's no help for the kids to learn except in the classroom. So everything that used to help them learn, like the CBC, doesn't help them anymore. Now they watch Oprah and other crap.

This response by Evans demonstrates a frustration among some educators who lament the quick changes that they perceive to be happening in Canada. It is also an example of those who want a return
to a blissful North America where everyone understood the so-called greatness of European achievements. As I have mentioned earlier, this blissful period never really existed, especially for those people who belong to marginalized groups. Of course, Evans’ comments also contain criticisms of the influence of corporate pop culture, especially Disney. In this respect, he indicates that he has been influenced by small-c conservatism. Although his position on the effects of Disney can be seen as coming out of a radical perspective, his other comments in which he wishes for a return to a time when students understood the Judeo-Christian-Hellenic foundations of western civilization clearly indicate that he is not a radical. (This assessment also fits with Evans self-assessment. He has called himself a small-c conservative in previous conversations with me over the years.)

Evans laments the lack of understanding among his students, most of whom are of Asian descent, of the Judaic-Christian-Hellenic heritage upon which he believes Canadian society is based. It might be true that the first- and second-generation Asian students in his classroom exhibit a waning ethnicity, but this is no different for European-Canadians (and in this I speak from personal experience). I consider this to be more a function of the immigrant experience in general, coupled with the high-impact intensity of pop culture today, rather than a smaller focus on the traditional western canon. In *Educating Citizens* (1988), progressive educator Ken Osborne agrees that there is a place for the western canon in a curriculum based on a democratic socialist agenda. Teachers should work from a combination of “real world” conditions and the traditions of liberal education, according to Osborne, in order to understand something of “the wider heritage of which they are both the heirs and the trustees for the generations to come” (p. 48). Yet, Craig Evans makes no mention of real world conditions or anything close to resembling a democratic socialist agenda. Rather than holding a progressive perspective, Evans supports a traditionalist perspective.
Evans’ response to what multiculturalism means utilizes another conservative code when he equates it to “political correctness.” In *Writing the Social* (1999), Dorothy E. Smith considers the notion of *political correctness* to be an ideological code “planted and put into circulation to regulate the intertextualities of public discourse” (p. 172). Smith posits that conservatives, like former American president George Bush, consciously used this code to control the public discourse around progressive movements based in multiculturalism and feminism. “Once ideological codes are established, they are self-reproducing” and “operate as a free-floating form of control in the relations of public discourse” (*ibid.*, p. 175). According to Smith’s theory, Evans has incorporated this particular conservative code into his thinking and used it to dismiss any further discussion around teachers (further) embracing multicultural education in their pedagogical practices. Evans is firmly positioned within the monocultural paradigm in Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy.

The two forms of multiculturalism that emanate from liberalism, namely the liberal and pluralist versions, also fail to acknowledge unequal power relations between various racial and ethnic groups. As I demonstrated in the curricular analysis section in this chapter, liberalism dislodged conservatism as the dominant ideology beginning with the 1968 B.C. social studies curriculum. By corollary, it is no wonder that liberal and pluralist multiculturalism were the two most common multiculturalist discourses evident in the words of the veteran teachers.

As I mentioned in the section describing the five versions of multiculturalism in Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy, liberal multiculturalism “glorifies neutrality” by highlighting common aspects of humans, regardless of background. A few of the teachers used the colour-blind discourse of liberal multiculturalism in its classic form. Tim Patterson, who teaches in a west side school composed of primarily East Asian and White students, described what it means to be a good citizen in the following way:
TP: I think that [students] should be aware that this is not a uni-cultural society, if that's a word. You should hope to achieve a common thread of understanding that is cross-cultural, but I think the hardest thing for a citizen in a country like Canada to understand is that there are different views based on ethnicity. But that said, I think that the teacher looks for commonalities on a human level.

Patterson displays both liberal and pluralist forms of multiculturalism in this quote. Later on in the interview, Patterson answered the question about multiculturalism by stating a preference.

TP: I like the common approach. I like that approach, finding the common approach rather than overtly promoting the differences because there's a human element to all cultures and I think that should be promoted.

By stressing "the common approach," Patterson declares himself to be in support of liberal multiculturalism. He wasn't the only teacher who preferred to teach about commonalities across cultures. Barry Kelvin, another teacher in a west side school, responded to a question about social justice by incorporating the colour-blind discourse.

BK: ... We all come from the same starting point. We all, you know, come from the same background, really. We're on this Earth. We all want to have good lives. We're all African. We want to be happy. We want to enjoy life.

Both Patterson and Kelvin are using a classic version of the colour-blind discourse. This discourse, of course, is clearly rooted within liberal multiculturalism. By pointing out that all humanity originates from Africa, Kelvin attempts to sidestep the issue of unequal power relations, a strategy he also employed when discussing issues of race in the teaching of the past, which I described in the preceding section of racial discourses. It is interesting to note that in that section, Kelvin was quoted as asking "How far back are we to go?" to right the wrongs of history. Yet, here he goes back to the beginning of humanity to carry on with his colour-blind and clearly power-blind perspective.
Liberal multiculturalism does not take into account historical events or processes that work to privilege some groups at the expense of others. In other words, history and its connections to power are absent. Instead, liberal multiculturalism focuses on the festivities of non-dominant cultures, such as their habits around dress, food, music, and dance. Barry Kelvin describes how he fell into the trap of this version of multiculturalism until misgivings changed his way of teaching.

BK: In the old days what did they do? They taught about festivals. They celebrated national days, which gave a totally warped vision of this culture or this civilization. Like, every day's a dancing day in this country. And they always wear wooden shoes in Holland... When I first started teaching, I'd grab onto anything I thought would be fun. I think that's pretty usual for a first-year teacher. It's interesting until you realize the ramifications of doing this.

Kelvin exhibits a partial penetration into the limitations of liberal multiculturalism. He understands that by highlighting the celebratory aspects of different cultures, the students receive a caricature representation. Perhaps this is why Kelvin relies on a colour-blind understanding of the past. He may consider it to be too complex for him to incorporate historical injustice into the curriculum he teaches. (As will be seen in chapter 6, Kelvin supports an individualist boot-strap philosophy for helping his students get ahead, regardless of social background.) Yet, Kelvin's partial understanding of the negative ramifications of teaching about other cultures in a caricature manner was not the norm among the group of participants.

One of the key characteristics of liberal multiculturalism is that all people, regardless of background, share a common humanity. The dominant culture is replete with rituals of leisure, of course, enabling liberal-minded educators who wish to promote, consciously or not, the notion of a common humanity by highlighting the festive rituals of other cultures. Although Barry Kelvin suggests that it is common for beginning teachers to resort to a liberal multicultural framework because it contains an element of fun, it turns out that there is a significant percentage of veteran teachers who
implement a similar strategy. In fact, three of the remaining nine participants described their notion of teaching from a multicultural perspective in these terms.

The response of Ed Hitchcock, a west side teacher at Kipling Secondary, to the question about what multicultural education means encapsulates this sentiment best.

EH: Well, I would first consider that it's the sharing of various cultures. If you're looking at Japanese language, Japanese music, Japanese food, Japanese customs, we've had visiting Japanese officials and students. The deeper the bow, the greater the respect. You wouldn't necessarily give just a one-head nod, that wouldn't certainly be too appropriate.

PO: So would you say that multicultural education means promoting an appreciation of different cultures?

EH: An appreciation, yes, but one that isn't so Eurocentric. What about, say, some of our Asian cultures or African cultures? It's not to say that you have to change your whole lifestyle to accommodate this, but you can at least have an appreciation. You might not like some of the music, but you can at least understand why it's there.

Hitchcock's first set of statements seemed to describe how he prepared his students to greet Japanese officials. I attempted to encapsulate what he had said, an important part of the analytical process. I suggested that his notion of multicultural education was to encourage "an appreciation of different cultures" in order to give Hitchcock the opportunity either to agree or to think on a deeper level about the meaning of multicultural education. Yet, his response to my probe only further reinforced the notion of "appreciation."

There were three teachers who spoke about multiculturalism from a predominantly pluralist perspective. In fact, west side teacher Barry Kelvin suggested that rather than calling it multiculturalism, "the real word for it should be pluralism." As well, there were two others who incorporated aspects of this with other versions. The teacher who most clearly articulated his views
around race and multiculturalism from a pluralist perspective was Eric Quinn, a teacher at Warner Secondary School, located in Vancouver’s west side. Quinn spoke eloquently about the reasons why a pluralist version of multiculturalism is best suited to the needs of today’s society. He also took the opportunity of using the interview to critique versions to the right and to the left of pluralist multiculturalism, particularly in the telling of the past. Perhaps it is best to begin with Quinn’s critiques.

During the interview, Quinn and I had an exchange about the appropriateness of teachers altering the prescribed curriculum to consider the groups the students in a particular classroom belong to. He offered the following thoughts:

**EQ:** We have to teach history. We have to try to make sure we create a pluralist, tolerant society. So, how do you do that? There’s a fairly direct correlation. You can’t create a pluralist and tolerant society by giving students a monocultural view of humanity and human activity through time.

**PO:** So, do you agree with the critics who say that the curriculum has been too Eurocentric?

**EQ:** Yeah. The way I see it is, in the ’70s there was this crisis of relevance ... You can see it in the textbooks. If you look at them, there’s this crisis of relevance. What do we teach? And part of the solution was in reevaluating the whole hierarchical militaristic point of view of history. And it was soon after that that social history came in. And social history became like a new way of understanding history. The CBC, *The Peoples’ History* CBC series is a good example of, I think, a mature venting finally of a sense of, “Hey, you know what? There’s all sorts of people who have their stories to tell.” So you tell as many stories as possible. You soon realize stories are not just about the movers and shakers.

Quinn is clearly opposed to what Kincheloe and Steinberg call monoculturalism, a term Quinn himself used without any prompting from me. By positing that teachers should “tell as many stories as possible,” Quinn also seems to be praising social history. Yet, this does not put him in the same camp with noted radical social historians such as Howard Zinn, who wrote one of the seminal works of
social history, *A People's History of the United States* (1980). In the preceding section on racial discourses used by the teachers, I pointed out Quinn’s thoughts on teaching history from the perspective of the marginalized. He considered teaching from the “equal opposite extreme” as flawed as teaching from a Eurocentric position. Quinn does not bring power into his telling of the past. In this sense, he is clearly opposed to both of the radical forms of multiculturalism: left-essentialist and critical. Moreover, Quinn would undoubtedly take exception to R. W. Connell’s suggestion that curriculum be altered to “the standpoint of the least advantaged” (1993, p. 43).

Quinn thought that the key issue around multicultural education was in how to “create a pluralist view of history … without creating victimization.” As I pointed out in the last section, Quinn thinks that it is the discourse or the kind of social history that focuses on injustice that creates social problems today rather than the actual events that have taken place. For this veteran teacher, the most crucial reason for pushing a pluralist version of multiculturalism is because it fits in with our non-racist attitudes as Canadians.

EQ: [I]t’s probably the central thing in our Canadian ethic, in our ethos as Canadians and that is, we don’t see the world as racially divided. Everybody has to categorize and divide up the world to understand it, of course. But the way that we do it in Canada is not in a we-versus-them way. This is why I’m against teaching my political opinion. Because, I think that the us-versus-them situation ultimately becomes ideological. It teaches division. I come from a home that was quite big on division, you know, based on religious grounds. It took me a long time to bust through that and really understand things in a way of, a perception of what is central to the Canadian ethos. And that is, we subscribe to the sense of dignity, the dignity of each individual, which does not make anybody more equal before the law.

A careful reading of Quinn’s lengthy commentary indicates that the way to talk about difference in a manner that does not create an us-versus-them situation is to negate any considerations of power and socially-constructed oppression, at least here in Canada. It is significant that Quinn is able to articulate
how his pluralist views developed out of a reaction to his upbringing in a religious home that was "quite big on division." The majority of people are probably influenced by ideology either directly or as a reaction against what they have experienced.

Quinn also believes that it is not "ideological" or biased to teach about the past without highlighting the injustices perpetrated on one group by another more powerful group. This is an extremely crucial point for this research. The apparent blindness to power in the formal curriculum appeared several times during the interviews with many of the teachers. I consider this to be a major impediment to realizing the means of using social studies for the goal of social justice. Eric Quinn, however, had a response to critics such as me.

Throughout the interview, I could not help but feel that underlying Quinn’s teaching of social studies was the conviction that Canada was a beacon of light, a paragon of a nation in which social justice was the driving force. Consider the following comment:

EQ: A lot of the minorities that come here, they come from very divided societies where there are deep senses of us and them. And if they hear us, as teachers, perpetuating that in our framework, they will just perpetuate it in theirs, whether it's Japanese looking down on Koreans or Chinese or all of those groups looking down on the East Indians. They've got to hear this story from us of racial tolerance, racial tolerance based on the dignity of each individual, backed up by the biggest force we have, which is the law. The courts, or even the gun, if necessary.

Quinn wishes to use education to combat the racist attitudes that are coming to Canada from other places, especially Asia. According to Quinn, state apparatuses, such as the school, the law, the court, and even the police, are to be used to teach the Other about progressive values such as tolerance. This element of nationalistic fervour is not completely unheard of in educational circles, especially when one considers what takes place in the country to the south of us. To a large extent, Quinn’s goals and expectations for the role of the school are not all that different from my own or from those of most
radical or progressive educators in Canada. The difference, of course, is in the approach. I could not help but think that Quinn’s views seemed to be based on a lack of awareness of past suffering, especially during Canada’s colonial and nation-building periods. In fact, Quinn’s thoughts around issues of race and multiculturalism are a clear demonstration of the crucial difference between liberalism and a more progressive radicalism based on a socialist or social democratic ideology that critiques power.

I consider Quinn’s views on these issues to contribute to the ideal of what many liberals claim to want to use our schools for, namely, to promote a non-racist and socially just society, but are unable to deliver. There are many reasons why social divisions exist, many deeply embedded in our past. Yet, the effects linger to this day. By ignoring these factors, teachers such as Eric Quinn mistakenly believe that the mere message of tolerance will prevail and that unjust social hierarchies will one day vanish. Perhaps I am speculating too much on Quinn’s behalf. Yet, the data provide radical critics with evidence that the school acts as a hegemonic device for those in privileged positions, economically, politically, and socially. This is a classic radical criticism of liberalism.

One more point pertaining to pluralist multiculturalism that arose from the data was also the last point that Kincheloe and Steinberg discussed in their description of this version. If indeed pluralist multiculturalism has a vital role in furthering capitalism’s global interests, as Kincheloe and Steinberg maintain, then educators who believe in this doctrine must want to instill within the students a set of skills to help them negotiate with people from other cultures. Teacher Barry Kelvin agrees.

**BK:** When these kids graduate and they start to deal with people they don’t know from other cultures, they will be better able to adapt. They will have more, I don’t know if skills is the right word, but they will know how to proceed in a more respectful way, I think. They’ll at least have some experiences even if they’re limited to a video clip in the classroom or a field trip. But at least social studies becomes an avenue for getting insights that they won’t get in any other courses.
Put this way, pluralist multiculturalism sounds as though it is a definite improvement over the Eurocentric curriculum that was traditionally used in B.C. classrooms until the 1980s. I would have to agree with this. Yet, on the other hand, this position can easily be co-opted to enable the aims of capitalism to be furthered. From this perspective, pluralist multiculturalism serves a similar function, as Edward Said (1978) so eloquently explained, that European Orientalists performed during the empire-building era.

Another teacher said that for him multiculturalism meant a “sharing of various cultures” because this would lead students to “an appreciation” of humanity, in general. A fourth participant agreed that cultural appreciation was important because it would help promote tolerance. For both of these teachers, the celebratory nature of liberal multiculturalism was the preferred form. The remaining form, known as critical multiculturalism, has the opposite effect of liberal forms of multiculturalism.

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997), one of the key characteristics of critical multiculturalism is the assumption that everything about teaching is political. Although there was very little evidence of critical multiculturalism in the thoughts expressed by the teachers during the interviews, two teachers exhibited thinking from this position. Kelvin claimed that the reason that some teachers resort to a liberal version of multiculturalism is because it is so difficult to find better teaching “materials [so] that you can educate yourself before you educate the students.” I do not necessarily agree with Kelvin’s reasoning on this front, however, because I have found it a relatively easy process to find materials to aid in the development of pedagogy based upon critical multiculturalist principles. This is why I use the term “partial penetration” to describe Kelvin’s thoughts. Had he actually employed some agency, found some effective resources and taught from this perspective, I would not have been so quick to add the adjective “partial” to Kelvin’s position.
Another teacher whose thoughts indicate at least some influence from the radical ideology is Steve Graham, a teacher in a relatively impoverished neighbourhood in Vancouver's east end. This is his response to the question about multicultural education.

**SG:** History has traditionally been from a Caucasian, White-dominated perspective. There's no denying that fact. The topics that students now are interested in show how multiculturalism is making a difference. Looking at the research poster on Japanese Canadian internment camps on the wall there that a couple of my students did shows some fascinating things that went beyond anything I even knew. I also spend some time on the experience of the early Chinese immigrants in British Columbia. You know, Gold Mountain, and the different treatment they received just because they weren't White. I know that I don't teach about dead White men exclusively. Sure, there's some dead White men in there. But teachers must look at other examples of Canada's history to teach about, unless you're completely oblivious to your classroom. I look around to a typical group of faces in my classroom, right? And I see, you know, Indo-Canadian, Filipino-Canadian, Vietnamese, Chinese, you name it. So I'd be an idiot if I focused my whole course around dead White guys.

Graham exhibits another feature particular to critical multiculturalism, albeit to a minor degree. His comments indicate that he is at least partially aware that each student's racial self-image is important in the connection between their own identity construction and self-esteem. Yet, he eschews the celebratory approach of the pluralists in favour of focusing on differential treatment and other forms of injustice.

Had the conversation gone further, I might have been able to discern Graham's thoughts around what Kincheloe and Steinberg were getting at around the concept of racial self-image, namely, how "power shapes consciousness" (p. 25). The curriculum alteration he provides around the different treatment Chinese immigrants received in nineteenth century British Columbia because of their race indicates an understanding that racial injustice in Canada's history is important for students to
understand. In this way, Graham separates himself from those teachers who don’t believe that this should be told, whether because it creates “victimized” groups today, as Eric Quinn contends, or it forces educators to deal with the dilemma of how far back in time should we focus on racial injustice. Yet, overall, even Graham’s position is a weak example of critical multiculturalism.

Perhaps it is not surprising to find that there was very little evidence in the interview data that would indicate the presence of a perspective based on the tenets of critical multiculturalism. After all, this form of multiculturalism emanates from the politics of the radical left. The two instances I cited, one by Barry Kelvin and the other by Steve Graham, were only examples of partial critical thought. There was no evidence in the data of a critical multiculturalism and a commitment to egalitarianism and the elimination of human suffering based in the curricular perspective of transformation. In the history of Canada and elsewhere, race has been so central to the experience of human suffering. Yet, because there was so little evidence of it being presented in a critical framework, it is clear that there is a major problem of using the school, particularly the social studies classroom, as a site to foster progressive change.

5.5 Summary and Conclusion

The preceding analysis makes it clear that political ideology has indeed been at the root of how the social studies classroom explores issues of race. Both data sources, the curriculum and the teacher interviews, indicate that there has been an ideological struggle of sorts primarily between conservatism and liberalism during the twentieth century. To a much lesser extent, the radical left has also made brief appearances in social studies education in British Columbia. Yet, the evolution of the influence of political ideology in B.C. social studies education can be summarized as a move from the unabashed White supremacy of conservatism to a more insidious Eurocentric liberalism.
The B.C. Annual Reports from 1926 to 1933 indicate that social studies learning objectives were overwhelmingly dominated by British conservatism and its traditional cornerstone of racial hierarchies based upon White supremacy. The 1941 and 1949 curricula continued with the notion that the British Empire was good for all subjects, regardless of race. The essentialist discourse used in the state-sanctioned documents promoted a Eurocentric monoculturalism throughout this period. Other common hegemonic strategies used were the reification of First Nations cultures and the omission of Asian peoples, despite the preponderance of these racial groups in the social make-up of this province.

Although the colour-blind discourse first appeared in the 1956 curriculum, this document is still dominated by the conservative essentialist discourse. It is noteworthy that the entire 1956 and 1968 curricula are devoid of any notion of conflict in the history of Canada. (Refer to chapter 4 for references to only a small fraction of the conflicts that took place between various social groups during the colonial and nation-building periods.) Yet, the colour-blind discourse made more frequent appearances in the latter document. Usage of statements such as “Canadians, both past and present, have interacted and co-operated in the development of the Canadian nation” serves to underscore Frankenberg’s assertion that the colour-blind discourse is power-blind. In the framework of this study, colour-blind statements like this work as hegemonic devices in the service of the privileged White elites of Canada. The 1968 curriculum is also the first to acknowledge the cultural diversity of Canada’s population, an indication that pluralist multiculturalism was gaining credibility in certain social and educational circles during this time. It also indicates that liberalism was successfully dislodging conservatism as the main ideology underlying the social studies curriculum in British Columbia. The 1968 curriculum exhibits the last vestiges of the conservative ideology, albeit in a much less overt way than its predecessors.
The 1980 curriculum gave tacit approval to the imperial project, citing the necessity of expansion for certain societies without pointing out the consequences for others. In this way, the 1980 document indicates the successful transition of the social studies curriculum from conservatism to the liberal ideology and its trademark characteristic of hidden power. The 1988 document, especially the grade 9 component, is the first and thus far only document to create some state-sanctioned space to create imperialism, nation-building, and race relations from a radical ideological position. This space, however, would only be used by a teacher already influenced by a progressive left-wing political ideology. By contrast, the grade 11 component of this same document is almost completely developed through the liberal lens of pluralist multiculturalism.

The most recent social studies curriculum, published in 1997, is more liberal than any other in its ideological underpinnings. It is also more adept at concealing economic and political interests than any of its predecessors. The revised format enabled official knowledge to be more tightly controlled. Meritocracy is strongly supported in this document, especially in the representation of the contributions of immigrants to Canada’s development. Yet, the 1997 curriculum is a vast improvement over the others in the representation of First Nations peoples and issues, albeit from a liberal perspective. In terms of racial representation, the B.C. social studies curriculum had evolved from a blatantly supportive paper steeped in White supremacy and conservatism to a polished document championing pluralist multiculturalism and based in liberal ideology.

The second data source for this research, namely, the views of ten veteran social studies teachers in Vancouver, can only be viewed as a snapshot, lacking the longitudinal aspect of the curricular analysis. Moreover, the participants all teach in Vancouver high schools, thereby negating the possibility to determine whether teachers in the suburbs and small towns across British Columbia think differently. It is also possible that this group of department head teachers is not indicative of the
Vancouver teaching force, in general, although my thoughts on this possibility based on my long experience as a Vancouver teacher suggests that this is not the case. With all of these points taken into account, it is clear that there is an ideological struggle taking place at the level of the actual thinking about issues of race among Vancouver’s veteran social studies educators.

Although liberalism has long supplanted conservatism as the main political ideology underlying the B.C. social studies curriculum, the data analysis of the interviews indicates that conservative views on racial and cultural matters have not been expunged as successfully from the minds of teachers. The essentialist discourse appeared, as did the more contemporary cultural deficit discourse. Both are effective in taking the blame away from the school system itself in explaining why members of marginalized groups fare less well academically. The first was used by two teachers who considered the genetic make-up of First Nations people and east Asian working-class people to be at least part of the reasoning behind the economic and social plight many of them experience.

The second version of the traditional cultural-deficit discourse was used by half of the ten participants. The various teachers who were influenced by this discourse used it in different ways. The most common usage was the claim that the lack of academic success of certain racial groups, especially First Nations people, is because of a lack of successful role models. Other statements used by the teachers that indicated a belief that the problem was in the marginalized culture itself included their lack of understanding of the current economy, their attitude that schooling was more for social purposes than academic ones, their cultural aversion to the written form, and their lack of a sense of structure around time. A statement made by one teacher best sums up all of these points within the cultural-deficit version of the essentialist discourse: “[M]aybe it’s Aboriginal culture, that it’s not their forte to pursue academic life.”
Fewer teachers used either of the other racial discourses. One used the colour-blind discourse of liberalism in the same series of statements in which he utilized the conservative cultural-deficit discourse. Two teachers used elements of the race-cognizance discourse. One teacher used the race-cognizance discourse to place the blame for the lack of academic success with Aboriginal students squarely on the school system itself. Both of these teachers demonstrated through use of this discourse that the radical political ideology had influenced, at least to some extent, the ways they saw the world in racial terms.

The most surprising finding in this segment of the research was in the resistance to the race-cognizance discourse held by the majority of the teachers. All of them were aware of its basic content, namely, that the marginalization of various racial and cultural groups in our society stemmed from oppressive social structures constructed by the dominant groups. There were three criticisms of this discourse. First, some claimed that this discourse was the result of our society simply becoming too “politically correct.” Second, two of them indicated that the view of the race-cognizance discourse “creates victimization.” This position in particular leads me to stress the need for teacher education to deconstruct the power some educators believe this discourse to possess in creating victims rather than the real root causes, namely, material and social inequities. A third point of resistance to the race-cognizance discourse, related to the previous two, was that it would inevitably turn social studies into “the bleeding hearts of education,” as Ed Hitchcock said, a label he clearly despised.

It must be acknowledged that the fact that each one of the participants was White undoubtedly skewed the reaction to the race-cognizance discourse. Yet, the vast majority of teachers and preservice teachers are also White, at least in the context of British Columbia. Therefore, this finding in particular requires some attention in both teacher education programs and social studies curriculum.
The interview discussions around multiculturalism exhibited similar aspects as those involving racial discourses in terms of political ideology, of course. In fact, the analysis around multiculturalism that used Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy yielded very similar results to the racial discourse analysis based on Frankenberg’s work. All of the teachers said that they believe that in the past the social studies curriculum has been Eurocentric, especially for the student population in the typical classroom in B.C.’s Lower Mainland. Yet, two of them lamented what has been lost by what they perceive to be a shift in curricular focus brought about by multiculturalism. Indeed, these teachers are what Kincheloe and Steinberg call monoculturalists.

The two most common forms of multiculturalism supported by the teachers as a whole were the two based in the liberal ideology. Four teachers supported liberal multiculturalism, while three others were predominantly pluralist, in addition to two others supportive, to a lesser extent, of pluralist multiculturalism. One teacher in the latter group spoke of multiculturalism both in terms of pointing out cultural differences as well as commonalities across the human spectrum. In other words, he is in support of both forms of multiculturalism emanating out of liberal ideology.

Two teachers said they emphasize commonalities rather than differences across cultures in their classroom lessons. Tolerance was the main goal for the teachers who described aspects of pluralist multiculturalism as part of their teaching. One of these teachers expressed a social justice philosophy similar to my own. Yet, his means were quite different. He ignored the reasons why social divisions based on race and culture have occurred in the past and in the present, considering this to be the best way to encourage tolerance. In a manner similar to Karl Marx, who considered liberalism incapable of attaining the economically-free society its adherents claimed to want, I consider the position of the liberal educator to be inherently flawed, as well as socially and politically naïve. There are reasons why these social divisions occur, many of them deeply embedded in the past. Yet, the effects linger to
the present. Based on both theory and my experience as a teacher, I don’t believe that the mere message of tolerance is strong enough to prevail in the minds of the students and, more importantly, in society itself. My position is also supported by others (Lewis, 2001; Sleeter, 1996).

There were other underlying reasons, also related to the notion of tolerance, why some teachers supported a pluralist form of multiculturalism. Two of them seemed to base this in a type of nationalist pride, that Canada was a leader in tolerance and that it is in the best interests of all, including newly arrived immigrants, to get on the bandwagon, so to speak. Two mentioned that by highlighting the achievements of successful members of non-dominant groups, students from those groups benefit in terms of increased self-esteem. Another teacher spoke of the benefits students would enjoy, both in work and socially, once they became adults if they had been educated in aspects of other cultures during their school years. The analysis around teacher use of the two versions of multiculturalism emanating out of liberalism demonstrated the effectiveness of Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy and why using Frankenberg’s model of racial discourses would not have been enough.

Two teachers demonstrated partial support for what Kincheloe and Steinberg refer to as critical multiculturalism in their taxonomy. One mentioned the “ramifications” that arise when teachers approach multiculturalism by focussing on celebrations, food, dress and religious holidays. The other went further, describing how the differential and unfair treatment various racial groups have experienced in the history of Canada is part of his lesson plans. Yet, I describe both of these teachers as being only partially influenced by critical multicultural because neither spoke about a commitment to a teaching philosophy based on the eradication of human suffering based on race and racism and the intersections with other axes of oppression in our contemporary world.

1 In Canada, there is often a distinction made between First Nations issues and issues of race in general. This may be, at least in part, due to the political and legal arguments that because First Nations people were the first inhabitants of the land, that their situation differs from all other groups.
According to Haithe Anderson (2002), crucial limits to liberalism and its multicultural forms have been made clear since September 11, 2001. The liberal call for tolerance has been disrupted by the apparent anti-American philosophies held by adherents to Al Queda. Anderson concludes that even liberal teachers understand that “foreign ideas radically opposed to homegrown ones must be rejected” (p. 1).

Although I have not delineated between forms of conservatism in this study, my use of the term “small-c conservatism” is similar to the way I describe conservatism in general on social issues, namely, its support of traditional social hierarchies. Yet, small-c conservatism is more highly critical of the effects of mass culture and corporate influences than the corporate conservatism that dominates American political power structures today.
Chapter 6  The Forgotten Identity Marker: What Curriculum & Teachers Say About Social Class – Not Much!

In North America, discussions of social class are considered to be in questionable taste, indeed are surrounded by formidable taboos. It is less outre to converse graphically about kinky sex than to suggest that social classes exist, or that their existence has important consequences.

James Laxer in The Undeclared War (1998, p. 32)

A prevailing assumption in our time is that class awareness is a thing of the past, that anyone who engages with it is either misguided, revels in mischief-making, or mistakenly blames others for their own ineptitude or low station in life. Indeed, the meritocratic notion that anyone can make it through hard work seems to be as deeply embedded in North American consciousness as the Christian idea that there is a beautiful afterlife for those who simply grin and bear their lot in this life. Yet, there are several extremely important reasons to discuss social class in both the Canadian and American contexts today. In fact, the topic should have more resonance today than it has for several decades because it is getting ever more difficult to be poor than it has been since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

There are myriad reasons for issues of social class to receive prominent attention. Child poverty is greatly increasing at the same time that provincial governments across Canada are reducing funding for public education (Maynes & Foster, 2000, p. 56). Free trade deals like NAFTA are lowering the wages, job security and working conditions for a vast number of labourers in both Canada and the United States (Laxer, 1998, pp. 17-18). One of the greatest accomplishments of all western societies (except the United States) took place in the post-war decades when state-financed health care systems made available for all citizens high-quality health care. This is undoubtedly an egalitarian transforming achievement in which liberals and social democrats can take pride. Yet, in Canada and Britain today there is increasing pressure to create two-tiered health care systems to more closely resemble the
American system (Laxer, 1998, p. 21). Moreover, social scientists who study life expectancy have known for a long time that the biggest single factor in elongating life is social class (ibid., p. 29). With the current dismantling of the social-welfare state, an increase in this longevity gap can be expected. It is significant that places with a narrower income gap like Japan, France, and Sweden have “a life expectancy that is on average higher than societies where the income gap is wider,” such as Canada, the United States, and Britain (ibid., p. 30).

Social relations today are greatly influenced by occupation (ibid, 1998, p. 43). To a large extent, you are what you do for a living, at least as far as others are concerned. The main reason for this is straightforward: people may be better able to determine similarities and differences they may have with other people once they know their occupation or profession. Relating this to children, there are very few people in Canada who do not recognize that one’s life chances are greatly decreased for those who come from a working-class background compared to those who do not.

If social class is still an extremely important aspect of one’s identity, what are the barriers to it being discussed, even in polite terms, in North America? Indeed, anyone who even occasionally reads major European newspapers like the British-based Guardian and the Paris-based Le Monde realizes that the public discourse in these countries includes legitimate debate over the future of the social-welfare state. In fact, many European societies accept the Marxist assertion that industrial societies are always composed of social classes that can be labeled either dominant or dominated. So why is the situation so different here?

In The Undeclared War (1998), Canadian political scientist James Laxer suggests that part of the reason that Europeans openly debate class issues is in their history. European capitalism displaced feudalism, the class-based system that supported nobility at the expense of a landless peasantry, while “the seventeenth-century colonies that became the United States were capitalist from the start” (p. 53).
American philosopher John Dewey (1989) agrees with this assertion, claiming that “[t]he shock of physical dislocation effected a very considerable modification of new attitudes” (p. 132). Yet, at the time Dewey was developing his philosophy of education, he saw this (almost) blank slate as a “fortunate conjunction of circumstances” because the “task of forming new institutions was thereby rendered immensely easier.” It would seem that Dewey did not envision that the privileged citizenry of late twentieth-century America would allow the exploitation of the working classes in the United States and elsewhere to proceed with little in the way of intense public debate.

As Canada becomes more integrated with American values and economics, more and more Canadians also buy into the rhetoric that accessibility to the market system is available to all. In both Canada and the United States, many people believe that “the inequalities that do exist … are the consequence of what happens when people of differing levels of ability apply dissimilar amounts of energy to the task of getting ahead” (Laxer, 1998, p. 36). In other words, wealth and power are seen as legitimately attained in meritocracies.

Laxer contends that another major barrier to opening up the debate about the social-welfare state in North America lies in the popular idea that the economic system here is already an “egalitarian capitalism that serves the interests of the little guy” (p. 32). The effect of this discourse is that since the 1980s there has been a vitriolic attack on the poor themselves. (Europeans, on the other hand, especially in the west but increasingly so in the east, are in general much more skeptical of the liberal notion of egalitarian capitalism.) Many North Americans have bought into the conservative argument that poor people have no one to blame but themselves for their miserable lives. Instead of a war on poverty, we see a war on the poor unfold. In both countries, there has been an unprecedented increase in the gap between the haves and the have-nots (Laxer, 1998, p. 5). In other words, privileged segments of our society
benefit from the war on the poor, especially from regressive tax cuts. It becomes clear that ideology is involved in this contemporary re-working of these old debates.

Another reason that state-subsidized programs have become less popular may be in the evolution of the left itself. In Achieving Our Country (1998), Richard Rorty suggests that, in the American context at least, what he calls the reformist left (and Canadians call the social democratic left) gave way to a cultural left that was more concerned with helping victims of “sadism rather than … of economic selfishness” (ibid., p. 80). The cultural Left, according to Rorty, is not interested in “asking whether Americans are undertaxed, or how much of a welfare state the country can afford, or whether the United States should back out of the North American Free Trade Agreement” (ibid., p. 79). After all, a strong argument can be made that the NAFTA deal “has more to do with differentiating between the rights of social classes than with liberalizing trade” (Laxer, 1998, p. 17). In Justice Interruptus (1997), Nancy Fraser develops a compelling argument for the social democratic left and the cultural left to coalesce around common goals: “The best we can do is to try and soften the dilemma by finding approaches that minimize conflicts between redistribution and recognition in cases where both must be pursued simultaneously” (p. 31).

According to both Rorty and Fraser, the vast majority of Americans are convinced of the superiority of the capitalist system. This situation allows those with political and economic power to exploit the situation further by ensuring that the neoliberal discourse of the hidden hand of the market is the only one with credibility. It also enables the capitalist class to conjure up cultural images that enrage White conservative working-class people enough that they end up voting for political parties with economic policies that further oppress many supporters. In the 2000 American presidential election, some of the poorest counties in the U.S. voted “Republican in order to get even with Wall Street” (Harper's, April 2004, p. 39), despite the fact that George W. Bush “raised more money from wealthy
contributors than any other candidate in history, a record he then broke in 2003" (ibid., p. 37). The politicians supported by this working-class movement have reciprocated by rolling back the capital gains tax, deregulating electricity, passing regressive labour legislation, allowing the gap between the rich and poor to dramatically widen, and a host of other measures causing massive harm to the working classes. Moreover, it is quite likely that these supposed representatives of the common people can expect to be re-elected next time round. In other words, many working-class Americans have absolutely no idea what is in their own best interests. Why is all this happening?

Laxer (1998) contends that one of the reasons for this shift away from thinking about the redistribution of wealth was that the collapse of communism “in our age has given capitalism the appearance of a natural condition rather than a system” (p. 56). Fraser (1997) names this “the post-socialist condition” (p. 1). A situation arises that makes it much easier for social conservatives with a neo-liberal economic agenda to marshal cultural anger in order to achieve economic ends. In an attempt to reconcile these disturbing trends, Fraser calls for progressives to support both the economic left that attempts to redistribute the wealth and the cultural left that fights for acceptance of (most) difference. Fraser argues that “[t]oday’s racial division of paid labor is part of the historic legacy of colonialism and slavery” (p. 21). In North America today, there is a disturbing tension between the non-White working classes and a tandem of White middle-class power and White working-class defensiveness. Fraser posits the best way to attain a socially just society is to create a movement that demands a redistribution of wealth in concert with a recognition of cultural difference. There is much to be lauded in this approach, not the least of which is the potential to quell a White working-class backlash. There is no reason to believe that anti-immigrant, native sentiment will not arise again in the same way that it did in 1907 in Vancouver and in the post First World War period throughout Canada. At the same time, Fraser is correct in postulating that contemporary heterogeneity in North American societies requires a strong
acknowledgement from those fighting for economic justice that struggles for recognition are very important. Yet, for Fraser, concerns of social class are equally important.

Those who believe that there is no other viable alternative to capitalism and that meritocracy rewards those who deserve it are likely to either benefit from these arrangements or are ignorant of the notion of power. I use the notion of power in the Foucauldian sense, as a socially constructed force that is more insidious than anything else. For Foucault, knowledge and power are both socially constructed and completely intertwined with each other. The next section will explicate how power is enmeshed in the political discourses involving social class.

This chapter will follow a similar format as the previous one on race. The next section includes a discussion of the various discourses around issues of social class and how they relate to the major political ideologies. This will be followed by an examination of how social class issues have been represented in the social studies curriculum from 1941 to the latest one in 1997. As with chapter 5, an analysis of the teacher interviews will be near the end of the chapter, preceding the conclusions.

6.1 Discourses of Social Class

Some may argue that issues of social class are being discussed in the media today. There is much evidence in support of this position. Yet, it is the standpoint taken that matters. This is precisely where ideology comes into the picture.

In chapters 4 and 5, I mentioned several times that race was a major marker in Canada's colonial and nation-building periods that worked to separate people and determined much of what they experienced. It all depended on what side of the colonial divide they happened to be born. In a similar fashion, this chapter will explore the representation in social studies of the differing experiences of people depending on what side of the class divide they happened to have found themselves. Just as
chapter 5 destabilized the notion of the universal subject along racial lines, chapter 6 will destabilize it from the standpoint of the working class. The destabilized landscape often has race and class intersections in both the historical and contemporary context. Yet, as Fraser (1997) theorizes, there is very little discourse that points to these intersections.

I was not able to find a concise taxonomy of social class discourses in the literature that is as widely applicable as Frankenberg’s racial discourse analysis. By making use of the conceptions of the political ideologies discussed in chapter 2 and combining them with the ideas appearing in the previous section of this chapter, however, I was able to compensate for this in the analysis of the social studies curriculum. Moreover, a theory developed by Bruce Curtis, David Livingstone, and Harry Smaller (1992) about the different societal attitudes toward working-class achievements in education, attitudes that are clearly influenced by political ideology, was instrumental in helping me explore the ways in which the veteran teachers perceive working-class issues. In fact, one of the interview questions was about working-class achievements in education. (Please refer to Appendix 1, question 14.) I will outline the theory by Curtis and colleagues in the section prior to the interview analysis section.

The following discussion is about how conservatives, liberals, and radicals consider issues of social class and the discourses they use. This discussion is necessary in order to analyze the curriculum and the teacher interviews in terms of social class.

First, a conservative-influenced curriculum may address labour and its struggles but from the standpoint of capital. This is consistent with the manner in which Canada’s corporate media portray labour issues today (Martin, 2003, p. A8). This is also consistent with conservatism’s belief in upholding traditional social hierarchies in order to maintain social cohesion. A conservative might be more inclined to speak about how best to train working-class youth rather than how best to educate them. After all, the relations in most workplaces are best described as using a top-down authoritarian model. Jean Anyon
(1980) demonstrated that some teachers of working-class students resort to pedagogical strategies that reflect the authoritarianism the students are expected to experience in the workplace. (I have had several colleagues over the years who teach in this manner.) A conservative view is that this is the best way to prepare working-class students for their likely future employment.

It is noteworthy to consider how a conservative-influenced curriculum might address labour issues from the standpoint of capital. An example of this in the Canadian context would be the manner in which the curriculum might represent the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Is it shown to be an achievement of the capitalists who organized its completion? Is it depicted as a boondoggle that saw the capitalist class lobby the federal government for massive amounts of public monies only to squander most of it for their own gain? Or is it presented as a feat that took an incredible amount of effort and lives on the part of the workers who used dynamite, shovels and sledgehammers to complete it? A conservative curriculum would resemble the first telling of this historical event.

Moreover, a conservative-influenced curriculum would present labour and trade unionism without integrating race into the picture. Yet, race and ethnicity (as well as gender) are crucial categories in the class structure of Canadian history (Ng, 1993). In the example of the CPR, about 1,500 of the 17,000 Chinese migrant labourers who came to help build it died either by disease or in its actual construction (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 7). A conservative curriculum is unlikely to point out these unjust tragedies, part of the legacy of White supremacist racial hierarchies.

Especially pronounced in British Columbia was a division of labour ethos that “separated into spheres of ‘white’ and ‘yellow’ work” (Creese, cited in Palmer, 1992, p. 213). In chapter 4, I discussed the appearance in British Columbia of the radical labour organization known as the Wobblies or the IWW. Despite the fervour it caused among B.C.’s capitalist and working classes, it is unlikely that the IWW and its anti-racist philosophy would be represented in a conservative-influenced curriculum in a
positive light, if at all. It most certainly would not mention the brute force the capitalist class used, in the form of hired thugs, to intimidate union leaders and the multicultural labour force throughout the nation-building period.

There have always been those who defend class-based societies. Prior to the Enlightenment, there were two main arguments in support of hierarchies of material inequality. The first one invoked the idea that God was involved in ordaining certain special people, whom the people came to recognize as royalty. The second argument follows along the line that people raised in upper-class backgrounds have been groomed to have the right character and temperament to be leaders (Schwarzmantel, 1998). Both of these notions are part of the conservative ideology and lean on a type of essentialism for support. Yet, throughout much of history, the beneficiaries of such doctrines have relied on brute force to maintain these systems of inequality. While the former argument is now an embarrassment for most conservatives, there is still support for the latter. As I mentioned in chapter 5, however, conservatism has also evolved to embrace the liberal notion of meritocracy, namely, that society is based upon a (mostly) fair competition to determine who inhabits the upper classes. A crucial difference between the two versions of meritocracy is that the conservative version is applied to groups while liberalism tends to blame the individual for their social and economic misfortunes.

Why are there so many conservatives who support such an argument? After all, members of the upper class in most advanced industrial societies make up somewhere between 3 to 4% of the total population (Laxer, 1998, p. 39). Of course, if one includes members of the upper middle classes as part of the elite, this number greatly increases, but it is still a minority. Laxer explains:

In any successful system of class rule, those in the dominated social classes must, to a very considerable extent, buy in to the objectives, interests and way of life of the dominant classes. (p. 47)
The crucial point in this quote is that regular working people “buy in” to policies that are often not in their best interests. Although the privileged in these societies sometimes rely on either the military or the police to defend their property and position, for the most part they are not required. The argument here is the same as in chapter 2, namely, a hegemonic discursive formation renders class distinctions invisible. This formation emanates out of liberalism, and in this chapter, the discourse that dominates is class-blind.

Accordingly, a liberal curriculum would ignore or downplay the collective resistance and struggles of the working classes throughout history. In effect, this omission would deny working-class students the opportunity to learn about their own reality. The result is a middle-class norm (as well as White and male) that is assumed within liberalism in general, and a liberal-influenced curriculum in particular. In other words, there is once again a unified subject, the organizing category of most versions of liberalism, only this time it is along the axis of social class.

Most Canadians take great pride in their country’s supposed egalitarianism. This is especially the case for those who espouse a liberal philosophy. Consequently, the suggestion that there is currently an attack on the working classes here in Canada has had difficulty in gaining widespread acceptance. (Of course, a corporate media opposed to this message provides an effective obstacle.) A liberal-influenced curriculum, therefore, would support the notion of egalitarianism as part of Canadian reality rather than as a Canadian ideal.

Another feature of a liberal social studies curriculum is encapsulated by what has come to be known as the American dream, and by corollary, the Canadian dream. This, of course, is familiar to everyone: a poor immigrant arrives from a distant land and through hard work and sheer determination can rise in material well-being and social status. In short, although social class is rarely mentioned in any liberal discourse, the tacit assumption is that it is much easier to jump from a dominated class to a
dominant class in Canada and the United States than in most other countries. Yet, Laxer (1998) reminds us of the power in discourse: “Perhaps more important than mobility itself has been the idea of mobility” (p. 33, emphasis mine). Although it is possible to become upwardly mobile, it is a rare although much publicized occurrence. It is even a more rare occurrence for African Americans, Hispanics, and First Nations people. Moreover, mobility can occur in more than one direction, of course. It is unlikely that a liberal-influenced curriculum would focus on downward mobility, or even mention it, despite the preponderance of people from both the middle class and the working class who have lost their jobs in recent years due to down-sizing. It is clear that such a curriculum would not address this intersection with race.

A focus on conflict between groups is antithetical to a liberal-influenced social studies curriculum. To a very large extent, a liberal-influenced curriculum has very little mention of any conflict within the social groups that make up Canadian society. After all, it is the individual that receives the attention, not the collective. This is a major feature of such a curriculum. Despite this kind of omission, there is no denying the existence of social classes in Canada, nor the conflict that often occurs between them.

One Marxist axiom states that in order for a social class to exist there must be other social classes. (Indeed, the entire notion of discourse is also premised upon a power differential between groups.) In other words, a social class can only exist in relation to other social classes that are either more or less powerful than itself. In the Communist Manifesto (1967), Marx and Engels discuss class as it refers to people’s relationship to the means of production and neo-Marxist scholars continue to build from this insight. Clearly then, as I have already mentioned, a social class is either a dominant one or a dominated one. And conflict in its various forms has always been at the centre of class interaction. The notion of conflict is an important signifier of the radical-influenced curriculum.
In discussing the American school curriculum, Gerald Graf (1994) considers that “both the liberal pluralist and the conservative solutions have outlived their usefulness” (p. 10). Speaking from a more radical perspective, Graf claims that we must “stop listening to those who tell us that controversy is a symptom of barbarism” (p. 11). He suggests that students would benefit from learning about how present conditions are rooted in past conflicts. As an example, allow me to go back to a conflict in B.C.'s history that I mentioned in chapter 4: the coal-mining labour disputes on Vancouver Island during the 1870s. If the B.C. curriculum were to address the different viewpoints of the White miners, the Chinese miners, and White capital during these labour disputes in Dunsmuir’s Vancouver Island coal, then today’s students might be better able to understand present-day management-labour and White-Chinese relations in British Columbia. It is significant that both of these relationships in the contemporary context of British Columbia can be strained at times (Palmer, 1992; Klein, 1999; Orlowski, 2001b).

Graf describes a radical curriculum that would highlight the various perspectives of the groups embroiled in major struggles throughout history. Although Graf’s suggestion is applicable to all sorts of groups and group conflicts, I mention it here as one way I am analyzing the B.C. social studies curriculum. This is consistent with the overall perspective that a radical social studies curriculum would highlight, namely, aspects of social reforms that lead to either fundamental, structural change, and social movements that do the same. For our purposes in this chapter, the radical curriculum would address the history of trade union militarism in Canada, including the influence of the Wobblies and its apparent association with communist elements, and the resultant changes to labour laws, from the standpoint of the working class.

Yet, as Ken Osborne (1988) cautions, a curriculum for working-class students must also include elements of the Western canon. After all, according to Osborne, “[w]orking-class students, too, have a good deal to learn from history, from literature, from the arts – all of which are as much part of
their heritage as they are of anyone else’s” (p. 47). Osborne stresses that a principle of education must be to help “students live rich, many-sided lives” (p. 48), so that they themselves can decide how to live in it. I would add that curriculum should be a combination of both a working-class history and elements of the Western canon because the former would never be accepted on its own, possibly by the working-class parents but definitely by more privileged classes.

The populist movements that swept western nations beginning in the 1920s, culminating in the Post-Second World War social welfare state would also be represented in this curriculum. The struggle that first took place in Saskatchewan resulting in the first publicly-funded healthcare system in North America should be the focus of social studies lessons for every student in Canada. Today’s concerted attacks to dismantle the egalitarianism of our current medicare system would undoubtedly meet a higher level of resistance if this were the case. Such a curriculum would better enable students to become informed citizens who are aware of past struggles as well as what is in their best interests. After all, progressive changes have always come about as a result of the agency of the dominated groups, rather than out of the kindness of the dominant ones. A radical-influenced curriculum would include labour struggles and the construction of the social-welfare state in its content. Let us turn to the analysis of the B.C. social studies curriculum.

6.2 Ideology and Discourses of Class in B.C.’s Social Studies Curriculum

As I have already mentioned in chapter 2, conservative ideologues believe that competition in the social environment is crucial for both individual and group well-being and that free market capitalism is the best system to achieve these conditions. The conservatives controlled public education in British Columbia for at least the first half of the twentieth century (Barman, Sutherland & Wilson,
Their influence on the way the social studies curriculum represents economic issues should reflect this.

The B. C. Department of Education Annual Reports from 1926 to 1933 show that there was some interest in addressing the concerns of the working classes, at least the White working classes. Concepts that were repeatedly tested during the 1926 to 1933 period included employer-worker relations during the Industrial Revolution, the contributions of immigrants during the Era of Prosperity, and The Industrial Disputes Act of 1907.

Agency on the part of labour was no doubt a factor. As historian Jean Barman (1988) puts it:

In Vancouver during the 1920s, working people turned their attention to the city's schools, not to overturn the system but rather to obtain for their children fairer consideration within it ... The consequence was considerable change in public schooling despite active opposition by middle-class business interests more concerned with their own immediate economic advantage than with the creation of optimum social infrastructure for the entire community. (p. 14)

This is another example where it is the agency of oppressed groups that forces change. The school-reform lobbying by working-class people, reflecting what they perceived as being in their own best interests, originated mainly from a conservative ideology rather than from a radical one. Much of the focus of their lobbying was for job-training, specifically shop courses for boys and home economics for girls.

The conservative orientation is also evident in the analysis of chapter 5 in which I summarized early curricular depictions of non-White peoples as either savages or barbarians. The Putnam-Weir Report (1925), based on a study for educational reform in British Columbia, also contains a tone of systemic racism toward non-White people at the same time that it calls for a fairer curriculum for White working-class children. This should not be surprising given that the White Asiatic Exclusion
League had led a riot in Vancouver’s Chinatown and Little Tokyo areas in 1907, less than two decades before the *Putnam-Weir Report* (Howard, 1992, p. 92).

Speculation leads me to consider that it was awareness, either conscious or unconscious, of Roediger’s “wages of Whiteness” that influenced the White working classes in British Columbia to lend their support to conservative racial hierarchies. This is a very similar process to the one used in nineteenth-century Europe in which the Other was made into spectacle or even debauched entertainment in order to get White working class people to buy into empire-building as the natural order of things (Young, 1995, p. 51). It is also perhaps a testament to the failure of the IWW anti-racist philosophy to become entrenched in working-class collective consciousness. Of course, this conservative version of a class-based curriculum could also have emerged out of a compromise between White labour and capitalists. The descriptions of labour unrest in Agnes Laut’s reports of little more than a decade earlier clearly depict related struggles that intersect along axes of race, ethnicity, and class, as I pointed out in chapter 4.

Despite some recognition of working-class concerns, the overall ideology in all of the B.C. Department of Education Annual Reports is far from being a radical one, as the discourse of capitalism and its needs supercede all other concerns. For example, the 1929 exam addresses the question of private ownership versus public ownership in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The question itself clearly emanates from a conservative ideology as it heralds the efficiency of the private sector to accomplish Herculean tasks (1929, p. 130, #3). Yet, historian Bryan Palmer (1992, p. 82) describes the completion of the CPR as a deal involving blackmail and corporate welfare. The federal government was at a loss as to how to defeat Metis leader Louis Riel and the Metis in their fight for an agenda for Aboriginal rights during the 1885 Rebellion. This is omitted, however, as is any mention of
the exploitation of the CPR workers, both White and Chinese. As I mentioned in the preceding section, this is an example of representing historical events from the perspective of capital rather than labour.

The first published B.C. social studies curriculum came out in the middle of the Second World War in 1941. Not surprisingly, much of the curriculum is centred on issues concerning aspects of war and nationalism. Yet, there is no mention that the hellish trenches were filled by legions of working-class young men. The curriculum does include a section in a unit on “troubles arising from the [first] world war,” however, entitled *The Disruption of the Economic Structure* (1941, p. 168). Two of the Specific Objectives that teachers are expected to cover are clearly in support of business interests. The first objective contains the phrase “increased tariffs and the strangulation of world trade” (p. 168), clearly in support of free trade. The second objective refers to “unemployment and heavy taxation” (p. 168) in a way that clearly links the two as problematic. Although both twentieth-century conservatism and liberalism support large-scale capitalism, the 1941 curriculum developers were conservative in their overall outlook. It is clear that the discourse of capitalism is supported by this document despite the repeated warnings throughout the paper against propaganda.

The rights of workers that were evident in the B.C. Department of Education’s Annual Reports in 1926 to 1933 were very much in the background in the 1941 curriculum. With the publication of the 1949 curriculum, they had completely disappeared. This may be a consequence of the growing negative attitudes toward Bolshevism and the communist movements within North America at the time. In *Achieving Our Country* (1998), Richard Rorty outlines how even many in the American left attempted to separate themselves from communism during this period. At the same time, American anti-communist crusader Senator Joe McCarthy was beginning his rise to fame as the Cold War was beginning to intensify. After this period, the achievements of the American left in terms of economic reforms were minor (Rorty, 1998).
In Canada, Cold War hostilities were evident but not at the same level as in the United States. This is reflected in the rise of the Canadian Commonwealth Federation (CCF), a socialist-based populist movement that rose to power in Saskatchewan in this era, an event that would have been close to impossible in the United States. Almost immediately after forming government in 1940, the CCF opened a public debate on the merits of a publicly-funded healthcare system versus the private system that was the only option at the time (McLeod & McLeod, 1987). Yet, there is no mention of this very important debate in the 1949 curriculum.

Although Canada’s labour movement made great gains during this era (Palmer, 1992), it is also excluded from the state-sanctioned document. Both curricular omissions - a public healthcare system and pro-labour legislation – act as hegemonic devices in that students do not gain the necessary information from social studies to engage in serious debates as informed citizens. Generally, this silencing of the gains made by working-class families allows students to leave school without the knowledge of the history of unchecked capital on workers and the possibilities of a social welfare state. This leads to the creation of a citizenry more susceptible to the perspectives of the corporate media and its pro-business agenda.

By the time the 1956 version of the B.C. social studies curriculum was published, it was generally acknowledged that the economy was robust, healthy and growing across the continent (Laxer, 1998). Canada’s westernmost province was no exception as the B.C. government constructed massive infrastructure projects, especially in transportation and hydro-electricity (Barman, 1991). As concerns of a crashing economy subsided, so did fears of a Bolshevik revolution. The new senior level high school course, History 91, was filled with learning objectives that reflect the liberal influence on the curriculum: the legalization of trade unions (p. 118), social security programs, and even co-operatives (p. 121). Significantly, however, and consistent with the liberal ideology, the conflict
between labour and capital, so much a part of British Columbia’s history (Palmer, 1992), does not appear at all. The learning objectives are worded in such a way that a student might be inclined to believe that the legalization of trade unions, for instance, came about out of the benevolence of capitalists and right-wing provincial governments.

The resistance posed by B.C.’s working classes has most often been led by its radical elements who have articulated the need for the capitalist system to be reformed or even destroyed in order for social justice aims to be realized (Leier, 2003, 1990; Palmer, 1992). Speculation leads me to conclude that the 1956 curriculum developers consciously omitted any historical or current references to the radical left ideology or its proponents. The 1956 curriculum appears to have been written from a combination of conservative and liberal perspectives.

With the publication of the 1968 curriculum, however, all of the learning objectives about trade unions and labour legislation were completely removed. There was some coverage of the life of the common labourer before and during the Industrial Revolution in the grade 9 social studies course (p. 28). Yet, the representation of conflict so long ago is a safe way to maintain power and privilege for the capitalist classes. This approach smacks of tokenism. Yet, it is also hegemonic in more insidious ways. It appears to acknowledge some strife between workers and owners - or the proletariat and the bourgeoisie – but because the events described are in the distant past, it tacitly implies that life has improved for current labourers and their families. This may very likely be the case, at least for those living in western nations. Yet, problems of representation remain.

The decrease in labour representation in the curriculum can be explained by a confluence of factors occurring across much of the west, but especially throughout North America. I mentioned that it was agency on the part of the working class that led to better representation in social studies, especially after the release of the Putnam-Weir Report in 1925. A waning class consciousness led to a
weaker lobby for increased representation in the curriculum. In *The Age of Extremes* (1995), historian Eric Hobsbawm contends that it was the conversion of both the middle classes and the working classes into consumers that led to a decrease in class consciousness. In *Illusive Identity: The Blurring of Working-Class Consciousness in Modern Western Culture* (2002), American historian Thomas Walker claims that cultural hegemony was the major influence behind this transformation:

> [D]uring the "American century," workers in the United States were encouraged by a mass-mediated cultural process to equate their daily labors with a new socially constituted upwardly mobile identity, leaving their working-class roots behind to fulfill a new proprietorship within the "American Dream." In the end, these new forces of cultural hegemony in the West overcame traditional working-class identities, painstakingly molded together over time by diverse yet common experiences.  

(p. 188)

Walker contends that the mythic American Dream, based on its cornerstones of meritocracy and opportunity, enabled the privileged capitalists to maintain hegemony over their workers. Popular culture, propelled by the media owned by the same privileged class, was able to permeate into working-class consciousness, feeding off their dreams of a better and more liberating existence for workers and their families. As the title of Walker’s book suggests, working-class consciousness became blurred because of the more inclusive label of consumer. An identity based on *consumer* rather than *worker* further normalizes the privilege of the capitalist class.

Yet, the 1968 curriculum is noteworthy in another respect. In Canada, the Canadian Commonwealth Federation evolved from a socialist party to a social democratic one, renaming itself the New Democratic Party in 1961. One of the greatest achievements of the CCF-NDP occurred in 1962 in Saskatchewan when the NDP implemented the first public health-care system in North America (Whitehorn, 1992, p. 86). Even though the federal Liberals implemented the same service...
across the country a few years later, this pillar of the Canadian social welfare state is not mentioned at all in the 1968 document. This was also the case with its successor, published in 1980.

After disappearing from the 1968 curriculum, the related concepts of corporations and labour unions make their way back into the 1980 curriculum, albeit in a non-directed, loose kind of manner. In a unit entitled *People and Resources* in the grade 9 social studies course, students were expected to come to an understanding of “citizens as consumers, producers, taxpayers” (p. 100). Furthermore, there were two institutions stated as major “components of the Canadian economy:” corporations and labour unions. One of the unit Generalizations states that all “students should come to recognize that all peoples and societies are faced with the same economic problem: conflict between unlimited wants and limited resources” (p. 100). By overstating the case for material consumption, the curriculum performs once again as a hegemonic device in that it normalizes a major aspect of capitalism, namely, the purchasing of *wants* and not just *needs*. In this way, the curriculum is serving the pro-capitalist process described by Hobsbawm and Walker that transformed workers into consumers.

The 1988 curriculum had a similar approach in its representation of economic issues as its 1968 and 1980 forerunners. Borrowing from the 1968 document, Social Studies 9 addresses the lives of working families during the Industrial Revolution (1988, p. 46). By focusing on working conditions and “worker organizations” in Britain over two centuries ago, criticism that these issues are being neglected in the present is effectively muted at the same time that current power arrangements remain hidden. Yet, relations between the capitalist class and labour became hostile during this period, bringing to an end the relatively long truce that had more or less prevailed since the end of the Second World War. The hostile relationship between the social classes that began in the mid-1970s have “been growing in intensity ever since” (Laxer, 1998, p. 4). Yet, *this* conflict is omitted from the liberal-influenced curriculum.
In terms of current economic issues, there is one Sample Key Question in the 1988 document that prompts students to discuss the “role of working people” (p. 60) in the development of both the Canadian and B.C. economies. The label “working people” refers to a group that includes both labour and the middle class, failing to distinguish between the different concerns of each. Although both the working class and the middle class in Canada see themselves more and more as consumers, there are still concerns of labour that differ from those of the middle class. Legislation around replacement workers, picketing and collective bargaining, to name but a few, are of paramount importance to working-class families. Yet, the 1988 curriculum failed to address any of them. Nor was there any hint of socialism in this document. The social democratic movement, embodied by the New Democratic Party, was at its zenith at the federal level. They were in power in two provinces, and poised to form governments in another two provinces at the time the 1988 curriculum was published (Whitehorn, 1992). Yet, the radical ideology is nowhere to be seen, especially around economic matters. Its successor, published in 1997, was even less forthcoming about working-class issues.

A Prescribed Learning Outcome in the 1997 social studies curriculum, which is the one currently being used in British Columbia, is worded in the following way:

It is expected that students will assess how identity is shaped by a variety of factors, including family, gender, belief systems, ethnicity and nationality. (1997, p. A-4)

Despite the massive body of scholarly work prior to its publication that supports the notion that an individual’s social class position significantly shapes and limits their experience throughout life (Zimmerman, 1992; Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992; Miller & Kastberg, 1995), it is not included in the list of factors that the curriculum developers consider to be important in the construction of identity. Moreover, there is very little in the way of suggested learning resources that refers to issues of social class, such as labour struggles, trade unionism, tax reform, and free trade. Is this an oversight or
is it an intended hegemonic strategy? Whatever the case, it is clear that working-class students are at a
disadvantage when compared to their middle-class counterparts, especially in terms of representation.
Their situations and concerns are not addressed at all, while the middle class is entrenched as the
hegemonic norm. Speculation on my part leads me to suspect that the curriculum developers were
quite conscious of this omission. A radical interpretation of this omission is that the curriculum is
based in a liberal self-induced power-blindness.

Another example of a common hegemonic strategy used in the 1997 curriculum is the
suggestion to teach about past issues for working-class people rather than current issues. A Suggested
Instructional Strategy for Social Studies 11 states the following:

Ask students to research the Great Depression through a variety of sources. Then have them develop personal plans for surviving an economic depression. In role, have students write letters to their parents after leaving home to look for work during a depression.

(p. 26)

With this liberal-influenced pedagogical technique, students may feel sympathetic to the unemployed
during the 1930s. Yet, they are not asked to explore how unemployed workers were treated by those in
more fortunate social and economic positions, how they were represented in the media, nor how they
were viewed by the general public. Pedagogy from this more radical perspective might help students
understand why attitudes that blame the poor for society’s problems are spreading across North
America today. After all, this was also the case in the 1930s. As well, they might comprehend how
such attitudes are ill-founded (Laxer, 1998; McQuaig, 1998). Moreover, a radical curriculum would
also address the root causes of the Depression, a topic the elites would prefer was forgotten.

The authors of the 1997 B.C. social studies curriculum did not consider social class to be a
factor in the identity construction of an individual. Nor did they bother to represent the role of the
public sector as “an alternative source of capital and creative energy in both the economic and cultural
spheres” as it was in the post-war years up until at least the 1980s (Laxer, 1998, p. 41). Consequently,
Canadians are experiencing attacks in both spheres, led by the neoconservative and neoliberal federal and provincial governments. In the cultural sphere, the National Film Board is all but gone at the same time that the CBC endures yet another round of cuts. Since the neoconservative B.C. Liberals formed government in 2001, the dismantling of the social welfare state is moving at an unprecedented rate in British Columbia, as schools and hospitals are closing, legal aid has disappeared, public sector union contracts are not being honoured, and welfare cheques have been greatly reduced. The social studies curriculum cannot be blamed for the lack of resistance to this dismantling, of course. Yet, it is clear that the spirit of John Dewey and his dream of an informed citizenry have had very little success here, as elsewhere.

Much of this chapter thus far has described the importance of social class in a person's life and the struggle to build a social welfare state. From a leftist perspective, ignoring the existence of either is not going to improve the material and social well-being of a significant segment of the Canadian population. The B.C. social studies curriculum is failing to adequately acknowledge the reality of its students, primarily those from a working-class background. Middle-class normativity is a key hegemonic component in the liberal ideology, and this is clearly reflected in the 1997 social studies curriculum. In this way, the curriculum helps maintain the status quo in ways that are difficult for the majority of students, as well as teachers, to detect and resist. The curricular focus on the individual has the same effect.

The concept of the individual made its first significant appearance in a B.C. social studies curriculum in 1949. A learning objective for students in one of the sample units is stated as:

A realization of the importance of the INDIVIDUAL in the advancement of civilization. (p. 70, my emphasis)
The 1949 curriculum also has several references to community. References to any collective ideals, however, have completely disappeared with the 1997 curriculum. The 1997 B.C. social studies curriculum does not encourage students to recognize the benefits of the collective or of community; nor does it help them to understand that the individual really exists as a social being who has responsibilities to help others, especially those who are having difficult times. In *The Long Revolution* (1961), Raymond Williams states that when a society focuses on the individual without considering our social interdependence, we are forced into the ridiculous social tension of desiring “individual consumption” while despising “social taxation” (p. 299). The most recent B.C. provincial election, which occurred in 2001, was a clear demonstration of this ridiculous social tension. The neoconservative Liberal Party campaigned on tax cuts so that working British Columbians would have more money to spend. Almost immediately after forming government, the Liberals let the electorate know they had been duped by curtailing social programs and significantly raising premiums in many necessary aspects of life, including healthcare.

The school curriculum has failed in helping students understand what is in their best interests. By corollary, the state has failed to develop educated citizens aware of what is in their best interests. The liberal focus on the individual all but obliterates social connections, supporting business interests and regressive tax reform in the process. Michael Apple (1990) furthers this line of reasoning:

> [The curriculum] does not situate the life of an individual ... as an economic and social being, back into the unequal structural relations that produced the comfort the individual enjoys.  
> (p. 10)

Not able to see who is producing what we consume, we live in a society in which the majority of people will wear clothes and buy stereos produced by sweatshop labour. Of course, I do not intend to imply that schools work in a vacuum, able to be a panacea for all of our social ills. They must contend with myriad social forces, especially the media, that are competing to shape societal values.
In sum, this latest version of the curriculum supports the development of individuals who see themselves as unconnected to other individuals, as consumers, as people who have gotten ahead through their own hard work, perseverance, and initiative. This is the result of curriculum developers influenced by liberalism. It is also a hegemonic concept that supports the status quo and the most powerful among us.

Except for a brief period of minor representation during the middle decades of the past century, working-class issues were not represented in the formal curriculum. In order to determine how political ideology has influenced the way that veteran teachers look at social class issues, I will briefly discuss the findings of a study on how the Ontario public views the unequal success rates of students from various class backgrounds. This taxonomy may shed light on the ways in which veteran Vancouver teachers and their students engage in the enacted curriculum.

6.3 Ideology and Discourses of Working-Class Academic Performance

To help me determine the degree to which the various political ideologies have influenced the teachers’ attitudes around issues of social class, I am using the taxonomy developed by Bruce Curtis, David Livingstone, and Harry Smaller (1992). In their stinging critique of the practice of streaming entitled Stacking the Deck: The Streaming of Working-Class Kids in Ontario Schools, the authors state that “every study of schools that has paid attention to class differences has found that working-class kids have always fared much worse than middle- and upper-class kids” (p. 7). They claim that working-class students leave school for poorer paying jobs with little or no security because they have not been served very well by the public education system. In their words, “working-class kids still receive less schooling, and a different kind of schooling” than kids from more privileged economic backgrounds (p. 8). Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller have developed a taxonomy based on the explanations people offer as to why
working-class students fare less well in school. Their taxonomy provided some background for the analysis of teacher interviews in chapter 5. It has also helped me determine the political ideologies underlying the teachers' attitudes and beliefs in this chapter.

"Socially powerful people tend to encourage the less powerful to blame themselves for their own misfortunes" (Curtis, Livingstone and Smaller, 1992, p. 14). This idea, based in nineteenth-century Social Darwinism, promotes the meritocratic notion that people who are bright, talented, and hardworking will rise to the top. By corollary, lazy and dull people will fill the lower ranks of society. This version of meritocracy differs from the liberal version in that it is applied to whole groups of people rather than individuals. In this way, it is imbued with an essentialist component. To take a recent but extreme example, it has been used in recent years by racist conservatives such as Charles Murray and Richard Herrnstein in their pseudo-scientific book, *The Bell Curve* (1994). IQ test results have been used to bolster this argument, despite the fact that the tests “have long since been proven to be biased in favour of a White, middle-class culture” (Curtis et al., p. 15). Many conservatives, therefore, still claim there is a genetic component to explain the conditions of poverty many social groups experience, a position still held by a couple of the teachers in this study. Conservatives are also increasingly stressing that public education is in trouble today because of declining standards rather than material inequality.

Rather than using the *genetic-deficit theories* of traditional conservatism, people who see the world through an ideological lens of either contemporary conservatism or liberalism explain the stratified nature of our society using *cultural-deficit theories*. I discussed this at great length in the data analysis of race in chapter 5. Cultural deficit theories also apply to this discussion of social class.

Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller specify three different types of cultural-deficit theories. Because I consider these social theories to be interwoven with power, I will use the word *discourse* in place of the word *theory*. First, the *value deficiency discourse* claims that working-class people hold the
same values as their more privileged peers, but it is their traditions or circumstances that keep them from being as successful as middle and upper middle-class people. In particular, it is the failure on the part of the working class to “defer gratification of baser subsistence needs for nobler ones like formal education” (*ibid.*, p. 16). This translates into the idea that all people within a capitalist society, regardless of class background, want to become rich. This aspect of the cultural-deficit position can be hegemonic because it leads to the conclusion that if fortunes were reversed and the poor were indeed the wealthy, they would have the same attitudes toward the poor themselves. Consequently, the notion within this dominant discourse is that the less fortunate should figure out how to help themselves. This pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps notion is part of the conservative and right liberal ideologies.

Sociologist Oscar Lewis (1966) developed a variation of this discourse, which he called the *culture of poverty*. This variant cites a lack of role models in the life of working-class youth as the main reason for their lack of academic success. Poor skills and attitudes are handed down through the generations, working against any social mobility possibilities that are part of the so-called American dream. Lewis considered himself a liberal; yet, conservatives have used the culture of poverty discourse to further another one, that of blaming the poor. The focus of this discourse, the way conservatives see it, is to blame entire groups for the oppressive situations in which they find themselves. Liberals, on the other hand, focus on an individual’s shortcomings. The results of these variations are the same for those at the receiving end, of course. I am referring to this overlap of discursive regions as *traditional*, extrapolating on the ideas of John Dewey (1938).

*Cultural capital discourses*, the third variant within these conservative/liberal discourses, emphasize that students from middle-class families have an advantage over their working-class peers by learning from their families the “general culture knowledge, elaborated language codes, and information about how schools work” (Curtis et al., p. 16), all things that tend to increase academic proficiency.
All of these discourses suggest that the working classes are incapable of creating their own cultural forms and meanings in the school setting and elsewhere. The solution, according to cultural-deficit theorists, is for the schools to provide more programs geared toward helping the working classes learn skills so they can find gainful employment. This reasoning results in a call for streaming. As with almost all aspects of cultural deficit theories, this position “tend[s] to ignore or discount the material conditions, such as inadequate food, housing and clothing, that can limit poor people’s learning potential” (Curtis et al., p. 17). Moreover, according to Ken Osborne (1991), support for streaming conceals a middle-class bias. Educators most often justify the need for streaming in terms of academic and non-academic programs, creating a discourse that includes notions of “ability, aptitude, attitude, [and] readiness for learning” without discussing middle-class and working-class students (p. 83). Consequently, less-academic streams have a high proportion of working-class White students (Kelly, 1993). Race is also a factor, of course, as it so often is where issues of social class are concerned. Lower stream programs are disproportionately filled with Black, First Nations and other non-White groups (James, 1990; Osborne, 1991).

Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller demonstrate their own radical politics by claiming that “[b]oth innate-difference and cultural-deficit theories of inequality ignore how schooling itself is shaped by political and economic relationships that produce educational differences” (ibid., p. 17). This is precisely the major complaint leveled by Michael Apple in his critique of mainstream American public education entitled Ideology and Curriculum (1990). Conservatives and liberals tend to use the blame the victim discourse, while radical educators place the blame squarely on the system itself. This distinction proved to be quite a significant one in the analysis of interviews.

The radical-influenced class-power approach described by Curtis, Livingstone and Smaller critiques the connections “between the forms of schooling and the structures of capitalist society” (p.
19), as well as a curriculum that favours the middle and upper classes. The authors stress the important
point that they recognize working-class resistance has always been at the centre of these struggles, that
schools are not able to simply reproduce workers from the children of workers to fit the needs of
capitalism. By acknowledging working-class resistance and agency, they take exception with the major
point raised by Bowles and Gintis (1976) in their classic work on social reproduction, *Schooling in
Capitalist America*. Any teacher who explains the lack of academic success of working-class students as
a failure of the system to serve them properly, rather than as a failure by the students or their families,
has been influenced by a radical ideology.

The class-power approach is related to critical multiculturalism as described by Kincheloe and
Steinberg (1997). In the summary of Kincheloe and Steinberg’s taxonomy of multiculturalism in the
previous chapter, I mentioned that a key component of this form of multiculturalism is the demand that
people comprehend how “power shapes consciousness” (p. 25). This is also a key feature of the class-
power approach. It is also similar to the focus in Sleeter and Grant’s “Education that is Multicultural
and Social Reconstructionist” (1994). They demand that students be taught to understand the social
construction of knowledge and that they become politically literate. Moreover, in its explanation of
why working-class students fare less well in high school, this approach has an overlap with the race-
cognizance discourse in Frankenberg’s taxonomy of racial discourses (1993). Once again, illuminating
the hegemonic veils that conceal the ways power works to maintain the privilege of certain social
groups while oppressing others is common to all of these discourses and theories. The variation is on
the degree of emphasis they place on social class as a marker of a person’s identity. It is crucial that we
find out the degree to which the veteran social studies teachers consider social class to be a marker of a
person’s identity.
6.4 How Veteran Teachers View Issues of Social Class & Working-Class Students

We know that in places ... in which parents earn relatively low wages, the odds of children succeeding in school and persisting in school are considerably lower than those of their peers in more affluent communities. (Van Galen, 2004, p. 667)

To begin this part of the analysis, I wish to make it clear what this part of the research is about. Teachers find themselves in a contradictory position around the notion of upward mobility and egalitarianism in public education. According to Jane Van Galen (2004), schools are “institutions of meritocracy yet highly stratified by class” (p. 668). The middle-class social position of teachers working with working-class students (and their parents) provides a clear example of this contradiction.

There were four interview questions that referred directly to social class. (See Appendix 1, Questions 10, 12, 13, and 14.) Yet, many of the teacher responses to other questions revealed aspects of how they either think about social class or how they teach about it. In fact, ten analytical codes pertaining to issues of social class came out of the data. To make sense of this, I have divided these codes into two groups: the ways that teachers think about social class, and the ways that they think about teaching class issues.

6.4.1 How Teachers Think About Social Class

Despite the 1997 curriculum’s omission of social class as a factor in a person’s identity construction, I will not do the same here. All ten participants are White men. In terms of social class background, however, there was less homogeneity. According to their own perceptions, four of the ten teachers – Steve Graham, Tim Patterson, Eric Quinn, and Dave Carson - grew up in a middle-class household. The rest came from working-class families. Although there was a preponderance of teachers who grew up in working-class families, there was very little evidence of radical thinking about class issues among them. This is not as surprising as it would first appear. Although they were
not raised middle class, as veteran teachers, they have since become part of its membership. Research suggests that there seems to be a tendency of identifying with a higher social class than in one’s youth among significant numbers of parents of school-aged children (Brantlinger, Majd-Jabbari, & Guskin, 1996). It is my assumption that this same process is at work with the teachers.

One of the questions I asked all of the teachers during the interviews was whether they considered social class to be an important factor in a student’s identity construction. Only one of the teachers, Steve Graham, an east side teacher who ironically grew up in a middle-class family, considered social class to be very important.

SG: I see their class as a big factor because it has a lot to do with their opportunities. And they know this from a young age. Kids at west side schools just assume they’re going to end up at university. It’s assumed by mom and dad. It’s assumed by them. And guess what? The money’s there for them and they’ll go. Here, it’s the opposite. Here the kids won’t even be thinking of university but maybe some particular kids should be thinking of university. So I see it as pretty important, personally.

Graham focuses on the varying degrees of opportunities afforded to students based on their social class. He rightly points to higher education as a crucial factor in a person’s future (Laxer, 1998, p. 42; Levin, 1995, p. 28; Curtis, Livingstone, & Smaller, 1992, p. 11). Graham was also the only teacher to highlight the inadequacies of high school curricula itself as an impediment to working-class students finding gainful and employment, a point I will highlight and discuss further in a subsequent section of this chapter. In short, to some extent, a radical socialist-based political ideology appears to have influenced Steve Graham’s thoughts on social class.

Most of the teachers did not consider social class to be very important in a student’s identity construction. In fact, six of the remaining nine expressed this very perspective. Three of these six expressed the same reason for holding this view, namely, that compared to countries in the Third World, no one in Canada is very poor. Yet, there were significant differences in their reasoning, as
well as significant differences in their background. Here are quotes by the three teachers, Craig Evans, Eric Quinn, and Barry Kelvin, responding to either my query about the importance of social class in a student’s identity construction or my point that the wealth gap in Canada is growing:

**CE:** ... The working class [in Canada] isn't necessarily poor, either. They’re just the working class. It's a different history from the real poor. I mean, do we have the working poor in Canada like they do in the United States? It's a coming thing. We don't have them yet, but it's a comer.

**EQ:** I think we've got to have a global focus. One of the things I do with my students here is, like, point out that poverty is relative. In a way, wealth is relative. So let's have a Canadian focus but also let's remember that, for instance, poverty here is actually contextually defined. And that's not to say that it's not a problem. But let's also remember to look at this globally and realize the privileged base of all of Canadian society.

**BK:** ... When I traveled, poverty is just so obvious. You know, when I was in Egypt, there were thousands of men in the streets, unemployed, smoking those tobacco things, just sitting there all day. And I'm thinking, “This is a crappy life.” And I guess I just don't pay enough attention, you know, when I go downtown here, which I don't do very often, but then you see [poverty]. I'll do like probably most people do, try to give some money to the fella, depending on - but I'm also a little more severe than some people because I have a handicapped brother and he doesn't beg. He's got cerebral palsy and he tries to work. Then I get caught up in thinking, "You're only 18. What are you doing with a squeegee? You can't possibly be that run down."

Although all three teachers are expressing the same sentiment, namely, that there are people in other countries who are worse off than the poor people in Canada, there are important differences, as well. Craig Evans, who grew up in a working-class home in the Maritimes, expressed disdain for the United States several times during our interview. He also teaches at Victoria Park Secondary, an inner-city school where I was a colleague of his for eight years. It is my belief that Evans is naïve in his thinking around poverty among the student population at this particular school. Elsewhere in the interview, he recalled childhood friends who were poor, who “lived in one room with their mother ... and the food
was measured out” but, according to Evans, Canada no longer has that kind of poverty. Craig Evans was not old enough to have been a child in the 1930s. Consequently, I consider his views on contemporary poverty in Canada to be erroneous. The “working poor” definitely do exist in Canada today. I’ve taught their children, as I am certain Evans has done.

Eric Quinn, on the other hand, is clearly a liberal thinker. He grew up in a middle-class Christian home and teaches in what is ostensibly the wealthiest neighbourhood in Vancouver. His experience is perhaps why he does not consider poverty in Canada to be significant. At the least, he has not taught very many poor students and therefore may have a legitimate reason for being unaware that poverty is not a serious problem in Canada. Moreover, he would likely be taken to task by either his students or their parents if he discussed the growing wealth gap in Canada in a critical way, especially considering that this notion is nowhere to be found in the formal curriculum. Quinn continued to exhibit a strong liberal influence as he did with his views around race and multiculturalism. A radical critique would view his perspective as power-blind.

The response given by Barry Kelvin, however, is very significant for a number of reasons. By pointing out what he observed on his travels to Egypt, he agrees with Quinn in looking at poverty in a global context. Yet, he knows that poverty also exists in Vancouver. In fact, more than any of the other teachers, Kelvin’s philosophy around class issues is commonly referred to as pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps conservatism. This explains his comments about a hypothetical “squeegee” kid. Yet, there is a reason why he feels so strongly about this.

**BK:** I came from a fairly bizarre background ... And my mom was quite sick so we were a welfare family. So in school, I had extremely low self-esteem.

Kelvin’s upbringing shaped the way he perceives poverty today. As I mentioned in chapter 5, he is the quintessential liberal in terms of race, using the colour-blind discourse articulately. He also demonstrated a partial penetration around teaching about other cultures in a celebratory manner,
although he did not get past a pluralist conception of multiculturalism. Regarding issues of social class, however, Kelvin is a conservative. The influence of the conservative ideology was further demonstrated later in the interview when the conversation digressed to the topic of unions.

BK: I think unions were created rightly for industry. And now they've incorporated themselves in other areas and I'm not sure that's the way it should have turned out ... And that's not to say I'm White collar because I like playing hockey. I like to have a beer. I like to get down to earth. But I just see a difference. I also, arrogant or not, I like to think of myself as educated, as in a position where I've worked hard to get here. And it's a position that's fairly powerful in society, powerful in a good way ... Self-respect is something that comes along with teaching.

Kelvin exhibits an elitist view toward unions in that he considers his high level of education to put him above membership in a union. Regarding poverty, it is the last sentence in particular that reveals the reasoning behind Kelvin’s seemingly unsympathetic view toward poor people. “Self-respect” is particularly important to him because of his upbringing, which was laced with “extremely low self-esteem.” For Kelvin, self-respect must be earned. It is not that he is unsympathetic toward the poor. In fact, Kelvin claims to protect students from ridicule who he thinks have family and financial problems. All of this would at least partially explain why he has developed a tough love perspective toward underprivileged students and why he disdains unions, which he claims are much too “overly protecting.” It is clear that for Barry Kelvin, his own upbringing has had a large influence on the way he views social relations today, especially around issues of social class.

There were two teachers who considered a student’s social class to have some influence in their identity construction, but it was not as major a factor as other categories. East side teacher Larry Nelson sums up this position when he stated, “I think [social class] certainly plays a part ... But does culture and other aspects have a part? Yes, in some cases. And it would be a larger part.” Nelson’s response differs from the 1997 curriculum developers in that he would also include social class as a
factor in a student’s identity construction. In general, however, a clear majority of the teachers would agree with the list of factors in the 1997 document. In other words, class-blind liberalism is the dominant ideology among this group of teachers, as well as the formal curriculum. It is therefore difficult to imagine the enacted curriculum dealing with social class in a critical manner, if at all.

In chapter 5, I discussed the traditional conservative view of Carl Tragas who used the essentialist discourse to express a genetic explanation for social inequality. Recall that he claimed the reason why many immigrant people are labourers is because of “the gene pool.” This is what Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller (1992) call the genetic-deficiency theory. Tragas also spoke about how his view around genes and learning altered the way he taught working-class students, which I will discuss in a subsequent section. Yet, Tragas wasn’t the only one to use the essentialist discourse in describing the working class.

Craig Evans doesn’t mention genes per se, but his thoughts about the working classes have important implications for the way he must view these students in the classroom.

CE: Amongst the working class there's still a lot of bias and prejudice and so forth. And we can sit around as nice, middle-class, well-educated White folks and say, you know, is this [prejudice] in the curriculum or is it right in the culture? Is there a kind of evil hatred that’s resting there because it was initially used for, you know, one group to climb over the top of the other groups and get to the top?

PO: Do you mean that the racist attitudes that were obviously there a long time ago in Canadian society are still lingering despite what schools are trying to do?

CE: Yeah. They haven’t gone away. Look at the homophobic stuff. I mean, for all the stuff the homosexuals have done to try and belay homophobia, it's still, you know, especially with the working-class kids like, from Surrey, they're still cruising looking to beat homosexuals to death. Okay, so where is that coming from? There's a fear and a hatred in the culture. I don't think you're ever going to get rid of it. I don't see it.

PO: But the schools certainly don't promote homophobia.
CE: No, it's not promoted at all. There's an acceptance. People are out of the closet. You try and accept it. So you do it in the classroom but it's still there. It doesn't go away.

This rather lengthy excerpt has important implications for teaching. It is clear that Craig Evans believes that there are elements within the working-class mindset that simply cannot be changed, no matter the pedagogical strategies employed. Although he does not suggest a genetic component to support his argument, he is using an essentialist discourse. From my perspective, such an attitude is pessimistic and defeatist because it is based on the premise that the “fear and hatred is in the culture” itself. In other words, Evans considers it near impossible for schools to change these traits.

Usage of the essentialist discourse demonstrates that the conservative ideology has influenced these teachers. Moreover, it is not very difficult to see how this conservative view can negatively impact on the learning and subsequent future options of students from marginalized groups. On the other hand, the pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps philosophy of Barry Kelvin, also stems from conservatism; yet, his perspective may lead to increased motivation on the part of both teacher and student.

In terms of political ideology, it was also interesting to note the teachers’ thoughts around why children who come from poor families graduate from B.C. high schools at much lower rates. Rather than use the three ideologies I have been using throughout this research, it is more appropriate to use the terms traditional and progressive. My reasoning for using this adapted taxonomy here is because the cultural deficit discourses described by Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller are used by both conservatives and liberals in the current social landscape. With this binary in mind, the thoughts of the teachers around the lack of academic success for poor students can be divided into two groups. The
following analysis will help clarify why I decided to use the binary of *progressive* versus *traditional* rather than the three-way model of *socialism, liberalism, and conservatism*.

Four of the ten teachers appeared to hold a view pointing toward progressivism around the lack of academic success for poor students. Yet, upon closer inspection it would appear that they held a traditional perspective on the issue. For example, two of the teachers, Steve Graham and the normally conservative Ed Hitchcock, pointed to the irrelevancy in the curriculum for students from poverty. Here are some thoughts by Steve Graham, who teaches in one of Vancouver's poorest neighbourhoods.

**SG:** Our school system is still very university-focused. So to apply that to poor kids, I mean, look at what is happening financially with a university education, right? It's becoming less and less of a realistic option for a poor family, if it ever really was. But at least there was a time when the tuition wasn't sky-high.

**PO:** It has only been since the last provincial election that the post-secondary tuition freeze ended.

**SG:** And I've even seen that reflected in students' attitudes around this school in the past year and a half. It doesn't take long for these changes to have an impact ... And for some kids, you know, in talking about university, they make it very clear that, "Well, hey, I can't get into university financially." That's financially! So therefore, if our high school program is academically-focused for university preparation, then it obviously becomes less relevant for these kids. Look at this school - it used to have a dry-cleaning program and a very active auto shop program. Not any more!

Graham emphasizes the disadvantage poor working-class students face by having to take courses that do not necessarily prepare them for future employment. To his way of thinking, he considers the now-defunct vocational training programs his school used to run to be a better option for some of these working-class students. (I will discuss this very notion in the next section on streaming.)

Ed Hitchcock was able to sum up the same sentiment as Graham but more succinctly.
EH: You have to make the curriculum relevant and that's the key. If they feel it's relevant and that they're learning something that can be applicable then they will probably stay. Sometimes the knowledge-based industry in our schools is all too focused on micro information rather than helping these students get a real education.

When I probed Hitchcock about what he meant by a “real education,” he spoke of society’s need for trades people like “plumbers” and “electricians.” Both he and Steve Graham considered vocational training to be what is meant by curriculum relevance. Working-class people themselves have requested vocational training for their children in the past (Barman, 1988, p. 14). From an ideological viewpoint, this position is not radical. Rather, it is an attempt to procure gainful employment learning the skills necessary to participate in the capitalist economy, albeit at its lower rungs. In other words, successful working-class agency in this regard works to ensure that “working class kids get working class jobs,” to borrow a phrase from Paul Willis (1977). Two other teachers, Larry Nelson and Barry Kelvin, acknowledged that curriculum relevancy may play a part in the low graduation rates, but only acquiesced after I suggested it, and only begrudgingly. Without any input from me, Dave Carson suggested that curriculum plays a part, demonstrating once again a possible radical influence within his thoughts on social class. However, Carson was not able to elaborate whatsoever on this point.

The majority of the teachers used the traditional discourse of cultural-deficiency to explain the low graduation rates. In particular, all of these teachers utilized elements of the culture of poverty discourse to make their points. These teachers pointed to a lack of positive role models in the home. The quote that sums this position best was offered by west side teacher Barry Kelvin who posited “it could be low self-esteem of the parents, who didn’t succeed in school either … family problems … money problems … split parents … a feeling of failure.” Kelvin’s west side counterpart Tim Patterson added that a major reason is that “their parents are in varying degrees of sobriety.” Craig Evans also demonstrated a type of sympathetic response that was based on faulty reasoning, stating, “Lots of these
kids may be sons and daughters of drug addicts and prostitutes and their home life is horror beyond
what we can imagine.” Yet, Evans once again exhibits a naivety about the students in his school. From
my own experience teaching in the same school, I would hazard a guess that it is only a minute fraction
of the working-class student body who are the children of “drug addicts and prostitutes.”

Two of the teachers cited financial problems as a key reason for academic problems. Dave
Carson said it best: “I think that there is a whole cocktail of social reasons that lead to people dropping
out of school … I work under the assumption that poor kids have harder lives. For example, they might
have a desire to work, to help their families out.” Three other teachers pointed to the latch-key
phenomenon as the main reason, which can obviously be linked to familial financial concerns, as well.
This view tends to be more liberal than conservative.

In short, the majority view of this group of teachers is that it is the home life of poor students
that causes them to leave school before graduating. The discourse most frequently used is the culture
of poverty discourse, which locates the central problem within the lives of the victims themselves. Yet,
Deirdre Kelly (1996) suggests that such reasoning ignores the role of the school system itself in
“pushing out” these students from the regular mainstream schools. Schools are exonerated from any
blame. Teacher attitudes, however, are one of the forces that can result in lower academic achievement
and ultimately, students leaving school before graduating (Ornstein & Levine, 1989).

The majority of the teachers want to blame the victim for the academic shortcomings of poor
students. What is most curious, then, is the reluctance on their part to teach about disparities in wealth
and the current dismantling of the social welfare state in social studies. Is this because of hegemony
and the power of the capitalist discourse? Is it because of a hegemonic notion around social
hierarchies? I will address this incongruency in the section following the next one. At this point, the
analysis of the teachers’ thoughts on the practice of *streaming* yields further information about the ideologies influencing their views on social class.

6.4.2 How Teachers Think about Streaming

Schools see the difference not as between middle-class and working-class students, but as between “academic” and non-academic programmes (general, vocational, and the rest), and it is explained and justified on purely educational grounds ... These so-called educational arguments, however, simply camouflage a social reality. (Osborne, 1991, p. 83)

This quote of Ken Osborne’s indicates that most discussions on the practice of *streaming* avoid any connection to social class. To counter this, I have included a section on streaming (a.k.a., tracking) in this chapter on social class, but it would have been equally appropriate to place it in the previous chapter on race. This is because numerous studies have shown that in schools in which the student population is multiracial and across class lines, grouping students according to perceived ability “often results in racially and socioeconomically segregated classrooms” (Yonezawa, Wells & Serna, 2002, p. 38). Those who are placed in low-end modified programs often get instruction that is lower in quality, quantity, and interest (Oakes, 1985; Osborne, 1991). Rather than promote critical thinking, a modified stream typically “focuses heavily on rote skill development” (Levin, 1995, p. 32). This approach is considered to be good preparation for their likely eventual work-place needs. The end result, of course, is that working-class students get placed into tracks that lead them to working-class jobs, while middle- and upper middle-class students move toward the professions (Oakes, 1985).

The teachers’ thoughts around *streaming* were quite complex. Consequently, attempting to identify the influential political ideologies on this aspect of teaching was more complicated than on others. Streaming impacts upon other subject areas more than perhaps it does upon social studies. Yet, how teachers think about the practice itself indicates something about the way they perceive social
hierarchies, social roles, and employment opportunities for their students. This is why I have included their thoughts on streaming here.

The teachers were well aware of the types of streaming that occur in Vancouver high schools. This may very well have been because they are all department heads who have engaged in debates about streaming in all of its forms. Even though the Vancouver School Board “did away with [streaming],” as teacher Craig Evans put it, “we know it came back with a vengeance.” The situation is similar in the United States. Tracking, as it is called there, is no longer as widespread in American schools (Lucas, 1999). Yet, students often end up taking a set of courses concurrently or as prerequisites with differentiated curriculums (Braddock & Dawkins, 1993). The situation in Vancouver high schools is quite similar.

The variations of streaming across the city that these Vancouver teachers collectively listed for high achieving students were mini-schools, the varied enriched programs, International Baccalaureate, French Immersion, Arts, Music and Dance programs, as well as summer school courses for students wishing to get ahead. For students who have difficulty being academically successful, the teachers listed alternative schools and programs, modified courses including Canadian studies, and Skills Development classes. I will begin by discussing their overall general feelings around the notion of streaming itself, followed by their thoughts on the high-end streams and, lastly, the low-end streams.

Three of the head teachers expressed views that were opposed to streaming. Yet, all three – Hal Nagel, Carl Tragas, and Craig Evans - complained that they were forced to accept the practice of streaming high achievers because of a district-wide Vancouver School Board policy.

HN: What has happened, and this is the political side, is – we have a mini-school here. And some kids don’t get into the mini-school because there’s only 30 per year who get in. If they don’t get in, you know, well, where are they going to go? We’ll lose them to another mini-school. But we need the numbers, right?
PO: You need the numbers because of the school funding formula?

HN: Yeah. So let's offer enriched ... It's the next step to the mini. So basically it's a holding pen for mini-schools.

Nagel makes an excellent point. It is the way that schools are funded that more or less forces schools to create streams, at least as far as the high-achievement programs are concerned. Craig Evans voices a similar perspective.

CE: The Baccalaureate program [at another school] was bleeding off kids from here. So we started the Horizons Program to stop the stealing of our smart kids ... But it's not really because they are smarter or better. It's because they're more innocent or more delicate or more easily damaged. You get them in the programs like Horizons. You get some kids who are absolutely neurotic. They're neurotic about marks and that kind of stuff. They don't belong in the regular classroom. I mean, the regular kids are better off without them. And they're better off in a program like that with other neurotics, the sort of driven capacity and mentality where they can make [social] networks and survive.

Evans was the only teacher who described high-end students in a derogatory fashion. Despite the slights about being “delicate” and “neurotic,” Evans makes an interesting point that certain elite streams enable some of these students to “survive” in a high school. Yet, he was the only teacher who claimed that “the regular kids are better off without” the high achievers.

Carl Tragas agrees with Evans and Nagel about the need to provide some form of streaming in order to keep their stronger students, but he disagrees with Evans about its effects upon the other students in the regular classroom.

CT: A lot in education is done for the wrong reasons. We have honours classes in this school not because we are worried about some of those talented kids having an enriched environment, but [because] we'll lose those kids to another school because they have enriched classes or a mini-school and the parents will push them into it. So we started up this honours program here and we've immediately diluted the regular classes of the leaders that would make the class a better place for all students.
PO: So if you were on a district committee to decide whether there should be enriched programs or mini-schools, how would you vote?

CT: I would opt for not having them.

All three of these east side head teachers claim that it is Vancouver School Board policy that is forcing their hand at developing enriched programs at their respective schools. Although I did not ask about it, these teachers may have been influenced as well by the current focus on academic excellence for schools pushed for by conservative elements such as the Fraser Institute.

Two teachers were in favour of streaming the stronger students into enrichment programs. West side teacher Ed Hitchcock offered what is most reminiscent of a Social Darwinist position in support of meritocracy.

EH: Those kids often say they're bored. You know, they don't want to be held back by say, the average kid. If you've got brilliant kids, get them into a program where they can really move and accomplish a number of things. I think that's okay.

Hitchcock's position on streaming is based upon the notion of how best to further advantage those who do well at academics. He gave little concern to the effects enrichment programs would have on students left behind in regular classrooms. This is typical traditional conservative thinking. The rest of the teachers were unanimous in their position around enrichment programs: overall, the cons outweigh the pros.

Two of these dissenters were west side teachers Eric Quinn and Barry Kelvin.

EQ: I'm not in favour of enriched. A lot of kids are in the program because their parents want them to be, you know, enriched kids ... The reason I'm against streaming is because I'm in favour of a society that basically works together and achieves together and, you know, people have needs and people have abilities and they bring them together.
Once again, Quinn expresses an optimistic vision for a future society. Yet, because he refuses to address issues of conflict and power in his classroom teaching, I once again consider his position to be naïve for the same reasons I outlined in chapter 5. There is a broad range of opinion within liberalism on many educational matters. Quinn is expressing one of them on the topic of enrichment programs.

In terms of political ideology, Kelvin’s position is more complex.

BK: I don’t really agree with it, the reason being is that I think the kids can learn from each other. And when you start streaming, you start to elevate people into statuses and class systems ... Getting back to your working-class example, you get kids that are streamed only associating with those others in the same stream. It’s a potential for hierarchies and stereotypes. So I don’t agree with it. I know the argument is that you’re depriving those students with high academic possibilities, talent, promise, from reaching the stars. But they’ll be fine.

PO: Do you consider them to be going pretty far anyway?

BK: That’s the way I feel. There’s no need to stream them because they’re still going to achieve ... Even if some kids are behind, they get help from the stronger kids. They can be supportive of each other.

With these comments, Kelvin demonstrates a radical insight: streaming leads to “statuses and class systems.” Curtis, Livingstone, and Smaller express this very position: “The evidence shows that the high school system streams people in keeping with their parents’ class position and occupation” (p. 12). Despite clear liberal influences in his thinking around issues of race, it makes sense that Kelvin holds this position, given that he has risen in status and social class since his upbringing in “a welfare family.” This is also an example of how the same teacher can be influenced by different political ideologies, depending on the issue.

In this same sequence of comments, Kelvin was able to reconcile his opposition to streaming with his pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps philosophy discussed earlier.
BK: [Weaker students] work just as well or better with the stronger kids helping them. What I think often happens with the failures is that teachers group these kids together with somebody who's a lazy kid. A lazy kid, to me, is way different. The kid that works hard but just struggles, I admire those kids. The lazy one, whether he's weak or strong, tends to bother me.

It is difficult for me to exactly pinpoint the political ideology influencing Kelvin around streaming. It appears to be a cocktail of all three. Radical, because of his awareness of how streaming slots working-class students into working-class jobs; liberal, because of his support of meritocracy and the notion of hard work allowing an individual to get ahead; and conservative, because of the bootstraps philosophy he holds.

Two teachers expressed strong dissatisfaction with the current B.C. government’s proposed changes to public education called Career Pathways (B.C. Ministry of Education, 2003.) Steve Graham claimed that the new graduation requirements “are going to do the opposite of” increasing “flexibility and choice for students because now they’re going to have to make certain decisions at a younger age.” According to Graham, these forced decisions will make it very difficult for students to change academic paths at a later stage of schooling.

Carl Tragas also expressed a somewhat radical perspective when he explained why he is opposed to placing working-class students into modified streams.

CT: I don't like the proposed new curriculum for putting these little worker slots into the bigger puzzle. It seems very manipulative.

PO: Do you mean that it seems like they are using school curriculum to slot people into certain occupations?

CT: Yeah. I think it's an economic model.

Tragas provides a penetrating insight in a similar way as reproduction theorists have done in the past, namely, that schools have been used to meet the requirements of capitalists (Bowles & Gintis, 1976).
What is most interesting for me, however, is not the insight itself but which one of the teachers actually expressed it. As I have mentioned in chapter 5 and earlier in this chapter, Tragas was the only teacher to use the genetic-deficiency discourse to make a direct connection between working-class status and genes. This perspective may be the only one that would make any sense at all in streaming working-class students into programs in which they could gain the skills needed to procure secure employment. Yet, he is opposed to streaming of this kind. I declined to probe him around this apparent contradiction, however, because it appeared that Tragas was growing wary of what he perceived my ideological influences to be. In other words, in order to maintain rapport, I let this contradiction go.

In general, the teachers were not in favour of streaming the weaker students into modified programs. This position was probably best summed up by Eric Quinn's concern that it "creates a culture of 'we are the marginal ones.'" Yet, Ken Osborne's (1991) claim that the practice of streaming conceals a middle-class bias and a White bias, did not seem to be part of their reasoning. Despite this reluctance to support the streaming of students into modified programs, there are other attitudes some teachers hold that may help lead working-class students to marginalized working-class jobs.

6.4.3 How Teachers Think About Teaching Social Class Issues

In the curricular analysis section of this chapter, I pointed out that there is a hegemonic middle-class norm in the curriculum. Bearing this in mind, I will begin this section by exploring certain attitudes of the five east side teachers. These teachers are more likely to have a significant majority of working-class students in their classrooms.

One of the questions I asked each of the teachers pertained to their thoughts on how labour issues are represented in the latest social studies curriculum. (See Appendix 1, question 10.) As with other analytic codes, sometimes responses to other questions yielded information about their thoughts
around teaching issues of social class. Four of five east side teachers claimed that the problem with teaching about labour issues, working-class issues, or the dismantling of the social welfare state resided with the students themselves. Hal Nagel claims that it has nothing at all to do with either the formal curriculum or the teacher's role in the enacted curriculum.

HN: The social studies curriculum is quite political-oriented. [He makes a snoring sound.] You know, here's the timeline, kids. Know it.

PO: By political-oriented, do you mean it's about the structure of government?

HN: Yeah.

PO: What about the history component of the course? Or the current events component?

HN: Well, when you look at the content, you try to cram knowledge into them and that's it ... Hopefully in grade 11 you can draw on it, if they remember it. That's a big if! I think it's a natural maturity that the kids, when they get to grade 11, they have different issues. They're getting a part-time job. They may have to support themselves in their own living space, or support the family. Whatever the case is, they're more involved in society from a tax-payer's point of view. So I think it's partly the socialization that naturally occurs that they're dealing with.

Nagel's point is that working-class students have more important things to do at that time in their lives than learn about working-class issues. He describes a right-wing populism developing in the students as they get to grade 11 in which they resent having to pay taxes. As a veteran teacher of working-class students myself, I have come across these same right-wing populist sentiments (Orlowski, 2001a). The point of taxes and any notion of the social-welfare state have long disappeared from the formal curriculum, as I pointed out earlier in this chapter. Yet, the adapted curriculum in the social studies courses that I teach has units focusing on these very topics. The assessment strategies I employ lead me to believe that students leave the course with some understanding of the role of taxes in support of the
social welfare state. Nagel, on the other hand, is opposed to these adaptations because of an already over-crowded curriculum.

East side teacher Carl Tragas, who also taught for over 20 years at a west side school, made the following comparison:

CT: The east side students are less aware than the west side students.

PO: Do you mean that the east side students are less aware politically? Or that they don't know what's in their own best interests compared to west side students?

CT: I think the first. The knowledge isn't there because of, I don't know, I don't even think it's so much a language barrier. I think it's a socioeconomic generalization you can make that that they're less attuned to be interested in [politics]. Whereas a west side kid has the home life where there's expectations, academic expectations, where there's news, newspapers, Time, Macleans, The Economist, those kinds of things ... I could start a current events class in grade 11 socials, and be quiet for the rest of the hour. And they, generally, in a civil manner, would have a pretty intelligent conversation.

PO: Why do you think west side students are able to do that easier than here? Because they are also discussing these things at home?

CT: That's right ... The kids here, they beg me to stay away from current events, where they have to be involved ... And I'm disappointed.

Tragas' strong use of the culture of poverty discourse is very significant for this research. His position around teaching working-class students about working-class issues is the same as Hal Nagel's, namely, they don't do it because the students are not interested. He claimed that all students, regardless of social class, have a "lack of sympathy for unions," which he doesn't understand. Yet, when I asked Tragas what current events topics he might consider discussing in class, he responded with "fast ferries," an event that saw the left-leaning NDP government go over-budget on a large transportation project. Although the corporate media turned this into a major political story in the lead-up to the last
provincial election, it is hardly gripping material for most teenagers, regardless of their class background. Moreover, Tragas seemed to pay little heed to the fact that well over half of the students in his school are English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. In a study of two Lower Mainland high schools, Patricia Duff (2001) found that “ESL students in mainstream social studies classes are often disadvantaged” (p. 109). During open discussions, according to Duff, they “were never observed to propose a topic and, when asked specifically for input, they often hedged and provided brief, partially audible responses” (p. 116). The study found that a major reason why many ESL students had difficulty following discussions about current events was because of the high number of references to popular culture. Duff’s conclusions might explain why Tragas felt that many of his students were not interested in current events.

There was one teacher, however, who experienced teaching working-class students about working-class oppression quite differently. Like Carl Tragas, Steve Graham also taught for several years on the west side before becoming the head teacher at an east side school. In fact, the two were colleagues at the same west side school for two years.

SG: At [the west side school], I found myself being the devil’s advocate for what could be broadly called socialistic perspectives, because the kids, like kids in every school, they bring what they bring from home. There’d be a handful of kids who, perhaps, would bring the minority point of view. And there’d be the overwhelming majority that would have what we might call the Vancouver Sun’s endorsed view ... At that school, you feel kind of like a person who’s been in a war zone, providing an alternative perspective, and you’d get a barrage of kids coming at you going, “Wow, those people on welfare!” Here [at the east side school], it’s a lot less. It’s not to say that every kid here comes from a family that is, you know, more left-wing. That’s not true. What it is, is that kids here seem to inherently appreciate that First Nations people have been mistreated. There’s a perfect example, compared to [west side school], where you would encounter what you’d call discriminatory attitudes toward First Nations. Here they seem to inherently, or innately, what’s the word I’m looking for, innately know that sometimes large corporations or banks screw people around. So I guess, at a working-class school,
to stereotype it, there's a greater appreciation of some of the stuff that others have been through.

The different descriptions offered by Graham and Tragas about teaching working-class students versus upper middle-class students could not differ more. This is especially interesting considering that both of them are describing classroom discussions that occurred in the same west side school. What is the crucial factor for these different perspectives? It has to be the political ideology of the teacher themselves. For the most part, Tragas has been influenced by conservatism. (Recall his usage of the essentialist discourse stating “weak genes” are why the working class is where it is.) On the other hand, Graham is a progressive in his thoughts on class issues.

Graham was the only teacher who by and large considered working-class students to be enthusiastic learners. Perhaps this is a result of the topics he chooses which are “ones that affect kids” such as the recent lowering of the minimum wage from $8 to $6. These topics work in the classroom, according to Graham, because “kids understand injustice.” Others, such as Ed Hitchcock, who formerly taught on the east side, said many of them were “lazy.” Hitchcock and Carl Evans posited that the problem resided in their home environments, that there was absolutely nothing in their own attitude or in the formal curriculum itself that might be at least part of the problem. With this assertion, they were in agreement with east side teachers Hal Nagel and Carl Tragas.

Yet, Allan Ornstein and Daniel Levine (1989) consider teacher attitudes to be of paramount importance. They contend that one of the major reasons for low achievement among many working-class and non-White students is teacher perceptions of student inadequacy.

Many teachers in working-class schools reach the conclusion that large numbers of their students are incapable of learning. This view becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy because teachers who question their students' learning potential are less likely to work hard to improve academic performance, particularly since improvement requires intense effort that quickly consumes virtually all of a teacher's energy. Because students are influenced by their teachers' perceptions
According to the main point of this quote, the conservative perspectives of Carl Tragas, Hal Nagel, Carl Evans, and Ed Hitchcock, have most likely affected the motivation and performance of their working-class students. There are differing discourses within the conservative ideology, of course. The tough love approach of Barry Kelvin’s bootstraps conservatism is not what Ornstein and Levine are referring to, of course. Kelvin believes that students from under-privileged backgrounds can succeed, provided they get the support they need, whether from peers or the teacher, and they put in the effort.

All ten participating teachers stated that the current social studies curriculum was not fair in its depiction or lack of depiction of labour or working-class issues. Despite this uniform perspective, there was very little agreement on what should be done about this. Three teachers gave responses that are progressive in nature, or somewhere in the overlap region of left-liberal and radical.

East side teacher Steve Graham stated emphatically that teachers of working-class students should teach about working-class issues even if they are not covered in the curriculum. According to Graham, “I think it’s important for them in their development as citizens.” He admitted to difficulty in “bringing to life the Winnipeg General Strike” of 1919 for his students. Yet, as I mentioned earlier, he found it “easy” to teach them about current examples of working-class exploitation.

Catherine Combleth (1990) would approve of Graham choosing relevant topics, such as the recent lowering of the minimum wage in B.C., for his working-class students to discuss.

Sociocultural context includes demographic, social, political, and economic conditions, traditions and ideologies, and events that actually or potentially influence curriculum.
Cornbleth calls for contemporary and historical conflicts to be brought to the fore in the enacted social studies curriculum (p. 34). She theorizes that “curriculum is contextually shaped” and “always mediated by students” (p. 53). Part of what Cornbleth means by contextually shaped is the sociocultural aspects of the local population.

East side teacher Larry Nelson said he rarely strayed from the curriculum but considered it extremely important for his students to understand a particularly critical aspect of class conflict.

LN: I don’t think a kid should be leaving high school and not be able to differentiate between what a union is, and what it’s trying to do, and what it has done, and what it used to be, as well as what the other side, management, wants ... I think the best example I sometimes use, and unfortunately it’s happened again recently, is trying to explain to the kids in April, May or June why some of the teachers they really like are not going to be here next year. “Why?” they ask. So I try to explain to them seniority and the rights and powers of a union and the decreased dollars coming from Victoria for public education.

Nelson’s example would most likely resonate with students because of the effect on their lives as some of their favourite (and young and energetic) teachers are forced out of their teaching jobs because of funding cuts.

Two teachers claimed that the reason that they don’t cover working-class issues in the classroom is because they “don’t have the information needed to cover” them, as Dave Carson said. Carson wished that we taught in a system that sent teachers back to university with pay in order to learn about these topics. This is unlikely, but teacher education courses should consider these issues.

There were a variety of reasons among the remaining six teachers for not teaching about labour issues. Two of them, Carl Tragas and Hal Nagel, put the blame on textbooks and the lack of coverage there. The two remaining teachers, Tim Patterson and Barry Kelvin, were able to articulate a few examples of labour issues they covered in the classroom. Patterson emphasized twice in the interview that he “signed a piece of paper” to cover the curriculum. Consequently, the only topics he named were
“the Industrial Revolution in Socials 9” and “the Winnipeg General Strike in Socials 11.” Kelvin did not feel as bound to stick to the formal curriculum as his colleague.

BK: We just recently covered the Roosevelt years and how awful it was for the working class in the United States.

PO: Did you do the New Deal?

BK: The New Deal, and what was going on with the strikers and the factory owners hiring these thugs. I have an interview with this old lady talking about her brother that was shot in the back ... And we did the communist revolution. I read a passage from John Reid’s book, Ten Days That Shook the World. He became a union advocate after interviewing people who had been relatives of people who had been slaughtered by Rockefeller’s henchmen in New Mexico, who actually chased after women and children who had been striking. They chased after them, found them hiding in a cave and machine-gunned them. It’s unbelievable! Now that stuff certainly makes kids think about the history of the labour movement.

Barry Kelvin was the most vocal of the ten teachers against public sector unions and teaching about them. Throughout the interview, he repeatedly espoused a pull-yourself-up-by-the-bootstraps philosophy. Yet, he was also able to articulate more than any of the teachers atrocities that the working classes have had to endure. Moreover, he actually taught his upper middle-class west side students about these conflicts. As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the notion of conflict is an important signifier of the radical-influenced curriculum. In this case, Kelvin is helping create a radical enacted curriculum. It is true that it is less contentious teaching about these events in the distant past and far away from British Columbia than it would be to bring them into the contemporary local context. Yet, the interview with Kelvin, especially when we were discussing class issues, was a clear demonstration of how different political ideologies can work simultaneously on the same teacher.
6.5 Summary and Conclusion

In a similar manner as found in chapter 5’s data analysis about race in B.C. social studies education, the analysis about social class indicates that there has been an ideological struggle between conservatism and liberalism during the twentieth century. The radical ideology that questions aspects of capitalism has also made fleeting appearances in social studies education in British Columbia. In fact, despite the overwhelming evidence that suggests the importance of social class in identity construction and determining one’s life chances, there is very little directly referring to it in the curriculum or in the thoughts of the teachers. In this manner, the curriculum and the teachers’ thoughts are quite similar. The curriculum matches the low comfort level of most people when the topic of social class enters the conversation. The question is whether the curriculum reflects this tendency or helps to entrench it. The answer is that it both reflects and entrenches this reluctance.

In the B.C. Department of Education Annual Reports from 1926 to 1933, working-class issues receive some mention, although from the standpoint of capital. This is also the treatment given in the 1941 curriculum, as the capitalist discourse is even more prominent. The next curriculum, published in 1949, is clearly conservative in its orientation: the rights of workers are nowhere to be seen; as well, despite the beginning steps in the construction of the Canadian social welfare state, it receives absolutely no mention either.

It is in the 1956 curriculum that aspects of liberalism enter the discourse about capitalist society: trade union laws, social security programs, and co-operatives are mentioned but in a conflict-free manner. The longstanding struggles between labour and capital, so much a part of the British Columbian social landscape, are omitted from this document. Its successor, published in 1968, took a step away from liberalism back toward conservatism: trade unions are not mentioned at all. In fact, the only appearance of any aspect of labour is in reference to life before the Industrial Revolution. By
focusing on the distant past, the curriculum developers deflect criticism about omitting working-class concerns at the same time that they portray the present as struggle-free. In this way, it is a hegemonic strategy. As well, despite the massive public debates around the implementation of Canada’s publicly-funded healthcare system in the mid-1960s, it is not mentioned in the 1968 document.

Canada’s medicare system failed to garner the attention of the 1980 social studies curriculum developers either. Yet, unions do appear, albeit in the same conflict-free manner that the 1956 document portrayed them. This time, they are linked to the corporation, the first time this entity is mentioned in the curriculum. It is significant that there is a learning objective that specifically represents citizens as consumers, producers and taxpayers. As Hobsbawm (1995) and Walker (2002) point out, the transformation of the worker’s consciousness from one based in class to one focused on consumerism was one of the great successes of the capitalist elite. The curriculum can be seen as part of the ideological apparatus that enabled this process to succeed.

The further entrenchment of the liberal class-blind ideology in the social studies curriculum continued with the 1988 version. Labour is once again represented only in the historical context, this time in terms of working families during the Industrial Revolution. The social welfare state, despite the vigorous ideological public debates occurring over its dismantling, is not mentioned. The 1997 document, the one presently used in B.C. social studies classrooms, continues the liberalization of the curriculum. The only mention of any aspect of social class is a reference to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Moreover, it emphasizes that each student should understand that a person’s identity construction is affected by a list of factors that sociologists would accept, save for the omission of social class from this list.

In conclusion, the evolution of the social studies curriculum in B.C. has undergone a similar ideological shift in terms of social class representation as it has with issues of race. What began as a
stridently conservative document in 1941 underwent changes such that it is now almost completely liberal in its ideological orientation. There was some oscillation between the two ideologies in the 1956, 1968, and 1980 versions. By 1988, however, conservatism had been displaced by liberalism as the central curricular influence.

The omission of social class was also a dominant feature of how the teachers described how they teach social studies. In fact, only one of them even considered social class to be a central factor in a student’s identity construction. Perhaps this should not be very surprising, given the common beliefs that the school is an example of an egalitarian institution and that Canada is a fair and just meritocratic society. Despite this match between the teachers’ thoughts and the curriculum, the teachers responded to questions that allowed me to glean the ideologies influencing the ways they think about social class.

The class-power discourse was almost completely absent from the thoughts of the teachers. This indicates a paucity of radical thought among the entire group. Three of the teachers turned any mention of poverty in Vancouver or Canada to worse conditions for poor people elsewhere in the world. The claims to worse economic conditions in distant places or long ago was also reflected in their teaching: almost all of them taught about class issues elsewhere or in the distant past. In this way, the teachers matched how the curriculum portrays working-class issues such as poverty. The gains made through the construction of the social welfare state and its current dismantling are also omitted from the enacted curriculum. This is another match with the formal curriculum.

Teachers who came from working-class backgrounds seemed to be influenced to a greater degree than their middle-class counterparts by their upbringing. (This was more evident here than in the previous chapter because of the homogeneity of their racial backgrounds.) Five of the six teachers who came from working-class families were consistent in their expression of conservative views on matters of social class. Yet, there was variation in the conservative discourses they used in describing
working-class students. Two teachers used the conservative genetic-deficiency discourse to explain low graduation rates of poor students. Another used a different version of the essentialist discourse, claiming that schools would never be able to rid the working classes of homophobia and racism.

In terms of explaining the lack of academic success by poor students, the most common discourse used by the teachers was the *culture of poverty*. Almost all of the teachers considered the *home* of poor unsuccessful students to be the root cause rather than the curriculum or the school system itself. In this way, the teachers indicated acceptance of a *traditional* explanation for academic shortcomings. (I use the term *traditional* to refer to that overlap region of conservatism and right liberalism, especially pertaining to the culture of poverty discourse, meritocracy, and streaming.) Two teachers mentioned curriculum relevance but spoke of it in conservative terms, indicating that vocational courses need to be increased for working-class students who show a lack of ambition. Yet, half of the teachers used the culture of poverty traditional discourse, citing familial financial concerns for the main reason poor students often fare poorly in academic terms.

Despite the awareness of financial concerns, teachers were, by and large, extremely reluctant to address a critique of material inequality in our society. Again, part of the reason for this was that some consider the Canadian poor to be much better off than the poor elsewhere. This reluctance may also be a result of the normalizing effect of certain hegemonic discourses in support of capitalism in both the curriculum and in mainstream media. Fear of rebuke from authority figures may also be a factor.

The teachers’ views around the practice of streaming were quite varied. The department head teachers were very aware of the different versions of streaming that take place in Vancouver schools. Three of them claimed to be against streaming but were forced to accept it in their schools because of school board policy around funding. Two other teachers expressed support for streaming students into enrichment programs as a way to better meet students’ needs. Five of the teachers, however, were
clearly opposed to this form of streaming. One was able to make the connection between streaming and future class hierarchies.

All ten of the teachers considered the curriculum to be unfair in its depiction of labour and working-class issues. Yet, there was a lot of disagreement over what to do about it. Several of the teachers who grew up in working-class families claimed that working-class students are simply "not interested" in working-class issues. Ironically, a middle-class teacher was the only one who described his working-class students as enthusiastic learners, especially if they felt "the heat of the issue."

The ways in which teachers perceive working-class students and their abilities appear to be very influential in the academic expectations they hold for their students and, subsequently, student efforts. (This same dynamic works with how these teachers interact with First Nations students.) Political ideology is involved in the ways teachers describe their students' learning interests and in the topics they choose to cover. One teacher mentioned that a major reason why teachers do not cover working-class issues is that they have not been taught them themselves. This has large implications for social studies teacher education. A requirement for these programs of some background in labour history would go a long way toward rectifying this situation. Two of the teachers pointed at textbooks and a paucity of resources that focus on labour and the social welfare state. Perhaps teacher education could help in this regard, as well.

Although gender was not a unit of analysis in this study, there was no mention of women as workers throughout Canada's history in any of the curricular documents. This omission is another example of a hegemonic strategy that implies that women had no part in Canada's labour struggles when there is ample research that suggests otherwise (Creese, 1999, 1988; Strong-Boag, 1988, 1981; White, 1980). The tacit assumption suggests the conservative notion that the most effective role for women is in the domestic sphere. Moreover, there is no curricular reference to any intersectionalities
between class, gender, and race. Although I did not specifically ask teachers about intersectionalities, my past experience interviewing veteran teachers for Deirdre Kelly’s Teaching for Social Justice research projects suggests that these aspects of Canadian social relations are virtually absent from pedagogical planning (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). Again, there is much research focussed on race/class intersectionalities in Canada (Creese, 1999, 1988; Leier, 1990) that would provide excellent materials for a more progressive teaching of the Canadian past.

In sum, the majority of the discourses used by teachers to describe issues of social class were traditional ones that incorporate ideas from both conservatism and liberalism. In this way, they are a clear reflection of the formal social studies curriculum itself. Although the latest versions are mostly liberal, their predecessors were oriented toward a conservative perspective. The teachers also demonstrate this combination. Occasionally, a few of the teachers demonstrated a radical influence on their thinking and their teaching. Overall, it is clear that each individual teacher may hold more than one political ideology at the same time. Which one becomes dominant depends upon the issue under discussion.

1 Fraser (1997) contends that “a more differentiated politics of difference” is required than what Iris Young proposes (p. 204). Her position is that some differences, like neo-Nazi skinheads, should be eliminated, while others should be universalized, and others still, enjoyed.

2 The discussion in chapter 2 explained that my use of *discourse* is “as a constant and dynamic engagement with power,” which is always at the root of both discourse itself and which discourses gain currency in public debates. (See p. 29). From this description, I consider the substitution of *discourse* for *theory* to be useful for purposes of analysis. The three types of cultural-deficit *theories* are referred to as *discourses*.
Virtually everyone believes democracy is desirable ... The nature of their underlying beliefs, however, differ. For some, a commitment to democracy is associated with liberal notions of freedom [and] equality of opportunity... For some, good citizens in a democracy volunteer, while for others they take active parts in political processes by voting, forming committees, protesting, and working on campaigns.

(Westheimer & Kahne, 2003, p. 1)

Although this study is primarily focused on examining how political ideology affects the ways issues of race and class are thought about in social studies, it is in no way a stretch to include democracy and citizenship in this analysis. After all, modern democratic principles that arose out of the Enlightenment have been debated every step of the way by conservative, liberal and socialist ideologues. Moreover, each ideology holds strong positions on who should be allowed to participate in democratic decision-making and in certain institutional arrangements.

The notion of citizenship also arose out of conflicts that originated during the Enlightenment, struggles around inclusion and exclusion, and in the process it displaced the related concept of subject. In the Canadian context, this displacement lagged behind other western nations. It wasn’t until the Citizenship Act of 1947 that people became Canadian citizens instead of solely British subjects (Sears, Clarke & Hughes, 1999, p. 114). At the centre of these struggles were issues of race, ethnicity and class, as well as gender and sexuality. It has been a difficult process to extend full citizenship rights to more groups (Ungerleider, 1992), as current struggles over gay rights indicate.

In western nations, the past few decades have seen an increase in social movements of groups calling for increased recognition and increased access to the power nexus. Citizenship is clearly related to democratic principles. It is also clearly a concern of this study. Indeed, discourses about issues of race and social class in western nations have been influential in the struggles around
citizenship. It is the unifying conception of citizenship, namely, who is included and who is excluded in our society, that is pertinent to this study. Moreover, the liberal notion of meritocracy, now also favoured by most conservatives, is “fully consistent with democracy” (Laxer, 1998, p. 36) because in theory no one inherits power through inheritance. Yet, as I have already mentioned, the assumption that Canada is a meritocracy in which all people are given an equal chance at power and is simply a falsehood. I was curious to explore how these supposed links are considered by the teachers.

_Democracy_ could very well be the most contested term in the entire study. Ever since its appearance during the Enlightenment, it has been a source of vociferous debate (Schwarzmantel, 1998). As such, I will not endeavour to enter this debate over the _true_ meaning of democracy. (Perhaps there isn’t one true meaning.) Nor do I wish to go back to the roots of democracy in ancient Greece and discuss the writings of Plato and Aristotle. In this introduction, however, I will make a brief case as to why the related concepts of democracy and citizenship are important considerations for contemporary social studies education, particularly in the context of ideological representations of race and social class.

The conceptual framework of democracy among academics and activists includes ideas of representative government, political and social justice, equality, liberty, and human rights. Yet, the layperson’s view of what democracy means is not much more than simplified notions of elections and representative government. Whether the reason is our consumer culture bombarding us with advertising or a general lack of training to think critically about complex social issues, the end result is that we live in an era of acute political apathy. As Deirdre Kelly (2003) succinctly puts it, “[o]ur existing democracy engenders widespread passivity and disconnection” (p. 124). Yet, can we afford to sit back and let certain powerful forces have their way? Ever since the Enlightenment, many have
been concerned about making society safe from tyrannies, oligarchies, plutocracies, and anarchy. The question that always follows is: How?

As one response, political philosophers Nancy Fraser (1997) and Iris Marion Young (1997) suggest that democracy must embrace the idea of a politics of inclusion through vigorous debate and public dialogue. But how do regular people enter into the debate? This is the starting point for this brief discussion on why it is imperative to look at the ways democracy and citizenship are taught in social studies classrooms today.

One of the leading nineteenth-century liberal thinkers, Alexis de Tocqueville, believed in the inevitability of democracy. Yet, one of his major concerns was that it has the potential to fall into a kind of despotism in which a head of state presides over a congregation of isolated individuals who may be equal but also may be powerless. In Democracy in America, Tocqueville reasons that his worry was not so much that the masses would become active ideological followers of the leader. Rather, he saw the potential for the masses to be dumbed down to the point where they would not even be interested in large-scale political action. (The current political apathy in most western nations attests to the validity of Tocqueville’s concerns.)

Tocqueville influenced another great liberal thinker of the nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill. In Considerations on Representative Government, Mill thought it a good idea for every adult to have the vote. (He was supportive of the Pankhurst sisters’ agenda before women were enfranchised.) But Mill put a condition on this universal enfranchisement: compulsory secondary education must be instituted for all. Mill considered education to be most important in order to safeguard democratic society from degenerating into the despotism Tocqueville feared. The crucial question for both was essentially asked by a liberal French thinker before their time. Jean Jacques Rousseau questioned whether it was even possible to educate for a democracy.
In early twentieth-century America, John Dewey, the founder of American pragmatism who made a massive contribution to the philosophy of education, answered Rousseau with an unqualified affirmative. In *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey argues that public education offers the best hope against the possibility of despotic regimes. The public school, according to Dewey, must have a major mandate of developing in each student critical thinking skills so that they will become citizens capable of solving complex social problems. “The essential need,” according to Dewey, “is the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion and persuasion” (1927/1954, p. 207). In this way, democratic American society would be able to reconcile the inevitable tensions between individual rights, freedoms and the good of the overall community. Thus far, this entire discussion has been about what role education should have in strengthening democracy according to *liberal* thinkers. After John Dewey, *radical* thinkers began making contributions to this dilemma.

In the 1920s and 1930s, early American Social Reconstructionists like Harold Ruggs (1921) and George Counts (1932) went a few steps further than Dewey in imagining a role for public education, especially its teachers. These theorists considered the biggest threat to democracy to be the concentration of economic, social, and political power. Their solution was for *teachers* to become leaders of social change (Steven & Wood, 1995). The values teachers were to impart to students were to run “counter to the meritocratic ideology” by stressing the discourse of an egalitarian society (p. 127). Counts in particular argued that teachers should “seek power and then strive to use that power fully and wisely and in the interests of the great masses of the people” (cited in Stevens & Wood, 1995). In 1932, he posed the underlying question for this study: “Dare the schools build a new social order?”

Today’s Social Reconstructionists, such as Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant, have continued the call for teachers to employ agency in making it a better world. In *Education that is Multicultural*
and Social Reconstructionist (1994), they stress similar issues, focusing on the need for teachers to help students understand two vital points: first, that knowledge is socially constructed; and, second, that by gaining political literacy, people are in a better position to fight for what is in their best overall interests. (Of course, the analysis of teacher interviews was to inform me of the degree to which the teachers themselves understand these two points.)

Both eras of Social Reconstructionist theorizing stressed the need for structural and institutional change across society. Consequently, the Social Reconstructionists are clearly positioned within the radical political ideology. Teacher agency of the magnitude called for by Sleeter and Grant requires a significant number of radical teachers aware of pedagogical strategies who would do two things in particular: first, help students understand the insidious ways in which power operates to shape individual consciousness and ways of seeing; second, not run into difficulty with people threatened by such activism. Despite the difficulties in recruiting large numbers of radical teachers, not to mention the systemic adaptations required, the possibility of educators willing to engage in a politicized enacted curriculum exists, and with it, so does hope.

It seems to be a commonly held view that the goal of democratic societies is to reach a popular consensual agreement on values. But it might be that democracies are better suited for managing existing and continuing social tensions and conflicts over values and interests. These struggles over values and interests, of course, is where political ideology moves into the focus of the discussion. In Canada and in the United States, debates continue to rage unabated over values on myriad social and economic issues. Yet, every significant change in the social relations of our two countries has occurred through the efforts of liberals and social democrats over the vociferous opposition of conservatives. Healthcare, old-age pensions, collective bargaining, welfare, the establishment of a minimum wage, affirmative action, and – especially in the United States - civil
rights are only *some* of the positive gains initiated and supported by progressives that were opposed by traditional conservatives. Not only did every one of these initiatives increase the dignity of a large segment of our societies, but they also strengthened our democracies, as well. Some liberals, such as former Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern (*Harper's*, 2002), consider conservatives to play a vital role in American society by challenging progressive ideas, forcing proponents to examine their viability. According to McGovern, serious problems arise, however, when conservatives come to power.

As Richard Rorty (1998) points out, the hard-fought-for gains made for the benefit of common people are always vulnerable to dismantling by conservative governments. In the present historical moment, Americans might become acutely aware of this. The George W. Bush-led Republicans have taken measures to dismantle social programs and individual rights and freedoms at the same time that they have spent lavishly on the military and cut taxes, especially for the wealthy. Yet, there is hope before despair. Because we live in democracies the pendulum can swing back and regressive conservative legislation repealed.

In chapter 6, I outlined some of the concerns raised by philosophers Richard Rorty (1998) and Nancy Fraser (1997) about current attacks by American conservatives. Both are positioned in somewhat different positions along the progressive side of the same continuum. Rorty calls for the Left to mainly coalesce around economic issues as it did for the first half of the twentieth century. Fraser’s position is to form coalitions around a redistribution of wealth *and* a recognition of various social groups. Obviously, a democratic society should at least be able to provide the conduit for these coalitions to form and challenge current American conservative hegemony. Yet, significant segments of the working classes are *not* voting in their best economic interests, to say the least (Frank, 2004).
Conservative discourses appear to have found increased support in recent decades. Filmmaker Michael Moore notwithstanding, populists seem to be much more successful at garnering support for conservative social policies at the same time that they implement neoliberal economic policies. The call by progressive educators for schools to teach students what is in their best interests (Sleeter, 1996; Osborne, 1988) has clearly not yet become entrenched in schools. The major reason for this may simply be that it is much easier to govern a society in which fewer and fewer people possess critical thinking skills than one in which too many people ask too many difficult questions about power and social justice. As far as social justice advocates are concerned, the time has come to tackle Tocqueville’s greatest fear head-on by countering the tendency toward creating a society mainly composed of uninformed individuals.

Nancy Fraser may have provided at least part of the answer on how best to rectify the situation. In Justice Interruptus (1997), Fraser postulates around what she calls the “subaltern counterpublic.” She describes this as a space in which “members of subordinated social groups … invent and circulate” counter-hegemonic discourses (p. 81). These newly-formed “discourses of possibility,” in turn, can lead to new representations and identities that conceivably lead to an understanding of where their interests lie. For our purposes, the creation of subaltern counterpublics requires teachers who are skilled in encouraging the enacted curriculum to move in this direction, a notion undoubtedly supported by the Social Reconstructionists. The analysis of the teacher interviews later in this chapter will shed light on these possibilities.

Questions arise around what an enacted curriculum set on creating subaltern counterpublics would look like. In Inclusion and Democracy (2000), Iris Marion Young claims that both structural inequalities and exclusion pose obstacles for certain groups to better their situations in contemporary democracies. She argues that these groups should work out collective problems from their differently
situated social locations. Young suggests that in the process, groups pay particular attention to the norms of democratic communication and the processes of representation. Her ideas may be helpful to radical teachers interested in developing Fraser's notion of subaltern counterpublics.

In *Critical Democracy and Education* (1999), Joe Kincheloe suggests an outline based on critical pedagogy that would encourage the enacted curriculum to lead to something resembling Fraser's notion of the subaltern counterpublics: “the curriculum becomes a dynamic of negotiation where students and teachers examine the forces that have shaped them and the society in which they live” (p. 73). In other words, Kincheloe calls for teachers to develop an enacted curriculum that encourages self-reflection and lifts the hegemonic veil away from the hidden power structures. In fact, the ideas of Kincheloe, Fraser, and Young, based in radical or critical theory, suggest using education to deconstruct hegemonic forms of meaning making. (With similar aims, I specifically focus on the role of social studies education.)

The goal of this research is to determine how social studies education can effect positive change, including the strengthening of democracy. Very few people would argue against the notion of strengthening democracy. At this point, it is prudent to discuss in theoretical terms the discourses around democracy and citizenship used in conservatism, liberalism, and radical socialism. This theory will then be applied to the *formal* curriculum, as well as to the thoughts of the teachers that may shed light on the *enacted* curriculum in their classrooms.

### 7.1 Ideology and Competing Visions of Democracy and Citizenship

In a recent article entitled *What Kind of Citizen? The Politics of Educating for Democracy* (2003), Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne describe a study they conducted in which they explored different ideological conceptions of what it means to teach for democracy. They posit that although
John Dewey has perhaps had the most influence on the connection between democracy and education, educators have “interpreted his ideas in multiple ways, so no single conception emerges” (p. 2). Political ideology is once again at the root of these differing interpretations. The ideas of Deirdre Kelly and Gabriella Minnes Brandes (2001, 2003) and Joe Kincheloe (1999) have also contributed to the analysis in this chapter, specifically around the role of the teacher and epistemological concerns in the classroom.

Two other Canadian scholarly works have made distinctions between the ways that teaching for democracy leads to different kinds of citizens. In Teaching for Democratic Citizenship (1991), Ken Osborne claims that shortly after the British (male) working classes gained the right to vote in 1867, a conservative notion of citizenship education arose whereby workers were encouraged to vote responsibly for their representative. At the same time, a radical conception of citizenship education appeared that wanted to use the schools for “social change and transformation” (p. 118). Sears, Clarke, and Hughes (1999) also divide Canadian citizenship education into two distinct kinds: the elitist conception that “assumes that there is a small group of people that, by reason of birth or training, is especially fit for the business of rule” (Heater, cited in Sears et al., p. 124); and an activist conception of citizenship in which there is a “deep commitment to democratic values, including the equal participation of all citizens in discourse, where all voices can be heard, and power is relatively equally distributed” (p. 124). Clearly, the citizen-as-activist is a radical conception.

I consider the taxonomy developed by Westheimer and Kahne to be better suited to my goals for this study for a couple of reasons. First, they differentiate between three conceptions of citizenship in their taxonomy rather than only two. The three map onto the three political ideologies in a fairly coherent and logical manner. Second, I agree with Westheimer and Kahne that the notion of the participatory citizen does not distinguish between one who willingly participates within the
structures as they exist and the one who participates in order to transform the system. The first conception of the participatory citizen is liberal, while the second is radical.

According to Westheimer and Kahne, political ideology affects the various ways of teaching for democracy that leads to these three different kinds of citizens. Differing discourses of the *good citizen* are somewhat analogous to what each of the three political ideologies desire. The *personally responsible citizen* is the ideal vision of conservatives. The *participatory citizen*, one who engages in much more than voting, is what liberals want. The *justice oriented citizen* is the ideal result of what radicals hope to develop. How each ideology views the role of the teacher is a crucial aspect of the development of their version of the ideal citizen. The role of the teacher is also related to epistemological concerns: each ideology regards knowledge itself differently. These aspects of teaching for democracy will be described in terms of each ideology.

Westheimer and Kahne consider a strong sense of personal responsibility to be the main characteristic of the conservative discourse of the good citizen. Citizens should be law-abiding and act responsibly in the community. Conservative educators emphasize “honesty, integrity, self-discipline, and hard work” (p. 4). Kelly and Brandes (2001) add that conservatives want teachers to see themselves as “public servants carrying out decisions made elsewhere.” The role of the teacher in teaching for democracy is to help students “understand the rule of law and respect traditional authority” (p. 437). In other words, “the purpose of preparing democratic citizens is [either] downplayed or equated with building patriotism and national unity” (p. 438). According to conservatives, teachers are *not* to engage in what they see as political activity in any aspect of schooling. Kincheloe (1999) points out that a conservative notion of teaching about “democratic citizenship involves the uncritical acquisition of a neutral body of traditional knowledge” (p. 79). In other words, conservatives are more likely to support the positivist notion of school knowledge being
produced in a value-free, objective manner. Some conservatives may also acknowledge certain biases in curricular knowledge, but consider their version to be the best to maintain social cohesion.

In contrast to the personally responsible citizen of conservatism, a liberal discourse of the good citizen is one who is an active member of community groups and participates in community efforts to help those in need or to perhaps clean up the neighbourhood. Liberals believe that the good citizen participates and perhaps leads “within established systems and community structures” (Westheimer & Kahne, 2003, p. 6). Educators within this paradigm “want to teach knowledge and skills necessary for civic engagement in community affairs” (p. 9). Liberal teachers do not place much emphasis on encouraging students to critically analyze the current system of unequal social relations. According to Kelly and Brandes (2001), a liberal pluralist vision of democracy sees the teacher as a neutral facilitator of discussions who creates the space for multiple perspectives to be heard (p. 438). Although some liberals have an understanding of knowledge that there can be many perspectives of the same event, “an implicit assumption ... is that these perspectives compete on a level playing field,” and that the best ideas rise to the top (p. 438). As with liberal views toward issues of race and class, there is a power-blind aspect to their perspective of teaching for democracy.

The third discourse of the good citizen is the one Westheimer and Kahne call the justice oriented citizen. This radical view shares with liberalism a focus on participation in order to help the community, but there is a major difference: the justice oriented citizen works for structural and institutional change in order to eliminate human suffering. Observing or even engaging in social protests might be a pedagogical strategy used to help foster this type of citizen. Although this type of teaching may make political issues explicit, Westheimer and Kahne make it clear it is not to be confused with political indoctrination (p. 7). This is a fine line on which to walk. Kincheloe (1999) claims that radical educators do not adhere to a “pretense of neutrality.” Rather, they “expose their
values and openly work to achieve them" (p. 72). Kincheloe describes what I have been calling the enacted curriculum by invoking elements of the Freirian notions of *conscientization* and *praxis* (1973): the classroom “becomes a dynamic of negotiation where students and teachers examine the forces that have shaped them and the society in which they live. In this context, the curriculum is ever changing and evolving” (p. 73). Kelly and Brandes (2001) agree that radical educators emphasize collective problem-solving, stating that “[s]tudents need to learn analytic, communicative, and strategic skills” (p. 438).

These radical educators agree that the goal is to develop justice oriented citizens who are able to critique societal structures in order to understand the root causes of social inequities. This understanding is crucial if solutions are to be developed and implemented. Radical notions of epistemology adhere to the social construction of knowledge, acknowledging that power is entwined in its construction and representation. Moreover, radical teachers consider the notion that knowledge is neutral to be a false assumption of conservatism and much of liberalism.

In this section, I have described the competing ideological discourses of the good citizen, of the proper role of the good teacher, and of knowledge itself. It is time to apply these conceptions to the B.C. social studies curriculum. As with chapters 5 and 6, this will be followed by engaging in the analysis of the teacher interviews.

### 7.2 Ideology and Discourses of Democracy & Citizenship in B.C.’s Social Studies Curriculum

All versions of the B.C. social studies curriculum include content pertaining to the structure of representative government and its legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Therefore, I will not discuss the representation of the *structure* of representative government in the analysis of the
curriculum. Rather, this section addresses the ideological aspects of democracy and citizenship discussed in the previous two sections.

There is very little reference to democracy or citizenship in the B.C. Department of Annual Reports published from 1926 to 1933. In fact, the only significant mention of anything to do with democracy is in the exam portion of the 1930-31 Report. There is a brief question about the extension of the franchise (p. Q183). This question may have been included to address the pressure from non-White groups lobbying to have the vote extended to them as it had to White women earlier.

Democracy became a prominent concept throughout the first social studies curriculum in B.C. published in 1941. In the foreword of this document is a half-page section entitled Propaganda:

The dissemination of biased or partisan views, whether reactionary or radical, is a betrayal of trust, is harmful to public education, and destroys the influence of the person who indulges in it. It is not propaganda, however ... to instil (sic) into the pupils a love of country, loyalty towards it and towards our common throne, Empire and Commonwealth, appreciation of our free democratic institutions, and respect for law and order. All of these are consistent with the stated aims of our system of education, and the development of these sentiments is a duty of the school.

(B.C. Department of Education, 1941, p. 9)

The 1941 curriculum developers are clear in their aversion to socialist thought, which they call “reactionary or radical.” Any teacher who engages students in these ideas is guilty of promoting propaganda. They make exceptions from the charge of using propaganda, however, for any teacher who can instill a “love of country” and an “appreciation of our free and democratic institutions” into the minds of students. Clearly, conservatism is the influential ideology here, as developing patriotism is one of its central tenets. Moreover, although the term citizen is absent, the conservative notion of the good citizen is clearly expressed by linking a “respect for law and order” with nationalism, imperialism, and democratic institutions. This same point is made in a large section entitled Social Studies: Definition and Function in which teachers are strongly encouraged to praise “democratic
principles” in the classroom, including a respect for law and order. At the same time, however, they are warned not to “propagandize [their] own views – political, economic, religious, or other” because this “violates the objectives of the Social Studies and of education in general, and is inconsistent with the ethics of the teaching profession” (p. 127). In other words, propaganda is only to be used in the further entrenchment of the status quo in British Columbia.

In chapter 4, I outlined how a somewhat unique version of the White supremacist discourse became dominant in British Columbia, one which positioned the British at the top of all ethnic and racial groups. The 1941 curriculum supported the discourse of British superiority by exalting that “[t]he tradition of Democracy … is a tradition which almost alone the British peoples now maintain” (p. 128). For the better part of the rest of the curriculum, democracy is described within the conservative ideology of respecting the traditions, institutions and achievements of one’s “own country and Empire” (p. 129). Therefore, it should not be surprising that western nations that were part of the British Commonwealth would extol the virtues of democracy and Empire. This is especially so if one remembers that at this time there was no conception of Canadian citizens, only British subjects. In fact, although there is some suggestion of developing in each student the ability to think critically, this is dwarfed by the large emphasis on conservative aspects of democracy. These include a love of “country and Empire” and an acceptance that institutions can change as long as “only lawful and constitutional methods of doing so” are employed (p. 129). The classroom was no place for left-wing radicalism calling for social change like suggested by Social Reconstructionists Harold Ruggs and George Count.

Yet, in the social studies course for grade 11 students, the 1941 curriculum presents an entire large unit entitled How Democracy Developed and Spread and How it is Opposed by Autocracy and Modern Dictatorships (pp. 164-165). It would seem that this unit is an obvious response to Hitler and
the German Nazis. It might also have been developed as a strategy to thwart communist movements from gaining new recruits. Ontario educator Bob Davis (1995) contends that the new citizenship education was requested by “grass roots union and citizen groups representing people who were hurting from the Depression” (p. 31). As well, the elites were well aware that many Canadians were not enamoured with the fruits of capitalism, leading to a flirtation with communist ideas (p. 27). Consequently, the schools were once again viewed as an excellent vehicle to disseminate values in support of democracy and capitalism. This particular unit emphasizes the “principles of democracy,” including “freedom of speech, of action, and of the press,” as well as “[t]he rule of the majority combined with the protection of the rights of the minority” (p. 164). (This last point might have proved useful to opponents of the recent referendum held by the B.C. Liberal government on treaties and the rights of First Nations people. Not allowing the rights of minorities to be put into the hands of the majority, however, had long been removed from subsequent social studies curricula, as will be seen shortly.)

Another Specific Objective in this unit on democracy calls for the student to understand the “growth of democracy in Britain and the British Empire” and the “the extension of the franchise” (p. 164). As only White people had the vote in 1941, one can only wonder at what non-White students in British Columbia thought about these principles of democracy and the rights of the minority at that time. Yet, the 1941 curriculum emphasized both democracy and economic issues in such a way that it is possible that the “grass roots union and citizen groups” that Davis mentions, who were most likely composed of White people, may have accepted this conservative version. Then again, this specific objective may be in the document to allow students a space to discuss the issue because of pressure from non-White groups lobbying for enfranchisement.
The 1949 version of the B.C. Social Studies curriculum emphasizes that the "central objective of Social Studies instruction is the promotion of better citizenship ... and the development of worthy citizens" (B.C. Department of Education, 1949, p. 2). The term *citizenship* is used here as the Citizenship Act had occurred two years earlier. Although the description of the term *citizen* is vague, there is an entire page encouraging social studies teachers to promote "a higher quality of citizenship in the Province, the nation, and the community of nations" (p. 2). There seems to be an assumption that in order for democracy to work, the population must be filled with "worthy citizens," or upstanding individuals of good moral character. The statements indicate that the curriculum developers were influenced by a conservative ideology, especially as described by Westheimer and Kahne (2003) and Kelly and Brandes (2001).

For this curriculum, published four years after the end of the Second World War and the Holocaust in 1949, one can see that recent world events had influenced the curriculum developers. There is considerable space devoted to the General Objective of "Humanitarian Sentiments," a mixture of "personal rights and privileges with the acceptance of personal responsibilities and duties" (p. 5). Yet, the General Objective that immediately follows, entitled "An Understanding of the Rule of Law," clearly connects democracy to conservative notions such as a respect for authority (p. 6). Moreover, there is a large section that was absent from the 1941 version entitled "Attitudes, Appreciations, Allegiances" (pp. 7-10) in which students are encouraged to attain a "vivid sense of social responsibility" (p. 8) and a "sympathetic understanding of national powers and ideals" (p. 8, emphasis mine).

Patriotism, including the pro-British love of Empire, and democracy are strongly connected throughout the 1949 curriculum. This indicates a continuing conservative influence. In fact, one of the five major areas of the Social Studies VIII curriculum is entitled "The Struggle for Self-
Government" (p. 53). Included in this area is a unit called "Developments of the Democratic Form of Government" in which the teacher's first topic to be covered is "a desire for both King and Parliament." Another lesson in the unit also stresses a conservative bias toward the notion of democracy: "Democracy - an ideal which implies orderly change and progress" (p. 62). Yet, the teaching suggestions about democracy itself seem to refer only to elections, as exemplified by a suggested lesson plan entitled "The vote - a democratic procedure" (p. 62). The conservative ideology is also evident in a lesson entitled "Acceptance of responsibilities by men of vision (The Fathers of Confederation)" (p. 59), a title that heralds patriarchy at the same time that individual responsibility, leadership, and character are reinforced. In short, the 1949 curriculum emphasizes a conservative interpretation of democracy and citizenship.

I showed in chapters 5 and 6 that the third official curriculum document, published in 1956, was involved in an ideological struggle between conservatism and liberalism over representations of race and social class. This struggle is also apparent in terms of democracy and citizenship, as well. The treatment given to these concepts in this document is more developed than in previous versions. Although the central objective is still described as promoting "better citizenship" (p. 9), the 1956 curriculum explicates more thoroughly both the notion of citizenship training in grade 8 (pp. 44-45) and the struggle for democracy in grade 10 (pp. 63-66). As well, the curriculum strongly suggests that teachers use a textbook by progressive Ontario educator C. R. MacLeod entitled *Citizenship Training* (1949), which the curriculum describes as an "outstanding book on citizenship training" (p. 47). This strong endorsement is significant because, according to Bob Davis (1995), MacLeod's approach "was a method as exciting but as threatening to a rigid, top-down society as the very communism it was meant to be an alternative to" (p. 30). Canadian schools were still being used to instill a set of values (in the same way that Osborne (1995) claimed was happening several decades earlier) that would
enable the privileged to continue to enjoy what they had. Once again, the demon to castigate was communism.

Yet, despite a reference to a book that supports a progressive agenda for democracy and citizenship training, much of the 1956 curriculum is steeped in the same conservative ideology of its predecessors. Once again, citizenship and democracy are strongly connected to nation-building, loyalty and patriotism, although it is noteworthy that loyalty to Empire has all but disappeared. A section entitled *Empire Building*, which focuses more on geography rather than positive virtues, gives equal treatment to Britain, Russia, France, Italy, Germany, and the United States (p. 67). Canadian groups of privilege must have considered it time to use the curriculum to forge a Canadian identity separate from the British, who by 1956 had almost completely lost all remnants of their once huge Empire, themselves mired in a serious post-war economic and political slump. Besides the common list of recipients of student loyalty, namely, “self, home, school, community, [and] nation,” the United Nations was now added in place of Empire (p. 45). Less than a decade later, Canadian identity would become even less dependent on Britain with the creation of Canada’s own flag, which replaced the British Red Ensign in 1965 amid great controversy (Sears, Hughes, & Clarke, 1999, p. 116).

The 1956 curriculum demonstrated a conservative interpretation of democracy and citizenship in several other ways, as well. Personal responsibility (p. 66) and volunteerism (p. 89), two cornerstones of conservatism’s notion of the good citizen (Westheimer & Kahne, 2003, p. 6), were part of what the teacher was expected to promote. At the same time, however, the 1956 curriculum breaks from the conservative bent of its predecessors in several ways. For example, in the grade 10 unit entitled “The Struggle for Democracy,” one suggestion reads:

> In a democratic society each individual has worth and dignity regardless of his race, colour, class, or creed. Therefore, according to the democratic view, all men are entitled to freedom, political rights, and equality before the law. (1956, p. 65).
Despite the blatantly sexist language, this curricular statement has clearly been influenced by the 1948 United Nations "Declaration of Human Rights," which was a powerful attempt to promote a colour-blind liberal ideology in place of the racial hierarchies so prominent in conservatism. The liberal ideas that originated in the Enlightenment were starting to displace conservatism in the B.C. social studies curriculum. Moreover, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union, an ideological struggle between competing economic and political systems, was at its peak during the 1950s and 1960s. Hence, democracy was addressed in a more sophisticated manner in this document.

It was also expected that the teacher explain how a "concern for social welfare" in Canada has "furthered democratic advance" (p. 66). It would seem that this connection between a concern for social welfare and democratic advances is aimed directly against the communist rhetoric of the Eastern bloc. The curriculum also suggests that there has been a plan to construct the social welfare state, although this suggestion is delivered in an ambiguous, conflict-free manner. And in another example of progressivism entering the B.C. social studies 1956 curriculum, a unit entitled "Political Parties and the Importance of Party Government in Canada" includes a suggestion that the teacher develop in each student an awareness of the importance of being "an intelligent and informed citizen" (p. 86). All of these statements indicate that liberalism was having an influence on the curriculum developers of the 1956 curriculum, although conservatism was still the major influence.

In his book *In Defence of History: Teaching the Past and the Meaning of Democratic Citizenship* (1995), Ken Osborne claims that in Canada "[t]he combination of curricula, examinations, textbooks, and pedagogy that prevailed before 1968, even when it was successful, served to produce a particularly conservative kind of citizenship. Its prime virtues were hierarchy, authority and obedience" (p. 21). Osborne is correct in asserting that up until 1968 conservatism was...
the dominant political ideology, at least in the B.C. context. It is significant, however, that the 1956 curriculum was beginning to show signs that a more liberal interpretation of citizenship and democracy was worth teaching, as well.

The 1968 B.C. social studies curriculum changes direction from the 1956 version in the way that the concepts of democracy and citizenship are given treatment. In fact, democracy is only mentioned twice in the document: first, as one of several key definitions for the teaching of history (p. 12); and second, as a suggestion for a possible method to compare nineteenth and twentieth century Europe in terms of democracies and dictatorships (p. 29). Citizenship is also given short shrift, appearing only in an introductory paragraph on history and civics that describes “history as a preparation for responsible citizenship” (p. 9). The 1968 curriculum makes no mention of the struggle for democracy or enfranchisement, such as First Nations people being allowed to vote in 1960, or other aspects of democracy and citizenship that addressed issues of inclusion. Instead, students were asked to think of history as capable of leading “the student to make value judgments on the events and people” of the past (p. 11). Yet, focusing on the past and blurring its link with the present has been one way of hiding how power continues to work to privilege some at the expense of others.

The next social studies curriculum to be published in British Columbia came out in 1980. In contrast to its predecessor in 1968, this curriculum emphasized the need to teach students to “be active participants in the community by meeting their obligations and responsibilities as citizens” (p. 1). Developing the right “attitude” was crucial in this process (p. 5). According to the taxonomy developed by Westheimer and Kahne (2003), the 1980 curriculum addressed democracy and citizenship within a liberal ideology. One of the four major goals of this version of social studies is stated as follows: “Students should know and understand the roles, rights and responsibilities of an individual as a member of society” (p. 4). In fact, although the term *individual* was used in previous
versions of the curriculum, by 1980 usage of this term had increased tremendously, indicating a further displacement of the conservative ideology toward liberalism.

Other noteworthy developments appeared in the 1980 curriculum, as well. For example, one of its stated secondary goals of social studies was that these courses would enable students to know “about the media and understand its influence upon individuals and society” (p. 5). This was the first time that the curriculum had acknowledged the influence of the media on the workings of a democratic society. It also allowed a radical teacher the space to focus on the ways that the media acts as a hegemonic device while still being protected by the stated goals of the state-sanctioned formal curriculum. As well, one of the key issues in the grade 10 social studies course is put as a question: “to what extent should the government exist to serve its citizens or its citizens to serve its state?” (p. 110). For the question to be asked in this manner indicates how the curriculum developers were influenced by a liberal ideology to the degree that students were expected to grapple with ideological concerns, at least in addressing issues of democracy and the role of government.

Democracy and citizenship were completely absent from the program goals of the 1988 B.C. social studies curriculum (pp. 4-5). This is a stark reversal from the goals of the curriculum that had come out less than 40 years earlier in 1949. Yet, the 1988 curriculum continued to address democracy and citizenship with some similarities as the one published in 1980. For instance, the grade 8 course in the 1988 document was to ambiguously “develop attitudes of responsible citizenship” (p. 32). The grade 11 course was to do the same thing (p. 86), as well as emphasize citizen participation (p. 68). The second point is a classic example of how an educator influenced by the liberal ideology would teach for and about democracy.

Of major significance is the appearance throughout this curriculum of Sample Key Questions that suggest approaches teachers can use to guide students through difficult issues. These questions
would enable the radical teacher to go far in teaching students the ways in which power works to privilege some while oppressing others. Some of these questions are stated as follows:

- What avenues of protest are open to dissidents today? (p. 54)
- How do citizens influence the lawmakers? (p. 69)
- How do we ensure that elections are fairly carried out? (p. 70)
- What recourse do citizens have when rights have been denied? (p. 72)
- Are all conflicts ideological in origin? (p. 78)

It is interesting to speculate as to why such politically loaded questions found their way into the 1988 curriculum. The 1980s are generally seen as the decade in which group recognition rose to the foreground of many people’s consciousness (Fraser, 1997). Although large protests marked both the 1930s and the 1960s, particularly in the United States, large-scale rallies protesting certain policies of the government around military issues, class issues, and immigration issues were commonplace in the 1970s and 1980s in both the United States and Canada. As we shall see, almost all of these questions were removed from the next curriculum, which appeared in 1997.

With the publication of the 1997 B.C. social studies curriculum, the liberal ideology is even more pronounced in the ways that democracy and citizenship are portrayed. This is immediately demonstrated by the repetition of the term “active citizenship” on page 1, described as the “overarching goal of social studies,” and throughout the curriculum (pp. 2, 4, 6, 12 of SS 8 to 10 IRP). Moreover, this curriculum continues to promote “the role of participation” (p. 2) on the part of the active citizen, a cornerstone of the liberal interpretation of democracy and citizenship.

“Responsible citizenship” is also a term frequently used in the 1997 version (pp. 2, 16 of SS 8 to 10 IRP; p. 12 of SS 11 IRP), although the curriculum developers neglect to define it, as was the case
with the 1988 document. Recall that the first four versions of the B.C. curriculum defined responsible citizenship within the conservative perspective of hard work and obedience.

The 1997 curriculum is also a sophisticated document in the way that societal power is concealed. For example, although the curriculum suggests several times the need for students to become informed participants (p. 22 of SS 8 to 10 IRP; pp. 4, 12 of SS 11 IRP), the suggestions offered as student research topics are mostly from the past, such as slavery and religious persecution (p. 12 of SS 8 to 10 IRP). Similarly, there is a section addressing the “role of rebellions” in the “development of Canada” (p. 37 of SS 8 to 10 IRP) in which all of the suggestions pertain to significant but distant rebellions such as the Upper and Lower Canada rebellions of 1837 and the Metis rebellions led by Louis Riel in 1869 and 1885. It is possible that the curriculum developers considered it less controversial to have teachers talk about nineteenth-century rebellions rather than some of the serious labour struggles of the early twentieth century up until the highly disruptive B.C.-based Solidarity movement of 1983. By taking this approach, the curriculum developers have given the document a liberal influence.

In sum, the latest version of a B.C. social studies curriculum, published in 1997, is the strongest example of a liberal-oriented document, especially in terms of democracy and citizenship. Conservative notions of good moral character and deference to authority are no longer included. Moreover, the sample key questions of the 1988 curriculum that made space for the critically-minded teacher have disappeared in its successor. A common criticism of the liberal ideology in general is that it is power-blind (Frankenberg, 1993). Power is better concealed in the 1997 version than with any of its earlier conservative or liberal counterparts. The threats to Canadian democracy, such as the influence of the corporate media, are absent from this document. The accomplishments of Canadian democracy, such as the creation of the social welfare state and its offspring like universal healthcare,
are also not part of the curriculum. In terms of democracy and citizenship, the 1997 curriculum is a stronger hegemonic device than any of its predecessors.

Throughout all of the B.C. social studies curricula, from 1941 until 1997, conservative interpretations of democracy and citizenship, such as responsible citizenship, are prominent. The 1980, 1988 and 1997 documents address these concepts in a more liberal fashion. The 1997 curriculum is clearly the most liberal in its ideological orientation. There is very little evidence of a radical interpretation of democracy and citizenship, as described by Westheimer and Kahne (2003), throughout any of the curricula.

Sears, Clarke, and Hughes (1999) claim that in terms of citizenship education in Canada, "there is often a considerable gap between official policy and actual practice" (p. 128). The evidence, according to these researchers, suggests that the practitioners are much more conservative than what is in the formal curriculum. The next section will show that the thoughts of the teachers around democracy and citizenship bear out their assertion.

7.3 How Teachers Think About Democracy, Citizenship and Related Concepts

There was one question specifically pertaining to the notions of democracy and citizenship in social studies education in the interview schedule. (See Appendix 1, question 4.) Four other questions also addressed issues pertinent to aspects of this topic in a broad sense. (See Appendix 1, questions 3, 5, 6, and 15.) Taken together, these questions yielded data for the analysis of four codes, which I will present in the following order: the purpose of social studies, democracy and citizenship in social studies, teaching as a political enterprise, and teaching for social justice.
7.3.1 Teachers’ Thoughts on the Purpose of Social Studies

The ten teachers offered a variety of views about the purpose of social studies education. There were three popular choices – to learn about past mistakes, to develop critical thinking skills, and to teach about citizenship – but even among these there were different ideological perspectives. As well, two of the teachers described the purpose of social studies as the way to teach students about Canadian history.

Ed Hitchcock considered “an appreciation of your current country’s history” as especially important. He continued, “I think if you are a new arrival, you’ve got to have some idea about what has happened here.” Many progressive historians would also agree that immigrants to Canada should learn something of its history. Yet, the perspective of how the past is taught is crucial, and this is what is important in Hitchcock’s position. For instance, a Eurocentric view may lead new Canadians to accept discriminatory attitudes toward Canada’s First Nations peoples. Further, Hitchcock often focused on military achievements. For example, he answered my question about supplementing the curriculum with other “discoverers, adventurers, and heroes” in the following manner:

Billy Bishop. You think of him as a First World War individual with his seventy-three kills. Would you say John A, MacDonald is a hero? Would you say Christopher Columbus would be a hero? Winston Churchill? Some people would say, “What hero?” There’s always that revisionist history. At the end of the Second World War in 1945 he was voted out because the British wanted a change. Now, people say that Churchill saved the British in the Second World War ... I mean, is Neil Armstrong a hero for being the first man on the moon? Ho Chi Min could be a hero. Mao Tse-tung would be a hero. They’d be heroes in their own given way. You might say Douglas MacArthur could be a hero for some people.

It is clear that men who have risen to positions of military and political power constitute who Hitchcock considers worthy of the label hero. (It is noteworthy that I had even prefaced my question
Conservative Canadian historian Jack Granatstein supports the teaching about Canada’s past from Hitchcock’s perspective. In the introduction to *Who Killed Canadian History?* (1998), Granatstein laments that “[m]ost young people cannot place important global historical figures such as Winston Churchill or Franklin Roosevelt; Hitler is all but unknown, Stalin and Mao Tse-tung are names they may have heard once or twice” (p. 10). Clearly, Hitchcock and Granatstein share some overlap. Yet, according to Ken Osborne (1995), their conservative emphasis on political and military themes “should be considerably reduced so that social, cultural and economic topics could be given the place they deserve” (p. 51).

Hal Nagel agreed with Hitchcock’s focus on the teaching of Canadian history as a major purpose of social studies: “to gain an appreciation for the country they live in, and ... obviously the interactions and the important roles that Canadians play in world dynamics.” Nagel’s position on the importance of social studies is based on developing patriotism in a similar way as the curriculums of 1941 and 1949 exalted the “greatness of Empire.” The responses of both Nagel and Hitchcock indicate a conservative influence on the way they think about the purpose of social studies.

Five of the ten teachers focused on the importance of teaching of the past in a general sense as the main purpose of social studies. Two of the teachers – Hal Nagel and Craig Evans – emphasized this importance by claiming that there is much we can learn from past mistakes so that we do not repeat them. However, three of the teachers – Barry Kelvin, Dave Carson, and Larry Nelson – spoke about teaching history with essentialist undertones. For example, Kelvin stated: “[D]espite the fact that we’ve learned about it we still seem to be making the same mistakes and we try to uncover why that happens. What is it about the human psyche?” Larry Nelson stated: “I teach the whole twentieth century as four patterns: war, change over, prosperity, depression ... I try to teach the patterns.” Thus
far, I have categorized usage of the essentialist discourse as part of the conservative ideology. Dave Carson, however, uses this discourse as a way to thwart any notions students may have that we are an advanced version of the human species: “[Social studies] serves a purpose in allowing us to look at former patterns ... to recognize that we are really the same animal and that we are susceptible to those same things.” Carson’s usage of the discourse in this way indicates a kind of empathy that questions the liberal notion of progress.

Four teachers described the purpose of social studies in terms of the development of critically thinking skills. Eric Quinn, by far the most consistent liberal of the group, described it as “the art of deconstruction.” Yet, he cautioned against an inherent “danger” with this approach: “I know of somebody, I don’t know her, who teaches social studies 11 from a women’s studies point of view ... For me, it’s as equally fallacious as teaching the Eurocentric point of view and ignoring all others.” Quinn appears to be warning against a “left-essentialism” (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997) that arises when the dominant curricular perspective is displaced by a “standpoint of the least advantaged” (Connell, 1993, p. 39). He reiterated his description of the way he teaches about the past as “a pluralistic view of history ... without creating victimization.” Throughout the entire interview, Eric Quinn exemplified the archetypal example of why radical theorists (Frankenberg, 1993; Brantlinger, Majd-Jabbari, & Guskin, 1996; Lewis, 2001) consider liberalism to be power-blind.

Steve Graham also described the development of critical thinking skills as a major purpose of social studies, but from a different political perspective than Quinn.

God, if it doesn’t happen in social studies, it’s not going to happen anywhere else! And it’s not going to happen later in their life if it didn’t happen when they’re [in school], that we expose them to these ideas and develop critical thinking skills. So that they become committed, interested citizens who don’t mindlessly believe everything the [right wing] Vancouver Sun tells them.
In this passage, Graham speaks about the purpose of social studies in terms of the development of critical thinking skills, media literacy, and a committed, informed citizenry. The ghost of John Dewey would rest easier if more teachers shared Graham’s perspective on social studies, in particular, and public education, in general. Yet, he was the only teacher in the group of department heads to speak in these terms.

7.3.2 Teachers’ Thoughts on Democracy and Citizenship

Steve Graham was one of five teachers to mention citizenship as a major purpose of social studies except that his perspective was the only one that was decidedly progressive. According to Graham: “The major purpose is to develop citizenship ... but not in a 1950s kind of way.” Graham’s position on citizenship was once again the closest to Dewey’s vision for the role public education might one day embrace. Graham claimed that it is important for him to see growth in his students in terms of empathy for others and a sense of social justice. He did not mention social movements or protests in his teaching, however, which is why I consider his position to be progressive rather than completely radical (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). Yet, Graham’s progressive stance on how best to teach about citizenship was not the norm. In fact, a radical perspective on ways that the teachers thought about democracy and citizenship was as infrequent an occurrence as it was in the formal curricula.

All ten of the teachers pointed to voting rights as one aspect of teaching about democracy. As anticipated, four of them mentioned mock elections as a pedagogical strategy to make this point. Tim Patterson summed up the classic liberal position, according to Westheimer and Kahne’s (2003) taxonomy, when he said, “I believe that to make a good citizen, you have to get the students to understand what it’s like to participate in our society.” Yet, when I asked for some examples, he was
unable to offer any. None of the teachers considered social protest to be as an aspect of exercising rights in a democracy.

Another west side teacher, Dave Carson of Hudson Secondary, explained why teaching about social protests and human agency to effect social change is not part of his curriculum: “I think that if I were to focus on the protests I’d have a faceful of parents coming and saying, ‘Why are you doing this?’” Fear of parent backlash is a common challenge for many teachers who may want to discuss social protests as part of the current events component in social studies (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). This is one way that those who benefit from current economic arrangements are able to block teachers from attempting to introduce counter-hegemonic discourses in the classroom. In the current context of British Columbia, the provincial government has given parents increased power in several aspects of public education. One of these aspects is in teacher accountability, a notion that has particularly incensed many teachers and their union (Owens, 2003).

Five other teachers demonstrated elements of liberalism when discussing democracy and citizenship. Three of them invoked the notion of justice. For Barry Kelvin, an important aspect of teaching for democracy is “seeing injustice and recognizing injustice and then being able to recognize it on a contemporary level.” After I probed about what the next steps students might take with their awareness of injustice, he responded, “It goes back to understanding democracy and how you can impact change: by voting.” He did not teach about any other forms of democratic action.

The discourse of multiple perspectives in order to cultivate a tolerance for diversity was included in the responses of four teachers. This position is liberal-influenced (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). Without connecting this tolerance to suggestions for democratic action and reform, it is unlikely to shift societal power inequities. Similarly, five of the teachers spoke of teaching to develop critical thinking skills. Three among this group stated that the importance of these skills is
based on enabling students to make up their own minds without the influence of teacher bias or other forms of "propaganda," an idea that will be discussed in the next section. As Eric Quinn put it, "You want them to be able to make up their own mind and evaluate it based on thoughtful criteria, which is the basis of democracy." Quinn's position would most likely please supporters of John Dewey's progressive vision for public education, were it not for the several references he made to eschew "victimization history."

Yet, John Dewey and his vision are not known features among Vancouver's social studies department heads. Although it wasn't my intention to make queries about this major American philosopher of education, I found myself raising the topic during four of the interviews. Three of them immediately responded in the affirmative, mistakenly identifying him with Melville Dewey, the creator of the library decimal system. They did not know about the other Dewey's agenda for citizenship and education. Conservative teacher Craig Evans, however, knew to whom I was referring.

Oh Dewey. Dewey's a godless ass! He's got a secular school system which really doesn't have a definition anymore. And he's had a powerful effect in Canada, as well. He's lapsed into Canada, there's no question. Most people are not aware of this, of how he's come here. So they don't see his impact on the classroom and his crusade to create a world which becomes almost dehumanized. It lacks all of the content that the kids need to make sense of things, right. He's made it difficult to teach or accept anything.

It was difficult for me to probe Evans about his somewhat vague critique of Dewey because of the intensity in his voice. Having worked with Evans for 8 years, I was also extremely aware of Evans' strong evangelical Christian beliefs. Even during the interview, his usage of adjectives such as "godless" and "secular school system" led me to speculate that his apparent disgust with Dewey was based in a Christian conservatism. I decided to let the topic go.
Evans was one of five teachers who demonstrated a conservative influence in the way they thought about teaching for democracy and citizenship. In the enriched program where he teaches, "volunteering and community service" are integral components because it "gets them involved in the community and it helps everybody." Although volunteerism would not be discouraged by anyone who cares about community, the promotion of it without pushing for other reforms is generally considered to be a feature of conservatism (Westheimer & Kahne, 2003; Kelly, Brandes & Orlowski, 2004). This is also the case for other examples the teachers said when asked about how they teach about democracy and citizenship. These ranged from "get in line and play by the rules," a position advocated by Larry Nelson, to Ed Hitchcock's statement: "They must learn that they have responsibilities, including the responsibility to take care of themselves." This is clearly a conservative perspective.

Despite the dearth of radical teachers, there were elements of radical thought within the group. Barry Kelvin, for example, questioned the curricular focus on democracy. The following is what he said about a particular Prescribed Learning Outcomes in the formal curriculum.

*One of them said, "To appreciate democracy." But I think that is so biased. The wording was flawed. It always has stuck out for me. "To appreciate democracy." Why do I have to appreciate it? The old Churchill quote always comes to mind: "Not the best but better than the rest!" But then we've got the Florida thing with George Bush. I mean, give me a break!*

Kelvin was the only teacher to question the formal curriculum's hegemonic stance on democracy. It was no surprise to find out that he does a lesson with his students that is "a judgement of democracy." Kelvin's contention of bias can be further applied to the official statement of purpose of the entire B.C. school system, which encourages students to "develop their individual potential and to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to contribute to a healthy, democratic, and pluralistic..."
society “ (cited in Kelly, 2003, p. 123, emphasis mine). I have emphasized some of the words in this statement to indicate the influence of liberalism in this document.

In general, liberalism was at least as dominant as the conservative ideology among the teachers for teaching about democracy and citizenship. Yet, very few of them ascribed to the liberal notion of “the marketplace of ideas” (Kelly, 1986, p. 123) in which it is assumed that competing ideas result in the best ones rising to the top and, in this context, being published in the curriculum, without any consideration of power. When asked about why they think certain perspectives on historical events are in the curriculum rather than others, the dominant position among the group was at least partially penetrating from a radical perspective. (See Appendix 1, question 11.) Steve Graham explained how liberalism influences how the past is represented in the curriculum:

Since these documents are created by a group of humans who by and large have these dominant perspectives, right, it’s sort of a self-perpetuating thing ... [the curriculum] has got to be sanitized, acceptable, nothing too crazy. Nothing that others would highly question. Nothing too controversial. I think this is a kind of group-think that a government document expresses.

Graham, ostensibly the most progressive of the teachers across most issues, was also the most likely to supplement the curriculum to meet the needs of the students in his classroom. (See chapter 6.)

Hal Nagel, who was opposed to curriculum alterations, understood something of power in the curriculum: “It’s always the story of the victor.” Teachers such as Nagel, who are aware of how power works to influence the curriculum but are opposed to making any alterations, are conservative. They understand the dynamics of curriculum development and accept it, even support it, because they see the world through a conservative lens that accepts certain social hierarchies. Nagel, in particular, was adamantly opposed to teachers taking a stand on social, economic, and political issues in class.
7.3.4 Teachers’ Thoughts on Teaching for Social Justice

Much of this research has been about the specific aim of teaching for social justice. It is an examination of how the field of social studies is doing in these terms, particularly on issues of race and social class. *Teaching for Social Justice*, as a field of its own, has two major components (Kelly, in press). First, it is about teaching for democratic citizenship in a progressive manner. Second, it is also concerned with anti-oppression education in various forms. Both components are crucial to this study. This is the reason why this section is placed within the chapter on democracy and citizenship.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 have demonstrated the ways in which political ideology influences the myriad ways teachers view racial and class issues. This is also the situation with the different ways they think about teaching for social justice. This relatively new field has been making direct impact in some circles of educators. Yet, “the phrase teaching for social justice masks contested definitions, which, if left unaddressed, can undermine efforts to translate concern for social justice into practice” (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). Deirdre Kelly and Gabriella Minnes Brandes have written extensively on the many interpretations of what it means to teach for social justice (2000, in press).

At the root of these different interpretations is ideology.

Without even mentioning the term social justice, the thoughts of the teachers about issues of race and class already convey much of how they think about it. In *Toward a Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education* (2000), Kevin Kumashiro reviews the literature on anti-oppressive education, which he describes as “education that works against various forms of oppression” (p. 25). He summarizes and critiques four approaches in conceptualizing the nature of oppression and the curricula and policies needed to effect change. From Kumashiro’s work, I have been able to discern where the teachers in my study fit in his taxonomy of approaches. The approaches themselves indicate an influential political ideology. In chapters 5 and 6, I described the attitudes of the teachers
toward issues of race, multiculturalism, and class. I do not want to repeat their words, but I would like to connect some of their attitudes into the framework of Kumashiro’s work.

The first of these approaches, which has a liberal individual-focus, is called *Education for the Other*. It refers to the policy of “improving the experiences of students who are Othered” (p. 26). One way of doing this is by improving the assumptions and expectations that teachers hold about students from marginalized racial, ethnic, and working class groups. Five of the ten teachers used the cultural deficit discourse to explain the relative lack of academic success for First Nations students. This discourse removes the responsibility on educators to find a solution since the assumption is that the problem resides in First Nations cultures. In a similar fashion, almost all of the teachers considered the home to be the main reason why poor students fare poorly academically. Two teachers used the genetic-deficiency discourse to explain the low graduation rates, while another claimed that the schools can never rid working-class students of homophobia and racism. Clearly, the assumptions these teachers hold about their racially and economically marginalized students affect their expectations, and, in turn, these expectations work to further disadvantage these students. As I have already pointed out, teachers who fail to accept what Kumashiro calls Education for the Other from this perspective are influenced by conservatism.

Kumashiro calls the second approach, which also has a liberal orientation, *Education About the Other*. This approach focuses on the curriculum itself and considers “what all students – privileged and marginalized – know and should know about the Other” (p. 31). In my study, I was able to obtain a glimpse into what the teachers thought about such an approach by asking them their thoughts around adhering to the formal curriculum and supplementing it where they saw fit. (See Appendix 1, question 5.) Five of the teachers claimed to follow the curriculum as best they could. Two of this group blamed an over-crowded curriculum and a lack of time, to the point where Hal
Nagel said, “I can’t even afford 20 minutes to do that.” Three of the teachers spoke of supplementing the curriculum with what is called a social history perspective, citing the need for “multiple perspectives,” as Eric Quinn said. Yet, according to Kumashiro, one crucial problem with this approach is that shifting positionalities make it impossible to cover all experiences of all the people from all the groups. As well, “[t]eaching about the Other does not necessarily illuminate, critique, or transform the processes by which the Other is differentiated from and subordinated to the norm” (p. 35). From the power-blind liberalism that has influenced Eric Quinn, for example, Kumashiro’s assertion holds some validity.

The third approach in Kumashiro’s review is called Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering. This approach has a radical orientation because it “advocates a critique and transformation of hegemonic structures and ideologies” (p. 36). From the analysis in chapters 5 and 6, there were not any teachers who spoke in these terms, although Steve Graham came close when he used elements of the class-power approach in class discussions about topics like the recent lowering of the minimum wage. Likewise, the fourth approach, which Kumashiro called Education that Changes Students and Society, had no adherents in the group of teachers in my study. This radical approach assumes that “oppression originates in discourse” (p. 40). The repetition of certain discourses about the racial Other, for example, frames the way “people think, feel, act, and interact” (p. 40). Students that repeatedly hear that “it is not [First Nations] forte to pursue an academic life,” as Hal Nagel said, may soon treat their First Nations peers as less intelligent than themselves. Clearly, this fourth approach holds implications for Teacher Education programmes. Although the fourth approach’s focus on the connection between oppression and discourse resonates with me, it is the third approach that I consider to be most closely aligned with my own conception of teaching for social justice. The reason for this is two-fold: first, the fourth approach neglects material
considerations, which is so vital a component of my analysis; second, the third approach emphasizes a transformation of both "structures and ideologies," which stresses a collective change rather than an individual one, which seems to be at the root of the fourth, according to my understanding.

Conflicting political ideologies appeared when the teachers were asked what they thought is meant by the term social justice itself. (See Appendix 1, question 15.) Social justice is rarely "defined explicitly, and when it is, the definitions are theoretical and varied" (Kelly, Brandes, & Orlowski, 2004). Yet, the responses to this question indicate how much of an impact the term itself has made with these veteran social studies teachers in Vancouver. They also offer valuable information for Teacher Education Programmes focused on Social Justice.

Five of the ten teachers responded with interpretations of social justice that were influenced by conservatism. To Larry Nelson, social justice means looking "at the newer world, the changing world, the world of gender equity, the world of minority groups, First Nations, different lifestyles."

Yet, I have already mentioned that Nelson considers the quest for multiple perspectives to be too "politically correct" and that he isn’t convinced that it is "all for the good." Ed Hitchcock went even further in his condemnation of the term social justice.

EH: ... You can’t have Social Studies turning into the bleeding hearts of education ... You can’t turn around and have apologist history or revisionist history just because something occurred. For example, the head tax on the Chinese coming here, and then they want the federal government to apologize. That happened. That’s a fact. In 2003, should we still be wringing our hands and say, “Oh, how badly we have failed?” No. It’s a done deal. We move on. This is something I’m a bit hard-nosed about.

PO: So, in other words, it doesn’t really strike you as a good thing if a social justice focus moved into the social studies curriculum?
EH: Not right now, no. I guess I'm old school, you know. I like to look at the facts, not some airy-fairy thing just because we all have to feel good ... You can't force people how to think and that's where some of this is getting ridiculous.

In this exchange, Hitchcock exhibited a common belief among many of the teachers, namely, that the formal curriculum is filled with “facts” and anything that deviates from this is merely “some airy-fairy thing” and not really what good teaching is about. This attitude toward what schools normally do is widespread and is precisely what Tyack and Cuban (1995) point out is a major impediment to teaching from a more radical perspective. Hitchcock’s tone began to sound somewhat irritated during this point in the interview. Had this not been the case, I would have liked to explore his thoughts around why he feels so strongly about teaching to the formal curriculum without a social history perspective. I would have also liked to have probed around his masculinist dismissal of social justice as the “bleeding hearts of education” and some “airy-fairy thing.”

I asked Carl Tragas the same question about what it means to teach for social justice. Earlier in the interview he had responded to my question about his choice of past discoverers and heroes by saying, “My heroes, obviously, are more social justice types of people.” His answer to what it means to teach for social justice, however, belied his earlier answer.

CT: The key word is inequities. It has to do with opportunities... I think affirmative action defeats the whole purpose that we started out with. It's another inequity, as far as I can see... It should be a level playing field but it's almost an oxymoron... It's like saying one thing and then modeling something different.

Oddly, Tragas chose to focus on the notion of inequities, the same term which Kelly, Brandes, and myself contend is a determining factor in what constitutes teaching for social justice. The difference, of course, is that we maintain that teaching about inequities involves a critical assessment of who benefits and who loses as social conditions change over time. At no point in the interview did Tragas demonstrate a critical approach to teaching about differential treatment that groups have received in
the past or currently receive based on social, political, and economic policy. He did not seem to be aware that affirmative action is a progressive policy designed with the intent of making the “playing field” more level than the current situation, which is skewed particularly in favour of White males. Despite claiming to supplement the curriculum with “social justice types,” Tragas appeared to be more influenced by a conservative perspective than by any other.

Perhaps Tim Patterson best exemplified the knowledge gap many veteran teachers have around the notion of teaching for social justice.

PO: What does the term social justice mean to you?

TP: Social Justice. My student teachers for the past two or three years have been in a social justice program at UBC. I’ve never quite understood what it meant. I hear it. Social Justice. Well, I’ll take a stab at it. Based on the institutions we have set up in this country, is there equal access to these institutions? Is there equal resolution? Is there a sense of, I think, access, resolution and opportunity to the institutions that we have set up democratically? That’s what social justice means.

PO: Maybe you should start your day tomorrow by writing that on the board for your students.

TP: I can’t believe some of the things that come out of my mouth. I think that’s what social justice is. Equity in opportunity.

PO: Okay. Do you think that it should be the role of the teacher to teach for social justice?

TP: I think if the curriculum is complete, if the curriculum is thorough, then there should be a sense of social justice in the IRP. It should not be the teacher’s responsibility to create social justice in thematic lessons because it should already be in the IRP ... If the IRP is a good IRP then it should be involved with social justice, if that’s what the government wants to promote.

PO: But what if a curriculum was so clearly right wing? Would your opinion change?
TP: Teaching is not a vehicle to promote your agenda. You have a job, when you sign that piece of paper, to teach the curriculum. You are not there to create an army of followers. I think if you're a good social studies teacher you are facilitating diversity, you are facilitating different opinions and that's what it's all about, isn't it?... As a teacher, I think you should only facilitate. You have to understand that there are people who enjoy this perspective while there are other people who have that perspective.

Patterson touched on many of the tensions teachers face in teaching of controversial issues, as well as issues that are not controversial because of normalizing hegemonic tendencies. Despite Patterson emphasizing “equity in opportunity” in his “stab” at social justice, his further comments clearly remove him from the progressive camp on teaching for social justice. He refused to take on students who may “enjoy this perspective” or “that perspective” for fear of making them feel uncomfortable. For Patterson, who teaches in a predominantly conservative upper middle-class west side school, no matter the ideology that has influenced the curriculum developers, teachers are public servants who are expected to and therefore should do the bidding of the privileged. The Althusserian notion of the school as part of the ideological state apparatus is readily apparent when one considers the teaching philosophy of Tim Patterson. Patterson’s unwavering commitment to teach the official curriculum and never question authority places him squarely within conservatism.

Four of the remainder of the group considered social justice mainly from a liberal perspective. All of them described social justice in similar terms: Dave Carson said its main tenet was “being fair to all people”; Hal Nagel described it as “tolerance for difference”; Eric Quinn, meanwhile, described the role of the teacher thusly: “I don’t think we teach social justice. I think we live it.” He contended that teachers must “go about creating an ethos of respect and tolerance in the classroom that is a microcosm of what the school will strive for.” Inclusive language is part of this process, according to Quinn, as is “racial tolerance based on the dignity of each individual.” As I have mentioned several
times already, Quinn would only emphasize social groups in his teaching, which he referred to as “a pluralistic view of history,” only if it did not result in “victimization.” In other words, power-blind liberalism informed his view of the world.

West side teacher Barry Kelvin provided an excellent example of conflicting political ideologies influencing the ways in which he viewed social justice. For example, he explained how he used newspaper editorials and political cartoons to teach about bias. Yet, when I asked him specifically about social justice, his response veered sharply from the radical perspective.

BK: It depends on your interpretation of social justice. If you imply that social justice is teaching the working class that they’ve been deprived, then I don’t think that’s the direction to go at all. But if social justice means every person should have freedoms, should have liberties, should have rights, should be thought of as an important person, then if that’s what you mean, that’s the way I teach.

Kelvin’s response, in my opinion, is an archetypal example of colour-blind, class-blind liberalism. Kelvin emphasizes the individual, or “every person,” rather than any notion of the collective. Throughout the entire interview, Kelvin expressed resistance to any suggestion on my part that labour issues or the social welfare state should be taught in social studies classrooms. Yet, he considered his teaching to be a type of model for human rights and freedoms, excluding social welfare and trade union struggles. These omissions, however, serve the hegemonic purpose of effectively hiding power in these social relations. Although he demonstrated progressive thinking, Kelvin is clearly a liberal, not a radical.

The only one of the group of teachers who was able to articulate a predominantly progressive perspective on what it means to teach for social justice was Steve Graham. He said that many people have told him that he has a “really engrained sense of what is just and what is unjust for other people.” For Graham, the development of critical thinking skills and media literacy are crucial...
aspects of what he considers teaching for social justice to mean. It is also what he thinks students should learn in school in order for them to be “thoughtful, reflective citizens.” Throughout the entire interview, Steve Graham consistently described his teaching in Deweyian terms.

There seemed to be an even split between conservatives and liberals on thinking about democracy and citizenship, a somewhat more hopeful finding than what Sears, Clarke, and Hughes predicted (1999, p. 128). Yet, overall, the teachers’ thoughts about citizenship and democracy seemed to be slightly more to the right than the way that the 1997 curriculum presents these concepts. One reason might be because to present these issues in a progressive manner can easily become controversial. Alan M. Sears (1996) found that “teachers are often reluctant to deal with potentially controversial issues in class particularly when they are contemporary and local” (p. 124). Lack of time was one factor, as Hal Nagel said, but, according to Sears, many teachers “also voiced concerns about the possibility of negative community reaction” (p. 124), an issue raised by Dave Carson during our interview. It would seem that if the B.C. Ministry of Education wants teachers to teach about democracy and citizenship in a more in-depth manner, then it might be wise to put into place guidelines that would protect teachers from possible retaliation from parents.

7.4 Summary and Conclusion

The textual analysis of the B.C. social studies curriculum examined the ways that democracy and citizenship have been represented from its first publication in 1941 until the most recent one published in 1997. The conservative ideology was unquestionably the dominant influence up until and including the 1968 version. Patriotism and law and order are prominent concepts that teachers are expected to develop in students.
Aspects of the liberal ideology first appeared in the ways democracy and citizenship were represented in the 1949 curriculum. Although conservatism is the dominant perspective, there is a general objective statement that demonstrates the ideological struggle occurring throughout society: the General Objective of "Humanitarian Sentiments," a mixture of "personal rights and privileges with the acceptance of personal responsibilities and duties." The 1956 curriculum is also predominantly influenced by conservatism, although it addresses conceptions of democracy and citizenship in an indepth and sophisticated manner. Its successor, however, published in 1968, almost completely ignores both concepts.

Liberal interpretations of these concepts first became most prominent in the 1980 document, although elements of the conservative and radical ideologies were also present. The 1988 curriculum, although constructed mainly through a liberal lens, also provided the state-sanctioned space for radical educators to address faults in the economic, social and political systems in which we live. By 1997, these spaces had disappeared, indicating a complete victory of sorts for liberalism as its discourses of both democracy and citizenship became the only ones represented in the formal state-sanctioned curriculum.

The transformation of the B.C. social studies curriculum from a decidedly conservative document to a clearly liberal one took several decades to complete. Other than a few miniscule suggestions for teachers, the radical perspective on democracy and citizenship that Westheimer and Kahne describe is nowhere to be seen in any of the versions of the social studies curriculum. Perhaps it should not be surprising then, to find that there is very little radical thought in the ways the teachers think about democracy and citizenship.

When asked about the purpose of social studies, there were four common responses: to learn about past mistakes, to learn about Canadian history, to develop critical thinking skills, and to learn
about citizenship. Only one of the teachers was able to discuss the main purpose of social studies from a radical perspective, citing the development of media literacy and an informed citizenry. The rest of the participants were divided among conservative and liberal perspectives. The teaching of Canadian history was considered to be of paramount importance for both groups: the conservatives want students to know about powerful male figures in the military and in politics, while liberals stress a social history that “does not create victimization.”

In terms of teaching about democracy and citizenship, the teachers were evenly divided between a conservative perspective and a liberal one. Four of them used the liberal discourse of multiple perspectives, while one of them was strident about his fear of parental backlash if he were to teach about radical considerations such as social protests. Five of the teachers discussed democracy and citizenship in terms of individual responsibility and deference to authority.

None of the teachers used a radical approach in what Kumashiro calls anti-oppressive education. In terms of this taxonomy of teaching for social justice, the teachers were either conservative or liberal in their perspectives. The usual split in political ideologies appeared when the teachers were asked what they think is meant by the term social justice. Five of the ten offered a conservative opinion, with one expressing the fear that this notion might turn social studies into the “bleeding hearts of education.” There were four teachers influenced by liberal interpretations of social justice that included rights, freedoms, and a tolerance for diversity, and a lone teacher who spoke about social justice in progressive terms.

In sum, with regard to democracy and citizenship, the formal curriculum began as a conservative document with its first publication in 1941. By 1997, however, it had turned almost completely into a liberal curriculum. The thoughts of the teachers were almost evenly divided between those influenced to a large extent by conservatism and those more influenced by liberalism.
Consequently, the enacted curriculum in these classrooms is also likely a combination of conservative and liberal pedagogies. There was only one teacher who consistently spoke from a radical perspective on these issues, mirroring the minute space for radicalism in the formal curriculum itself. Yet, it is significant that the formal curriculum has a much more liberal orientation toward democracy and citizenship than the overall perspective of the group of teachers, which was tilted slightly toward conservatism.
Chapter 8 Conclusions

The research question for this study asks how political ideology influenced discourses of race and class in social studies education. This rests on the assumption that ideology actually exists in social studies education. There are many, including some of the teachers in the study itself, who contend that ideology has no place in the social studies curriculum or classroom. Yet, it is clear from the analysis in chapters 5, 6, and 7 that political ideology is involved in the curriculum, as well as in the thoughts of the teachers. Indeed, ideology lies at the very root of both of these data sources.

Even this is an important finding. As the opening quote by Leonardo on page 1 suggests, "there is a general tendency for educators to avoid talks of ideology." Yet, the omission of ideology in debates of public concern increases the likelihood of the privileged furthering their interests through the use of various hegemonic discourses. We can witness this in the current neoconservative assault on public education across Canada and the United States.

It is important to illuminate the role of political ideology in all aspects of public education. Indeed, it is important for the public to have a grasp of ideology itself and its role in all social, political, and economic relations. For me, an understanding of ideology and ideology critique should be the central goal for all secondary social studies courses. In the courses I teach, ideology critique is taught early and becomes the organizing principle in subsequent lessons throughout the year. After all, social studies is an obvious source of values and ideology that, in turn, affect society. The values that emanate from the various discourses offered in the social studies classroom have some transformative potential to affect societal change eventually. Clearly, an understanding of ideology is important, for teachers, students, and the general public.

If today’s citizens have no understanding of political ideology, then democracy itself suffers because the public will not have the language to properly discuss and debate these relations. Ideology
itself includes, as well as limits, the possibilities within individual consciousness and the collective consciousness. Without an understanding of ideology, as Schwarzmantel (1998) reminds us, our representative democracy is reduced to individuals and groups desiring power for the sake of power. The current B.C. government is officially called Liberal, even though they enact social and economic policies from a neoconservative ideology.

Knowledge of the history of political ideology in British Columbian society, including its public education system, would also help today's citizens understand the forces attempting to change it, for better or worse, depending on their perspectives. Chapter 4 demonstrates the power of a discursive framework that enabled a relatively small number of British settlers to colonize a land filled with tens of thousands of First Nations people and impose a conservative ideology to the benefit of the newcomers. This discursive formation was composed of a set of powerful discourses in their own right, a set that included the discourses of imperialism, capitalism, White supremacy, Christianity, the dying race, and the yellow hordes. Together, they enabled those who could claim British ancestry social, political, and economic power on "the edge of empire," as Adele Perry (2001) adeptly puts it. The cumulative effect of these discourses allowed the settlers to marginalize the Other during the colonial and nation-building periods by imposing a British supremacist, Christian, capitalist system of institutions that included the law, the political system, and the school system in British Columbia. The rationale for all of these systems was the conservative ideology.

Yet, as many scholars have pointed out, the school is the site of competing ideologies. Each of these ideologies is based in a vision for society. As I have emphasized, each considers the school to be an effective instrument in the implementation of that vision. Discourses become part of the enacted curriculum that are either hegemonic or counter-hegemonic, depending on the ideologies of the formal curriculum developers, the teachers, and the students. In short, the hegemonic discourses
are about power and domination; the counter-hegemonic discourses are about resistance to power and domination. It is clear that the curriculum has always been filled with hegemonic discourses of race and class that work in the interests of the ruling groups. A pro-British, capitalist ideology has evolved into one that is more subtle but still based in a hegemonic, Eurocentric, individualist ideology.

The ideologies that arose out of modernity, namely, liberalism, socialism, and conservatism, are still relevant in Canada today. Yet is clear that all of them have adapted substantially to changing social, political, and economic conditions. As John Schwarzmantel (1998) states, “the ideologies necessary to make sense of the contemporary world remain those that originated with modernity” (p. 198). This study should provide support for the resuscitation of ideology in these terms, and its relevance to understanding current social relations. Much of the progressive ideologies of feminism, pluralism, and environmentalism have been, according to Schwarzmantel, “necessary correctives or additions to this [ideological] spectrum, not replacements for it.” In consideration of this, the findings in this study suggest that Schwarzmantel’s contention about the relevance of the ideologies of modernity is valid, at least in the context of British Columbia.

The public school system was very much implicated in the construction of the institutionalization of racism and classism in British Columbia. Conservative discourses of race and class in social studies education were, at least to some degree, part of the ideological state apparatus. As ironic as it may appear, social studies today could and should look at past discourses themselves for the role they played in the construction of the conservative, White supremacist, capitalist society of over a century ago. Students would be better prepared to understand their continued influence in British Columbia today, as well as better understand current tensions between various racial groups and classes. Within the burgeoning field of critical social theory, one of the “productive debates [is] between materialism and discourse analysis” (Leonardo, 2004, p. 12). I contend that there are
effective pedagogical strategies that illuminate the ways in hegemonic discourses have material consequences, usually negative ones for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

Yet, by no means do I wish to promote the idea that teaching about the connection between discourse and material privilege should be limited to the underprivileged. At the time of this writing, I currently teach social studies in a west side Vancouver secondary school in which the majority of students come from middle-class and upper middle-class homes. Placing ideology critique at the centre of the courses at this school has been well received by the students (and I have yet to hear any concerns from other stakeholders). I agree with the educators in the Weis and Fine study (2001) who contend that classroom “counterpublics,” to borrow a phrase from Nancy Fraser (1997), that focus on public responsibility and intellect, as well as resistance, can create counter-hegemonic discourses. These discourses, in turn, have the potential to lead to a “public common understanding across lines” of race and social class (Weis & Fine, 2001, p. 499).

In the general society, however, there is a clear tension between those who favour the status quo and those who want the school to emphasize critical thinking about social problems. This study was an attempt to find out how teachers address this tension in their social studies lessons that involve race and social class. Its main purpose, however, was to ascertain the ways in which political ideology influences these hegemonic discourses in the high school social studies classrooms in British Columbia.

8.1 Findings

Each of the data analysis chapters provided extensive summaries and conclusions. In this section, I will provide only a general set of findings. Rather than separate the conclusions into the analytical categories of race, class, and democracy, as I did in chapters 5, 6, and 7, I will present the
influences for each ideology in each published curriculum. This will be followed by the conclusions of the analysis of the teacher interviews in terms of where the three ideologies appeared.

8.1.1 Ideology and the Curriculum

The B.C. Annual Reports from 1926 until 1933 were overwhelmingly dominated by British conservatism and the discourses of White or British supremacy. As well, working-class issues were presented within the discourse of capitalism. The first published social studies curriculum in British Columbia was published in 1941. The dominant ideology in this document was also conservatism, supported by a discursive formation that included imperialism, capitalism, and White supremacy. The major discourse of imperialism was mainly presented under the guise of the greatness of empire. It was supported by the essentialist racial discourse, which was presented in the form of a Eurocentric monoculturalism.

The 1949 curriculum was also dominated by the conservative ideology. The dominant discourses in it remained the same as in its predecessor, the main exception being the alteration of the capitalist discourse: there was no mention of the rights of workers. Other hegemonic strategies used in both documents included the reified representation of First Nations cultures, which can be seen as an adaptation of the dying race discourse that was so prominent in earlier decades, and the complete omission of Asian peoples. The liberal ideology makes its first appearance in the 1949 social studies curriculum with the General Objective of “Humanitarian Sentiments” that included “personal rights and privileges.”

An ideological struggle of sorts between conservatism and liberalism took place in the 1956 curriculum. Despite the first appearance of the colour-blind discourse, essentialism is the main racial discourse used, indicating that conservatism was still the dominant ideology. This document
addresses conceptions of democracy and citizenship in a relatively in-depth manner from a clearly conservative perspective. Yet, in terms of social class, the capitalist discourse tended to indicate liberal influences. Trade-union laws, social security programs, and co-operatives are all represented, but within the conflict-free liberal ideology.

With the publication of the 1968 curriculum, all of this had changed. This was the first document to acknowledge the cultural diversity of Canada’s population, an indication that pluralist multiculturalism was gaining acceptance. It also indicates that liberalism was dislodging conservatism as the main ideology pertaining to race in the curriculum. Conservatism, however, became even more pronounced in the curricular use of the capitalist discourse. The only reference to labour issues is one about pre-Industrial Revolution times. Moreover, the creation of the first publicly-funded healthcare systems in North America, first in Saskatchewan and then across Canada, are not mentioned at all. Similarly, democracy and citizenship are given short shrift.

The 1980 curriculum gave tacit approval to the notion of imperialism, citing the necessity of expansion for certain societies without pointing out the negative consequences for others. By effectively hiding power in race relations, the 1980 document indicates the successful transition of the social studies curriculum from conservatism to the liberal ideology. Liberalism also influences the way that class issues are represented in this version of the curriculum. Canada’s healthcare system was once again omitted from the document. Citizens are represented as consumers, producers, and taxpayers, that is, as individuals. Trade unions once again appear after a brief hiatus, this time linked to corporations in a conflict-free manner. Democracy and citizenship are similarly depicted from a liberal perspective, with a focus on participation. The 1980 curriculum is the first one to be influenced almost completely by the liberal ideology.
In terms of racial discourses, the 1988 document allowed some space for the race-cognizance discourse to become part of the enacted curriculum. Most of it emanates from a liberal ideological position, but there is a series of Sample Key Questions that address the negative aspects of imperialism and nation-building, as well as the complexities involved in race relations. This is the closest any of the versions of the curriculum come to indicating a radical influence. This is also the case with the representation of democracy and citizenship: there is a series of Sample Key Questions involving “avenues of protest … open to dissidents today” and ideological conflicts. In terms of class concerns, however, power is effectively hidden as there is absolutely no mention of the social welfare state or trade unionism, which were both under serious attack during the time this document was being developed. Class concerns were clearly constructed through a liberal lens.

The curriculum currently in use was published in 1997. It is by far the most liberal in its presentation of racial issues. It is also the most adept at concealing economic and political interests. The discourse of meritocracy receives prominence. There are several references to First Nations peoples and relevant issues, all from a liberal perspective. Liberalism is also at the root of the class-blind use of the capitalist discourse. This document emphasizes a list of factors that contribute to each individual’s identity. Yet, there is one significant omission from the list: social class. In a similar manner, democracy and citizenship were also presented from a liberal perspective. Protest or rebellion are only mentioned in the context of the nineteenth century. The 1997 curriculum takes a step away from the radical space created for democracy and citizenship in the 1988 curriculum.

In sum, from the B.C. Annual Reports of 1926 to 1933, through the seven curricular versions that first appeared in 1941 and last published in 1997, the conservative ideology was completely displaced by a liberal ideology. The discourses in support of imperialism and empire-building, White supremacy, capitalism, and the responsible citizen, gave way to a set of discourses better able to
conceal power from critics concerned with equality and equity issues. This latter set trumpeted the
colour-blind and class-blind individual as a consumer and a willing yet responsible participant in a
democracy. Although the displacement of conservatism occurred over an uneven time-line, all of the
analytical categories I am concerned with in this study – race, multiculturalism, class, democracy and
citizenship – were eventually represented within the liberal paradigm. It is clear that these liberal
discourses have had some influence on the teachers themselves, although the conservative ideology
was also evident.

8.1.2 Ideology and the Teachers’ Thoughts

I know that teachers, by and large, are extremely hard-working and committed to the
education and betterment of their students. This is not a critique of this aspect of public education.
Rather, I interviewed the teachers to better understand the obstacles in using the social studies
classroom to support the aims of a progressive social justice agenda, particularly in terms of race,
class, democracy and citizenship. After all, the mission statements in every version of the B.C. social
studies curriculum make some reference to the importance of developing critical thinking skills in
students in order to make positive contributions to society as citizens. Are the ideologies of teachers a
factor in what inhibits this part of the mission statement from being realized? I think they are.
Funding cuts to public education are also part of the problem, of course. (These cuts are also clearly
rooted in ideology.)

The analysis of the teacher interviews in chapters 5, 6, and 7 demonstrated that the
conservative ideology is a stronger influence in the ways that the teachers view matters of race and
class than it is in the actual formal curriculum. This is somewhat more understandable when one
considers the ages of the teachers themselves. All of the teachers except for Steve Graham, who was
the most progressive of the group, would have finished their own high school education prior to the 1980s. The oldest of the group – Carl Tragas, Craig Evans, and Larry Nelson – would have completed their secondary schooling prior to the 1970s. These three teachers seemed to be the most influenced by various aspects of conservatism. This study is not about how the schooling teachers received influenced their own ways of thinking. I mention it here only to offer at least a partial explanation for the preponderance of conservatism in their own thinking.

One of the biggest surprises for me was to find that the traditional essentialist racial discourse, so much a part of the European empire-building project, was still evident in the thinking of a couple of teachers. This version, which emphasizes a genetic deficiency, was used to explain why so many First Nations people have difficulty in society, and also to explain why many working-class East Asian immigrant families have a labourer rather than a professional as the main income-earner. Yet, this traditional cornerstone of conservatism was not the dominant discourse used to explain why First Nations students and students from poor families graduate at lower rates than their peers. The cultural deficit discourse was clearly the one used by most teachers. In fact, half of the teachers used this discourse in various ways to explain why fewer First Nations students are academically successful. Hal Nagel’s statement in particular sums up this perspective: “[M]aybe it’s Aboriginal culture, that it’s not their forte to pursue academic life.” In terms of social justice, both versions of the essentialist discourse – genetic deficiency and cultural deficit – put the blame on the victims rather than the school system for the academic shortcomings of members of marginalized groups. Two of this same group of teachers subscribed to the conservative Eurocentric version of multiculturalism that Kincheloe and Steinberg (1997) call monoculturalism. Both described initiatives of progressive multiculturalism and social justice to be “too politically correct,” an indication that this conservative strategy had influenced their thoughts.
The conservative ideology was also prominent in the ways that the teachers viewed social class issues. Yet, there was some variation in the conservative discourses they used. The same two teachers used the genetic-deficiency discourse, while another used a different version of the essentialist discourse to claim that the schools will never be able to dispel working-class racism and homophobia. The culture-of-poverty discourse was used by almost all of the teachers as they blamed the home for the reason why poor students often perform poorly in terms of academics. Two teachers spoke of curriculum relevance but from a conservative perspective: they called for more vocational courses for working-class students who show a lack of ambition to go to university.

All ten of the teachers considered the curriculum to be unfair in its depiction of working-class issues. Yet, some of them offered a traditional explanation to justify why they choose not to alter the curriculum to address these omissions: working-class students simply are not interested in working-class issues. Despite a general awareness among the group that many students in Vancouver come from homes with financial concerns, the teachers were, by and large, extremely reluctant to address material inequality in our society. Some of the teachers seemed to accept the hierarchical nature of capitalist society unquestioningly. This was also borne out in their positions around the practice of streaming. Half of the teachers, mostly from the same group who accepted social hierarchies, were in favour of some form of streaming.

Half of the teachers also described their views on teaching about democracy and citizenship from a conservative perspective. They discussed these notions in terms of individual responsibility and deference to authority. The conservatives emphasized the need for students to learn Canadian history in traditionally conservative terms, namely, the great man discourse that is filled with military and political conquests. Five of the ten teachers also demonstrated a conservative influence when they described the notion of teaching for social justice. One expressed the fear that social studies
would be turned into the “bleeding hearts of education” if social justice ideals became part of the curriculum. Another claimed that teaching for social justice should not involve any notion that the working classes had been unfairly deprived. One veteran teacher claimed that it was “almost criminal” for a teacher to attempt to be ideological in their classroom teaching. This same teacher, however, claimed that teachers had a moral responsibility to speak out on matters of “right and wrong.” In the discussions about democracy and citizenship, there was a reluctance to address any notion of inclusivity. This came out several times in the interviews, especially in the teachers’ strong opposition to the radical race-cognizance discourse that over half of them voiced. Moreover, not one of these teachers spoke of the importance of participation and the public good when discussing democracy, citizenship, or the purpose of social studies.

In sum, it appeared that conservative discourses were used by slightly under half of the teachers when describing their thoughts around issues involving race, class, democracy or citizenship. As I have mentioned before, however, there was evidence that almost all of the teachers were influenced by more than one ideology. The most influential ideology was determined by the issue under discussion. Some teachers influenced by conservatism were also influenced by liberalism.

There was a lone teacher who used the colour-blind discourse of liberalism when he spoke of teaching about Canada’s past. Two of the teachers used elements of the radical race-cognizance discourse, demonstrating at least a partial penetration of how power works to oppress some racial groups while privileging others. The two most common forms of multiculturalism expressed by the teachers were the two emanating out of liberalism. Two of the teachers emphasized commonalities, while another five spoke of the need to point out cultural differences in their support of a pluralist society. One of the five was also able to be critical of both forms of liberal multiculturalism, although he offered nothing to suggest that the radical ideology was influencing his views. In fact, there was
only one teacher who indicated a critical multicultural perspective: Steve Graham said that the
differential treatment non-White people experienced in Canada’s history was often a part of his
teaching of the past in social studies. Similarly, there was one teacher, Dave Carson, who used the
race-cognizance discourse to explain why, in general, First Nations students do not do as well
academically. His reasoning included a Eurocentric curriculum and a school structure that works
against First Nations students.

It is perhaps not surprising that both Steve Graham and Dave Carson also expressed some
support for offering students at least some critique of the discourse of capitalism. Graham was the
only teacher who spoke with some passion about the need for teachers to discuss pertinent class
issues with students. Carson believed that material inequality should be discussed in the classroom,
but the reason that he does not was because he did not understand the reasons for this himself. This
has implications for teacher education, which I will address in one of the following sections. The data
analysis also made it clear that the implications of the practice of streaming is not as well understood
as it could be: although half of the teachers were not in favour of it, only one was able to make the
link between streaming and the future life chances of students.

There appeared to be a disconnect between the curricular representations of democracy and
citizenship and the ways that many of the teachers conceive of these notions. Despite the formal
curriculum representing aspects of democracy and citizenship in a clearly liberal manner, only about
half of the teachers spoke through this lens. Four of the group used the discourse of multiple
perspectives in support of a non-critical kind of social history. One of these liberal teachers expressed
disdain for any teacher who “creates victimization” by pointing out past acts of injustice. Another
said that he steered clear of mentioning progressive social protest movements for fear of a parental
backlash. This fear might even be stronger in the current era in which the present neoconservative
B.C. government strongly encourages parental involvement in public education. Four teachers described social justice from a liberal perspective in support of individual rights, freedoms, and tolerance for diversity. There was virtually no talk during any of the interviews of social justice from a radical ideological position. This speaks to a systemic resistance to embracing the Social Reconstructionist idea of using teachers to lead the push for a more egalitarian and fair society. It also points to the need for social studies curricular and teacher education reform.

The data analysis found that, in general, while liberalism is clearly the dominant ideology in the formal social studies curriculum, this ideological progeny of the Enlightenment is in a struggle with the reactionary ideology, namely, conservatism. In terms of race and multiculturalism, the dominant ideology moved away from the unabashed White supremacy of conservatism to the insidious Eurocentrism of liberalism. This is reflected in both the formal curriculum and the attitudes of the teachers themselves. Where class issues are concerned, there is almost a complete match between the discourses in the official document and the teachers' attitudes: there are virtually no discourses whatsoever, either dominant or counter-hegemonic. Regarding democracy and citizenship, the curricular representation is supportive of the liberal ideal of citizen participation, rights, and responsibilities. Yet, the teachers were divided between these liberal ideas and the conservative notion of adhering to authority.

The powerful discourse of the individual has been of paramount importance in the displacement of conservatism by liberalism. Moreover, the lack of any discourse about the public good and the social welfare state, the rights of minorities, the rights of workers, and social protest clearly supports the liberal ideology, as well as dominant racial and socioeconomic groups in our society. The question that follows this analysis, of course, is what to do about this situation.
8.2 Implications for Social Studies Education

Throughout this thesis, I have repeatedly stated that there has been a struggle throughout the history of public education in Canada and the United States between those who want to use schools to further entrench the values of the status quo, and those who want to use them to improve the lives of more people, especially the marginalized. The findings from this study lead me to claim that changes are required if we are to expect the public education system in general, and social studies in particular, to help lay the foundations for a more fair and just society. I agree with Leonardo (2004) who states that “[c]onfronting inequality means coming to terms with social arrangements that create social disparities and understanding their sources” (p. 13). It is clear that, in general, public education has not placed this notion within its mandate. Chapter 4 demonstrated the direct connections between the conservative White supremacist values of the dominant society in British Columbia and the role the school played in inculcating these unjust values in students from the middle of the nineteenth century until the 1920s. There is no doubt that these connections continue to exist today.

Moreover, my study only addressed discourses of race and social class. Framing the study around discourses of race and class is not to suggest their primacy as axes of oppression. I contend that the categories of gender, sexuality, and ableism are equally important to study. I focused on race and social class and not the others in order to attain a sensible length for the final dissertation, as well as to build upon the research I began with my MA (Orlowski, 2001a). Moreover, other members of the UBC team led by Deirdre Kelly are researching various forms of oppression that may be exacerbated in and through schooling. Further research of a similar design would most likely find that traditional discourses of gender and heterosexism, as well as the omission of progressive discourses about gender and homosexuality, have also been a part of the history of social studies in British Columbia.
Conservative and liberal ideologies have dominated British Columbia throughout the twentieth century. They have also dominated our social studies curriculum, as this study has shown. Although the dominant ideology across Canada today is much more liberal than during the conservative nation-building period, there remain numerous daunting social problems in our multicultural, capitalist society. This is one of the main reasons I reject the notion that liberalism is capable of ameliorating these social problems. Despite its roots in the emancipation of all, I consider the inherent tension in liberalism between increased individual rights and the collective good to be too great an obstacle to overcome in order to realize the emancipation of all. Consequently, I place my hope for social studies education to make a more substantial contribution for a better society by calling for increased and more prominent discourses emanating from the radical ideology. Both the curriculum and the ways that social studies teachers view the world should reflect these discourses.

8.2.1 Implications for the Social Studies Curriculum

The issue of racial discourses in the current curriculum differs greatly from the related but often considered separate issue of class discourses. The 1997 curriculum presents race from the pluralist and liberal forms of multiculturalism quite frequently. Yet, even liberal discourses about social class are virtually non-existent, a strategy that is also a liberal hegemonic device. Similarly, democracy and citizenship are portrayed in a liberal fashion. All of the following suggestions emanate from the radical ideology. This list is necessarily brief, only a sample set of radical possibilities. I will not specifically position the suggested Prescribed Learning Outcomes for any particular grade level.

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994, 1995) emphasizes the importance of culturally relevant pedagogy. One component of such pedagogy is to include a curriculum that is based on the culture(s)
of the students in the classroom rather than the Eurocentric-based regular social studies curriculum. In the context of British Columbia, I consider it imperative for the curriculum to address the contributions of non-White people from both a historical and a contemporary perspective. It is my contention that the metropolis of Greater Vancouver is presently undergoing an impressive social experiment in multiculturalism. As such, its success can only be enhanced through a radical curriculum that addresses past conflicts, as Gerald Graf (1994) suggests. For example, I mentioned in chapter 4 the situation in which White capitalists were able to exploit White working-class racism toward Chinese miners for their own financial gains. This has been a successful strategy repeatedly tried within the capitalist system. The illumination of past race-class intersections will help students to understand the importance of working-class solidarity, as well as help them understand the present economic and social oppressive conditions of non-White people, particularly recent immigrants.

When I consider a curriculum that focuses on race/class intersections, I am reminded of a line from the 1956 poem by Allen Ginsberg called America (1997): “America I feel sentimental about the Wobblies.” Sentimentality is not the reason I would like to see the formal curriculum mention the first appearance of this radical organization in British Columbia, one dedicated to the progressive message of ending exploitation of all workers regardless of their racial or ethnic background. I consider it important for students to understand the importance of past struggles that have eventually led to progressive changes and less human suffering. This is also an area in which teachers and academics could collaborate to develop a repertoire of critical pedagogical strategies.

There was very little in the way of race/class intersections in the formal curriculum or in the thoughts of the teachers. Yet, to highlight these intersections in the curriculum would, in my opinion, provide students with what I think is an accurate dynamic in current race relations in Canada. In other words, it is clear that the majority of immigrants are often forced to accept low paid, unskilled labour
positions near the bottom of the social, political, and economic hierarchies in British Columbia today.

I would like to see a Prescribed Learning Outcome (PLO) that addresses globalization and sweatshop labour and links these to the old economic, slave-based system during earlier imperialist times. Another PLO should address the wages of Whiteness as described by both David Roediger (1991) and Peggy McIntosh (1988). Although it is a contentious stand, I also agree with the notion of addressing racial hierarchies in non-western cultures. It has been an all too common experience for me to listen to students tell of racist episodes that they have experienced that do not involve White people (Orlowski, 2001a).

Regarding specifically social class, I want to see PLOs that help students understand the construction of the social welfare state, including the public healthcare system in Canada and in other western nations. After all, an ignorant citizenry is in no position to stand up to the current neoconservative attacks on these hard fought victories that have helped western nations take a few steps toward realizing the progressive slogan, the emancipation of all. PLOs should also address the widening gap between the wealthy and the poor in Canada, progressive versus regressive tax reform, the effects of globalization and free-trade deals on full-time employment and worker security, and Orwellian double-speak such as the need for a flexible labour market and two-tiered healthcare.

This latter suggested PLO might be best addressed by developing an entire unit on critical media literacy. This in itself would enable the school to better fulfill its potential of strengthening democracy and citizenship. Also for the purposes of strengthening democracy, students should understand that it is these struggles won through the agency of oppressed groups have led to progressive legislation such as the 8-hour work-day and 40-hour work week. I think it would be a good idea for a possible unit of lessons that connected the lack of personal power in feudal society and the expansion of the franchise begun in the Enlightenment to current trends in voter apathy. On
several occasions, lessons with the specific aim of deconstructing the voter apathy discourse have led to discussions around consumerism, pop culture, and declining class awareness in my classroom over the years. It is not very difficult to move the discussion toward a class consciousness that manages to bridge race and gender that can properly deal with a conservative growing White defensiveness.

Ken Osborne (1998) has developed a list of fourteen statements that he feels should be part of a radical Canadian social studies curriculum intent on strengthening democracy. Based in a socialist framework, Osborne’s list is too extensive to repeat here. Some of the more important ones, however, address “the relationship between participation, power, and class” (p. 47), “how human rights are protected ... and the violations of human rights past and present” (p. 47), and past and present “issues and relationships between Canada and the United States ... and the similarities and differences” between the two countries” (p. 43). I agree with Osborne that if these statements were part of the social studies curriculum, we might eventually develop a citizenry better capable of understanding present and future sociopolitical scenarios. More importantly, we would have a citizenry with a more sophisticated understanding of political ideology.

8.2.2 Implications for Social Studies Teacher Education

Social Reconstructionists such as Harold Rugg (1921) and George Counts (1932) considered the role of the teacher to hold the key of a new and progressive social order. Contemporary Social Reconstructionists like Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant (1994) also call on the teacher to promote a radical enacted curriculum. It is clear that if the ten department heads in my study are any indication, the idea of teachers as radical visionaries is a long way in the future. I do not place the blame on the teachers, however, as many of them have good reason to be worried about a “faceful of parents,” as Dave Carson put it, making it difficult for them to teach in this manner. Moreover, as a veteran
teacher myself, I understand the potential that teacher autonomy offers, especially where the enacted curriculum can help create a radical counter-discursive formation. (Of course, teacher autonomy and the enacted curriculum can also lead to a conservative discursive formation, as well.)

Although I have rarely mentioned any pedagogical strategies from my own high school teaching experience, one I have employed with the predominantly working-class student body from different cultural backgrounds is to teach about political ideology itself. For example, I have helped students critique the discourse of disgruntled workers from all three political ideologies. In this manner, we are able to deconstruct the myth of meritocracy, as well as understand the employer-employee relationship in terms of power. (Another pedagogical staple in my classroom is the deconstruction of the woman as home-maker discourse from a traditional and a progressive ideology. Concepts such as divorce and emancipation invariably become part of the ensuing discussions.) By teaching about these topics within an ideological framework, there is still no guarantee that the teacher will be free of a negative parental reaction.

I am extremely aware of the potential for teachers to get into difficulty by teaching about topics that offend people from certain cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. I have found that the best way to avoid this situation yet still encourage critical thinking is to call upon the notion of promoting multiple perspectives. In its Rationale and Approach, the 1997 curriculum states:

The overarching goal of social studies is to develop thoughtful, responsible, active citizens who are able to acquire the requisite information to consider multiple perspectives and to make reasoned judgments ... The prescribed learning outcomes are designed to encourage in-depth study from multiple perspectives (e.g., time, place, culture, values) and to lead students to think critically and make reasoned judgments. (p. 1, emphasis mine)

The formal curriculum can be restrictive. Yet, it can also offer protection to teachers intent on creating counter-hegemonic discourses in the classroom. (It is ironic that I am promoting the notion
of multiple perspectives as providing protection for the radical teacher despite my earlier criticism of its use by educators who want to teach a power-blind social history.) If a teacher wanted to implement aspects of Kumashiro’s Theory of Anti-Oppressive Education (2000), which I would whole-heartedly agree with, the best insurance would be to know the places in the formal document that offer the space, even in ambiguous language, to do so. Kumashiro’s work offers a lot of potential for progressive pedagogy. Coming from both a poststructuralist and psychoanalytical perspective, his theory of anti-oppressive education is a substantive contribution to the field of social justice. It is the third approach in Kumashiro’s review, called Education that is Critical of Privileging and Othering, that I believe holds the most promise for the social studies classroom to be employed in the service of making our society a more fair and progressive place. This is because of its emphasis on collective agency, especially in the transformation of hegemonic structures currently influencing our social relations.

Before any teachers can employ such radical pedagogy, however, they would have to understand the issues from a radical, or at least progressive, perspective themselves. As Dave Carson pointed out in chapter 6, his reluctance to address the oppression of poor people stems from his lack of understanding their plight or the causes of their plight. (Of course, Carson also expressed fear of a parental reaction, an issue that should also be a possible topic for teacher education programs.) If teachers had a better grasp of power and hegemony, they would be in a better position to develop progressive attitudes toward marginalized students. As Ornstein and Levine (1989) point out, this in itself would most likely result in more academic success for these students.

The conclusions in all of the data analysis chapters, especially chapter 6, indicate that a major obstacle to implementing a radical social justice curriculum in social studies is with the teachers themselves. Teacher Education programs are filled with a high percentage of relatively idealistic
young adults with a desire to make a contribution to building a better world. In my opinion, these programs are an ideal place to start counter-hegemonic discourses, to explain the role of political ideology in education and in society, and, in general, to explain to these future educators how power and hegemonic discourses operate in our society. In the ten teacher education UBC courses in which I have been the instructor, it appears that the majority of student teachers believe in meritocracy, which is not very surprising given the prevalence of this belief in the general society. It has not proven to be very difficult, however, to help them realize the contradictions of hearing such a common traditional discourse in a society that is so clearly stratified along axes of race and class. In fact, ideology critique has been at the centre of all of the courses I have taught in the UBC Teacher Education Program. It appears to me that the student teachers leave these courses with a solid understanding and the language needed to further engage in ideology critique for their own future students.

I agree with the Social Reconstructionist view that sees the school as the best place to develop a radical vision of an egalitarian society with strategies for the implementation of policies based in principles of social justice. In other words, I am an optimist in that I see great transformative potential in the role of the school, especially pertaining to social studies. I want to reiterate my position once again around the charge of biased teaching and indoctrination: to claim neutrality by teaching the formal curriculum cannot be mistaken for being objective, as some teachers suggested during the interviews. All teaching is political. I consider it imperative for teachers entering the field of social studies to understand this very important axiom. This is what ideology has to do with social studies education.
8.3 Methodological Considerations

There are numerous ways in which I think this study could have been strengthened. Most of them would have required more time and resources than were in my possession. As well, the report is quite long already. That said, there are a few areas where improvement might have occurred relatively easily.

One limitation of the study is that I had no means of triangulation (see Silverman, 2001). In other words, there was no way in which I could corroborate what the teachers were telling me during the interviews. The best way to have done this, of course, would have been to observe them teach some lessons involving race and/or class issues. I did not mention this in the initial contact letter because I saw it as having the potential of scaring away recruits. Moreover, because of the great demands on teachers, I did not ask them if I could observe them teach once they had agreed to participate either. Yet, as I mentioned in chapter 3, triangulation does not necessarily translate into increased validity.

There was no opportunity for the teachers to provide feedback, through member checks, on my findings either. This would have provided another opportunity to further my data analysis. Only one teacher was open to the idea of meeting with the rest of the participants to discuss the analysis, obviously leading me to dismiss the idea. In fact, not one of the teachers was interested in a second individual interview either. I do not believe that this had anything to do with poor rapport between the participants and myself; rather, I again attribute this to the increasing demands put upon teachers by neoconservative governments across the western world (see Dibbon, 2004; Schaefer, 2003.)

All ten of the teacher participants were the department heads at their respective schools. In terms of recruitment, I chose to interview these head teachers for a variety of what I consider to be
good reasons (see chapter 3). Outside of a few instances, it was clear from the data that the liberal and conservative ideologies were the most influential on their thoughts around race and social class. It is a valid question to ask whether teachers who are not the head teachers would be influenced to the same degree by these ideologies. Would other teachers be more likely to be influenced by the radical ideology? My experience as a teacher suggests that the difference in findings would not be very significant. Yet, only another study would be able to properly assess this contention.

One more rather significant limitation had to do with my treatment of one of the main dimensions, namely, democracy and citizenship. My questioning during the interviews should have been at a deeper level. I did not ask the participants, for example, about involving students in teaching and learning, in setting the assessment criteria, in developing classroom policies around respectful behaviour. These are aspects that have been linked to democratic initiatives in the classroom (Kelly, 2004). To a large extent, I consider my omission of these probes to be the result of these same omissions in my own teaching. The study has pointed me in this direction as an area of future reading to help develop my own democratic pedagogical strategies.

Although I considered my questioning and probing techniques around race and multiculturalism to be much stronger than around democracy and citizenship, there was still ample room for improvement. For example, I did not address the model-minority discourse. Some research suggests that this discourse makes it particularly difficult for Asian students who do not fit into the stereotype of being academically successful (Maclear, 1994; Kumashiro, 2000). Moreover, the model-minority discourse is often used to further marginalize students of Aboriginal, Latino, and Black backgrounds.

Lastly, control of the data analysis, in this case to get at the core beliefs of the participants, is a crucial issue for qualitative research. Kvale states that there are two ways to control the interview
analysis: "the use of multiple interpreters and the explication of procedures" (p. 207). Because I was the sole interpreter of the data, the only approach open to me was what Kvale calls the explication of procedures. Readers will have to decide for themselves whether I was clear enough in this as they move through the interview data analysis sections of chapters 5, 6, and 7.

8.3  A Few Final Words

This study has demonstrated the profound influence that political ideology has in social studies education. Social studies is part of the school, which in turn, reflects the values of the surrounding society. By corollary, it is an amazing fact that very few people in our society willingly speak of ideology or its influence. This must mean that hegemonic discourses have been successful in discouraging people from understanding the world in which they live. It is no wonder that many people act in the world in ways that are not always in their best interests. Perhaps social studies curriculum and teacher education can one day change these tendencies. If this is to occur, a radical ideology, based on increased recognition and a more fair system of wealth redistribution, must be part of the change.
REFERENCES


McIntosh, P. (1988). *White privilege and male privilege: A personal account of coming to see correspondences through work in women’s studies*. Wellesley, Ma: Centre for Research on Women.


**Government Documents**


B.C. Department of Education. (1941). *Programme of studies for the senior high schools of British Columbia*. Victoria: Queen’s Printer of British Columbia.


Appendix 1: Interview Questions for Social Studies Department Heads

1. How long have you been a teacher? Where have you taught? What grades and subjects have you taught? When did you become the social studies department head?

2. Can you please describe the student population currently served by your school? [Probes: socioeconomic status, languages spoken at home, cultural diversity, etc.]

3. In your opinion, what is the purpose of social studies education? Do you believe social studies education to be a political enterprise? Explain.

4. What are your thoughts on the following statement? “Social studies must prepare students with the duties and responsibilities of citizenship in a democracy.”

5. Do you try to teach social studies as outlined in the IRPs? (If not) How does the course you teach differ? (If so) Why do you feel so strongly about teaching the formal curriculum?

6. Some teachers think that it is important that they remain neutral, not express their opinion in class, and instead focus on creating an open and supportive environment where students feel free to express their thoughts and feelings. Others, while agreeing that diverse views should get a fair hearing, think that it is important for teachers to clearly articulate their own positions. Where do you stand on this issue?

7. Do you encourage classroom discussions around controversial issues? (If so) Which ones? Why?

8. In teaching social studies, how do you teach about the “discoverers, adventurers, and heroes”? How important is it to highlight the members of non-dominant groups who have achieved success or made contributions to Canadian society?

9. What does the term multicultural education mean to you? How do you think of this type of teaching in relation to the overall role of the teacher? What about the ways you teach about issues of race?

10. Do you feel the Social Studies IRPs adequately cover or represent fairly the contributions or experiences of First Nations people? Of workers? (If not) Do you do anything to compensate for this? What? Why?

11. Why do you think certain perspectives on historical events are in the social studies IRPs rather than others?
12. Do you read a student’s social class as central in the construction of their identity? Recent Statistics Canada data confirm that the gap is widening between rich and poor Canadians. Do you address the growing gap between the rich and the poor in Canada? (If yes) How so? (If no) Why?

13. What are your thoughts on “streaming” or ability grouping? What are the positives, if any? What are the negatives, if any?

14. Why do you think that children of poor families leave school before graduating at a much higher rate than middle-class children? What about First Nations children?

15. What does the term *social justice* mean to you? Do you think the role of the teacher includes social justice? (If so) In what ways? (If not) Why not?