What Is Liberatory in Feminist Theory Might Be Limiting When Administered On Paper
An Intersectional and Interlocking Antiracist Postcolonial Feminist Discourse Analysis Of the Ministry of Education's First Draft Of Ontario's New Secondary 'Gender Studies' Course

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DEDICATIONS

First and foremost, I want to dedicate this work out of deep appreciation and gratitude to my beloved family. Mama, Padre, Frankie and Sister-Pissy-Soulmate, all I am is all you are, and I love every one of you immensely. All my accomplishments are the result of your support, compassion and motivation. Thanks for taking care of the loan payments, the pets and the painting apartments, for all the minuet details that you say 'are expected' of family mean the world to me. Sister, my feminism started with you and our bond keeps me hungry for justice.

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Furthermore, I would like to dedicate this study to members of the Miss G__ Project. Feminist activism is never easy, and I admire Miss G__ members for being so dedicated to our agenda. Moreover, I want to dedicate this study to the Ottawa chapter co-chairs of Miss G__: Julie and Tara. You are both amazing and incredible feminists, and I am truly honoured to be working with you both towards the 'fight' of getting this course implemented.

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ABSTRACT

The 2009 draft of the Ontario Ministry of Education's secondary level 'Gender Studies' course is currently undergoing review. Consequently, this study facilitates a (re)reading of this draft with and against the Miss G__ Project's 'course objectives' and 'suggested topics of study' put forth on their respective website. To do so, I use an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist theoretical framework to analyze both the strengths and limitations of this first draft in relation to the *feminist* tenets proposed by the Miss G__ Project. In turn, I employ this theoretical framework to critically deconstruct the ways in which this draft of the policy document represents various social issues. Within a *standardized* Euro-Colonial white-supremacist-capitalist-patriarchal framework, the Miss G__Project envisions this course to challenge oppression in and through the school curricula. Thus, I utilize this study to examine how 'discourses of domination' circulating within such a framework can foster the institutional appropriation of Miss G__'s feminist politics as an alternative discourse throughout this particular course draft.

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AN INTRODUCTION

A. <u>Remaining Critical of Change</u>

For many feminists, public schooling is regarded as a public site to teach youth why and how to challenge the hegemonic knowledge(s) being reproduced by society. This is especially relevant for an Ontario based feminist activist group known as the Miss G__Project for Education and Equity. In 2009, this feminist organization proposed a secondary level women's studies course that has since been approved by the Ministry of Education. At the moment, schools do not have "an introduction to studies of gender, its intersections with class, race, ability and sexual identity, and its implications on [students'] high school education" (Miss G__Project, 2011). Therefore, in 2009, the arrival of this course represented a pivotal moment for feminism within the Ontario secondary education public schooling system. Yet, despite its empowering potentials, feminists urge us to be attentive to the rise of discursive public anti-feminist backlash against this new course of study for young students here in Ontario (Miller, 2008).

Moreover, this public discourse is often socially constructed through educational narratives that characterize boys as 'failing' because of the historical feminization of public schooling (Part 2, We Can't Tolerate Failing Boys, Globe and Mail Oct.18th, 2010, ¶6). Here, 'feminists are to blame', as Crocco (2006) makes clear, for 'boys failure' in schools by paying too much attention to creating spaces that now 'equitably' enable the success of girls. Therefore, in this major research paper I demonstrate that such discursive manifestations of backlash function to 'distract' our analyses of the relationships between social inequalities, hegemonic masculinity and institutions of education.

B. <u>Statement of the Problem</u>

In 2009, the Ministry of Education posted a first draft of the curriculum policy document titled: Grade 11, University/College Preparation Gender Studies. The Ministry of Education then informed the Miss G__ Project that this new course would be implemented in 2011. However, in October of 2010, I received a phone call from a Ministry of Education representative in response to inquiries I had previously made regarding the 'status' of this course. They in turn informed me that this course would not be implemented until 2012 because of the ongoing evaluations currently being made to the grade eleven and twelve secondary curricula.

Since the revisions to this 'Gender Studies' course are still underway, my major research paper focuses on making an intersecting and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist discourse analysis of the content put forth in this first draft of this proposed secondary level 'Gender Studies' course. I utilize this research paper as an occasion to explicate the ways in which this course draft is structured by "discourses of domination" already circulating as "common stock knowledge" (Jiwani, 2006, p.31). Such knowledge, as feminist scholar bell hooks (1994a) maintains, is part of the hidden curriculum of a white-supremacist-capitalistic-patriarchal society.

Therefore, I seek to examine how these discourses frame this draft of the curriculum policy document, and impact the ways in which the Miss G__Project's politics are appropriated and represented. Such an analysis makes a departure from existing feminist concerns regarding the institutional and curricular use of feminist related rhetoric. For feminist educational scholars, like Jane Gaskell and Sandra Taylor, (2003) discourses pertaining to notions of (in)equality are commonly used throughout public schooling. Here, Gaskell and Taylor are concerned that such mainstream and/or popular institutional use of these discourses work discursively to depoliticize feminist social justice agendas. In turn, they function as a nexus that fuels the 'hidden'

curriculum of the state/government agenda (Alexander, 2005). Thus, I pay particular attention to the different ways in which discourses work together to represent certain social issue that are important to feminist theorizing, when analyzing the 'overall/specific course expectations' and 'teacher prompts' in the document. Doing so allows me to analyze how this document can be simultaneously detrimental and beneficial to the Miss G__Project's educational objectives and overall feminist mandate.

Many feminists remain critical about the role that standardized curricula play in reinscribing social hierarchies (Subrahmanian, 2007). I seek to demonstrate the intricate and recursive ways in which power functions through the language put forth in this 'Gender Studies' curriculum policy document. Consequently, the research questions that inform this proposed document analysis are:

1) In what ways does the Ministry of Education's 'Gender Studies' curriculum policy document take up (or not) Miss G__ Project's proposed feminist tenets?

2) What can intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist discourse analysis suggest about the ways in which certain social issues are represented as topics of study throughout this first draft of the curriculum policy document?

I will draw upon critical race, postcolonial, critical education and feminist scholarship as theoretical frameworks to guide my intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist discourse analysis. Furthermore, I will situate the analysis put forth in this research paper in relation to the Miss G__ Project's proposed course tenets outlined on their pre and post 2011 websites, as well as the scholarship published by Michelle Miller (2007, 2008), an active member. I also use Sandra Tam's (2009) 'Gender Studies' course feedback paper to contextualize my second (re)read of the draft from my theoretical framework.

C. Significance of Study

My major research paper is significant because it seeks to scrutinize the colonizing affects of Eurocentric epistemologies through the curriculum within the public schooling system here in Ontario. Moreover, there is no current study, to the best of my knowledge, which draws on postcolonial and critical race feminist scholarship to deconstruct this course draft from an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist perspective.

> Public schooling in Canada is structured by a 'Euro-colonial curriculum' that selectively cho[oses] particular groups by which to accomplish the task of nation building…where the concepts of racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, classism and homophobia become articulated with…social institutions to advance and legitimize…criteria of inclusion and exclusion. (Jiwani, 2006, p.9; Peters & Sinnithamby, 2010).

Therefore, I examine how colonialist, colonizing and imperialist discourses take shape throughout this 'Gender Studies' course draft. Such discourses, I argue, contribute to processes of 'othering' that reinstate positions of domination and subordination in 'commonsensical' ways.

For Yasmin Jiwani (2006) an intersecting and interlocking framework demonstrates how racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism and ableism are "social forces [that]…interlock so that the construction of identity is contingent on the particular nexus of interlocking factors operative in a given context" (p. 16). Thus, I decode certain textual expressions of various social issues within the course draft, to illustrate how these representational discourses are related to intersections of racist, heteronormative, ableist, sexist and classist social constructions of the Miss G__Project's proposed feminist knowledge(s). Doing so, affords me a grounding to discuss how these representations are implicated in their state-institutional frameworks, mediated as a discourse of "common stock knowledge" and work to perpetuate relations and representations of interlocking power through the curriculum.

CHAPTER I: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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This chapter is comprised of educational, feminist, critical race and postcolonial scholarship related to curricula. The purpose of this section is to report on existing scholarship related to my study so that I add to such work through my discourse analysis of the 'Gender Studies' course draft. In this chapter, I provide a definition of curricula as it relates to Ontario, and then transition to gendered critiques of the educational system. I discuss how feminists contest homogenous definitions of gender with the use of intersectionality. I then demonstrate the challenges of using intersectionality and how feminist and critical scholars have problematized its use. I conclude this chapter with scholarship pertaining to the mainstreaming of feminism and its respective relation to Ontario's secondary 'Gender Studies' course proposed by the Miss G__Project.

A. <u>Standardizing Curriculum for Ontario Secondary Schools</u>

High school education in Ontario is constantly changing, for every year new curricula is developed. However, public schooling at the secondary level is currently defined by a 'common curriculum' that is structured around 'high standards' in student 'achievement' (Carr, 2007, p. 229). For Carr (2007), such standardized curricula in Ontario are characterized by a business model that involves interests pertaining to "employability [which] prepare[es] students for the workplace and being competitive" (p.229). Many feminist scholars urge us to be attentive to the ways economic and capitalist discourses are normalized with use of curricular documents (Martell, 2003). Other feminist scholars stress that we need to examine how such discourses are conflated with neo-liberal and democratic ideations of 'success', which are also characterized by gender, race, and sexuality (hooks, 2003; Martell, 2003; Rezai-Rashti, 2009).

Wayne Ross (2006) defines curriculum as an "explicit or official curriculum, embodied in published courses of study, state frameworks, textbooks, texts and curriculum standard efforts" (p.23). Thus, *standardized provincial* curricula uses certain mediums and methods to

institutionalize and reproduce "aspects of society" for the sake of securing state interests through the dissemination of certain 'knowledge' (Brathwaite, 2010; Carr, 2007; Subrahmanian, 2007).

Ross (2006) suggests that courses included within a *standardized* social science curriculum are "operationally… anti-democratic" despite the assumption that some courses are 'supposed' to promote democracy. Such restrictions, he infers, are due to who gets to participate "in the conversation about the origin, nature and ethics of knowledge taught in the social sciences curriculum" (p.29). Therefore, despite the role that 'public voters' play in shaping curriculum policy, individuals who are in positions of power have a major impact on sealing the fate of social justice agendas (Carr, 2007; Dei, 2003).

B. Feminist Critiques of Standardized Curricula: Using a Gender Lens

For feminists, questioning the structures and positions of 'power' helps reveal the complex ways in which curricula contribute to the marginalization of women (Gaskell & Willsky, 1995). Interrogating who is granted 'authority' in shaping public school curricula, inspires feminists to ask, 'education for what?' and 'curriculum for whom' (Yates, 2006)? Gender as a point of analysis affords feminists to demonstrate the ways hegemonies—such as patriarchy—not only inform the construction of school curricula, but also, how such social forces are legitimized through them (Riddell, 1992, p. 35).

Hegemony is a form of "cultural leadership" where "in any society not totalitarian, certain cultural forms predominate over others" (Gramsci as quoted by Hall, 2000, p.107). Therefore, gender as a theoretical concept, reveals that patriarchy is defined by male/masculine centered cultural values. In response, feminists challenge gendered identities that are based on physical and biological characteristics. As post-structuralist feminist Judith Butler notes (1999,

2004) gender is a socio-cultural construction. Thus, gender identities are subject to change over time.

Gender is a discursive social formation that is ascribed various meanings. Such constructed meaning however, is subject to being "articulated with the needs and ideologies" of society, and its differing social domains (Jiwani, 2006, p.9). As schools change to accommodate girls, feminists in turn caution that simply 'adding and stirring' women to the curricula does not eradiate gender stereotypes. In fact, formal (standardized) curricula contribute to the oppressions of women (Riddell, 1992). Thus, even when using gender as a theoretical framework, feminists remain critical about the strategic and subtle ways in which curricula reproduces the gendered stereotypes required to normalize sexist ideologies and patriarchy (Subrahmanian, 2007).

C. Hiding Gender Codes with the Curriculum

Feminist scholar and educator, Sheila Riddell (1992) indicates that standardized curricula contribute to the naturalization of gender constructs through the use of 'gender codes' (p.15). Drawing on Arnot's work, Riddell (1992) explains that 'gender codes' "refer to the messages concerning appropriate models of masculinity or femininity…thus encompasses the cluster of behaviours, attitudes and emotional responses judged appropriate for one sex or the other" (p.15). Here, some feminist researchers are concerned about the ways in which textbook and lesson plans are comprised of gender referents, without explicitly mentioning the concept of gender. By 'decoding' curricular content, feminists have demonstrated how gender stereotypes and sexist ideologies are disseminated through masculinized and feminized representational discourses about men and women (Leavy, 2007b; Riddell, 1992).

As such, a gender lens reveals the ways in which curricula discursively contribute to maintaining the naturalized ideological divide between men and women, which work to justify

gendered hierarchies (Bryson & Castell, 1993; Subrahmanian, 2007). Moreover, deconstructing curricular narratives with a gendered lens has afforded what some feminists call a postmodern epistemological grounding towards making analyses, which seeks to challenge hegemonic 'truth claims' about our social realities (Leavy, 2007a).

Many feminist researchers challenge the "power-sensitive practice' of knowledge production. Building on the Foucauldian notion that power and knowledge are "inextricably linked" and gendered in nature, reveals the (in)visible patriarchal paradigms that structure curricula (Leavy, 2007a, p.89; Schuster & Van Dyne, 1983). Here, feminist Nancy Hoffman (1995) claims that socially constructed gender norms have created a "fundamental dualism between male and female that has made rationalism a specifically masculine mode of thought" (p. 45). Acknowledging that masculinity and femininity are foundational characteristics that inform processes of knowledge building, feminists argue that dominant androcentric conceptions about our everyday lives not only justify the subordination of women, but are also 'self-legitimizing' (Hanrahan, 2000; Leavy, 2007a).

As Leavy (2007a) suggests, this is because "grand theories" about gender differences do not question the "assumptions in which they rest (which are themselves products of complex relations)" (p.91). Thus, many feminists argue that curricula valorize androcentric knowledge(s) (Schuster & Van Dyne, 1983). Such scholars also illustrate how an androcentric curriculum works to privilege male bodies in ways that maintain the patriarchal structuring of hegemony, and its respective discursive hierarchies, throughout public schooling and society (Martin, 2006; Rich, 1985).

Feminist Ramya Subrahmanian (2007) claims that 'gender codes' help 'hide' a 'hidden curriculum'. For Subrahmanian (2007), 'hidden curriculum' is a term used by many critical

scholars to suggest that state/government agendas are implicated in curricula. Feminists examine naturalized 'commonsensical' process of learning to demonstrate how hegemonic knowledge production and consumption are interconnected with patriarchal nation building projects (Alexander, 2005; Mohanty, 2003).

However, Subrahmanian (2007) argues that explicating the 'hidden curriculum' "is not merely about [uncovering] gender stereotypes in the nature of examples used" throughout curricula. It is also about attending to the silences within curricula about gender inequality (p.66). Here, the exclusion and/or under representation of women and our experiences throughout curricular mediums, as Penney Clark (2005) suggests, is a reflection of our marginal status within a patriarchal society.

Furthermore, when the curriculum fails to address the very existence of patriarchy and the various ways in which women are marginalized throughout society, such silences also maintain patriarchal dominance (Clark, 2005; Subrahmanian, 2007). Therefore, feminists suggest that textbooks and lesson plans are discursive devices used by the state/government to strategically guise and deny their political investments in public schooling (Alexander, 2005; Mohanty, 2003).

D. <u>Mainstreaming Gender: Curriculum, Discursive Representations, and Backlash</u>

Jane Gaskell and Sandra Taylor (2003) indicate that institutional appropriation of gender related discourses have created "pockets of resistance" in Canada against feminist curricular reform (p.166). These authors explain that this is a result of the ways in which "gender equity issues in education [are] mainstreamed" (p.166). In turn, some feminists are attentive to the ways in which politically charged gender discourses are 'made benign' through curricula, and which

also contribute to backlash against various anti-oppressive politics (Bryson & Castell, 1993; Razack, 2003; Smith, 2010).

Although many feminists continue to debate the best ways to incorporate feminist discernments into curricula, Subrahmanian (2007) notes that one of these strategies is the process of 'gender mainstreaming'. 'Gender mainstreaming' is a strategy that was initiated by some feminists, as Subrahmanian claims (2007), "for ensuring that women's rights are addressed through development policy formulation" by bringing awareness to the larger public about "the social construction of norms and values that structure male and female identities" (pp. 128, 131). However, other feminists stress that this strategy has been emptied of its transformative potential—making it a hollow discourse and therefore, subject to problematic representation within institutional frameworks (Bryson & Castell, 1993; Subrahmanian, 2004). In turn, many feminists have turned their attention to mainstream usages of gender that take shape throughout curricular mediums.

Feminist Susanne V. Knudsen (2005) explains that, when textbooks mention gender, or seek to utilize a gender analysis, women remain the focal point. Consequently, males and masculinities are portrayed as "neutral" or "genderless" (p.69). For Knudsen (2005), this fails to acknowledge masculinity as the dominant and socially valued gender construct, and also ignores how such discursive formations are implicated in patriarchy. Furthermore, textbook and lesson plans frequently describe gender relations in dichotomous terms. Knudsen (2005) tells us that not only does this discursive binary imply that there are only two gender categories but also, "[t]his classification means that the two genders are considered opposite" (p.69). Such an oppositional analysis, not only differentiates women as the 'other' in relation to men but also, fails to

acknowledge gender as a fluid social construct in which a variety of diversifying identities are formed.

For Gaskell and Taylor (2003), this mainstream curricular conceptualization of gender suggests that gender equity means "the *same results* between boys and girls" (p.166). This specific 'gender equity' discourse takes shape throughout recent Canadian news media to portray schools as "nurturing, feminine domain[s]", where boy's academic needs are not reflected (Part 2, We Can't Tolerate Failing Boys, Globe and Mail Oct.18th, 2010). As a result, gender related narratives are often appropriated for curricular recapitulations of patriarchal dominance (Bryson & Castell, 1993).

Crocco (2006) stresses that the "shifting landscape of discourse" related to educational and curricular notions of gender have enabled a "new discursive representation" of 'women as the problem' to emerge (p. 175). In this case, Crocco (2006) maintains that representing women as 'the problem with gender inequality' is a common post-feminist backlash discourse that frames curricula. Such a discourse articulates that "the battle for 'girls' has been won, that 'girls' have had their day, and now it is time to turn attention and resources to boys" (p.175). Thus, for Crocco (2006), the dichotomous and individualistic focus inferred by this specific discourse is the result of social and institutional ignorance failing to "see" oppression "systemically" (p.185). But feminists also contest such hegemonic conceptualization of gender throughout curricula for being essentializing and homogenous (De Lauretis, 1990).

E. The Arrival of Intersectionality & Feminist Critiques of its Curricular Use

Many postcolonial and antiracist feminists argue that mainstream notions of gender primarily benefit a white social justice agenda. Some of these feminist scholars demonstrate how public schooling and its curricula are structured by interlocking systems of racism, classism,

heterosexism, ableism and sexism (hooks, 1994a; Peters & Sinnithamby, 2010; Razack, 1998).

For instance, hooks (2003) stresses that the mainstream and curricular focus on gender privileges

and inequities within a patriarchal society preoccupies itself with the ways in which women are

"economically disenfranchised". This type of focus fails to account for the ways in which racism,

white supremacy, heteronormativity and ableism are interconnected with patriarchy and

influence one's social class status (p.144).

In response to these monolithic gender narratives, Kimberly Crenshaw introduced the

concept known as 'intersectionality' in the late nineteen nineties. The arrival of this concept was

a response to mainstream institutional feminism's failure to address the "experiences and

struggles of women of colour" and to demonstrate how oppression always operates as a nexus of

domination (Davis, 2008, p.68).

To use Kathy Davis' (2008) definition of the term, "intersectionality refers to the

interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social

practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these

interactions in terms of power" (p.68). For Davis (2008), the concept of intersectionality is the

current 'buzzword' throughout many post-secondary women's studies programs, where its

conceptual framework, definition and application are debated amongst many scholars and

researchers. Yet, despite these contentions, Cynthia Levine-Rasky (2011) notes that

intersectionality is a commonly used concept throughout academia.

Knudsen (2005) suggests that the challenge with textbooks and lesson plans taking up

intersectionality is similar to mainstream curricular representations of gender—it becomes over

simplified. "Textbooks", she claims, have difficulties "in handling the complexity of

intersectionality [because they] are too 'small' in the sense that they have to reduce the narratives

into a few stories" (p.70). Jasbir Puar (2007, 2008) however, asserts that intersectionality risks

processes of 'othering' through its demand to 'know' the interdependency between various

identities, which first must be cleaved, named, and stabilized. She also cautions that such

identities are often taken out of context without considering the various epistemological

frameworks in which they are defined. Thus, "the constant changes within categories and

identities," as Knudsen (2005) suggests, makes it difficult to represent intersectionality. A reason

for this being is because feminists, such as myself, understand that gendered, raced, classed,

(dis)able-bodied and sexualized identities cannot be easily 'summarized' (Knudsen, 2005, p.70).

However, after examining various Canadian textbooks on race and race-relations, Levine-

Rasky (2011) claims that intersectionality was usually included as a three or four part model,

where categories are reduced to simplified notions of race, class and gender, and occasionally

ethnicity. Moreover, Nelson & Pang (2006) write that social studies curricula often makes

mention of various identity categories, yet fail to provide a clear definition of what the terms

mean and how they have been historically used. These authors scrutinize social studies curricula

for lacking categorical analyses, where there is often no mention of the discursive processes (i.e.

racialization) in which identities are constructed and formed.

For Bryson and Castell (1993), the reification and consolidation of identity categories for

educational purposes is contradictory to feminist research paradigms that seek to demonstrate

their constructedness. However, Jiwani (2006) stresses that we must be careful when

emphasizing the social constructions of identity in scholarship because the arbitrariness of

identity implies that systems of oppression, such as racism and sexism, 'are not real'. Instead she

urges that feminists recognize the discursive, physical and symbolic violence implicated in the

process of identity construction throughout our everyday lives. Drawing on Stuart Hall, Jiwani

(2006) argues that there is a link between power, differences and representation. Thus, many feminists ask us to remain critical about the ways in which certain social issues are represented throughout the curriculum (Knudsen, 2005).

F. Discursive Processes of 'Othering': Imperialist/Colonialist Representations of Difference

Many feminists are also critical about how the 'other' is constructed and represented as various raced, classed, gendered and sexual identities within the school curriculum (Clark, 2005; Crocco, 2006; McNich, 2009). Here, some critical scholars claim that the power to name, classify and represent identity differences for the sake of 'knowledge' production is a colonial discursive technique "deeply implicated in the operations of… imperialism" (Hall, 2000, p.107). Moreover, similar to the naturalizing affects of 'gender codes', 'fixed' curricular representations of identity 'differences' can be recognized as signifying practices used to normalize and reinstate hegemony (Hall, 2000). In turn, feminists are attentive to the ways in which the curriculum discursively sets up, what Hall (2000) defines in his work, an allegorical boundary between the 'normal self' ('us') and the 'deviant other' ('them').

For instance, antiracist feminists, Thijiba Sinnithamby and Samantha Peters (2010) stress that use of various racial, class, gender and sexual identity differences towards "didactic practices" is problematic for several reasons. Firstly, they stress that discourses pertaining to identity "fall into the trope of tokenization, essentialism, generalization, homogenization and ahistoricism" (p.174). In turn, these tropes provide the discursive basis to which us/them binaries are established and identity stereotypes become legitimized.

Secondly, discursive representations of various racial, sexual, classed and (dis)abled identities within the curriculum are not only over simplified and trivialized in their portrayals, but also, such inclusions serve a "consumptive focus". Building on the work of Boler, Peters and

Sinnithamby (2010) explain that 'others' and 'their histories' are merely included in curricula as a means of satisfying the 'demands to know' the 'other' (p. 174). For these authors, the public school curriculum often colonizes differences for the sake of imperial hegemonic knowledge production. Consequently, feminists caution about the ways in which imperial and colonial discursive formations about the 'other' frame certain representations throughout the curriculum. In this case, many feminists ask us to critically examine how racism is discursively reproduced through such policy documents (Peters & Sinnithamby, 2010; McNich, 200).

G. Discursive Techniques & the Curricular Legitimation of Racism: Racializing 'Others'

Nelson and Pang (2006), suggest that textbooks within the social sciences only mention issues pertaining to race and racism with a focus on history, where racism is treated as a past historical event between individuals that has already been resolved. But when race and racial differences are mentioned, such representational discourses take on anthropological and/or Orientalist (Said, 1979) discursive forms. Moreover, Nelson and Pang (2006) also suggest that textbooks "either have a limited discussion of racism or race or completely ignore…the issues" (p.130). Thus, these authors argue that institutional racism is normalized and socially accepted *through* the social studies curriculum for example, where colonialist and imperialist discursive techniques simultaneously deny racism and legitimize racist ideologies.

For Razack (1998) however, representational discourses about "'others' are instead, message[s] of racial inferiority…more likely to be *coded in the language of culture* rather than biology" (p.19). Similarly, Schick and McNich (2009) indicate that the curriculum often portrays racialized groups as culturally inferior rather than biologically inferior, as was the case in older textbook depictions. For this research paper, I utilize these critiques to examine discursive processes of racialization, even if there is no explicit mentioning of race and/or racism.

H. <u>Defining Curriculum in Canada as Eurocentric</u>

Feminists suggest that the curriculum needs to be contextualized in relation to a Canadian colonial history in order to understand how public schooling is still implicated with a legacy of residential schooling (Bannerji, 2000; Monture-Angus, 1995; Pomeroy, 2010). Peters and Sinnithamby (2010) argue that the colonization of Aboriginals in Canada is constantly ignored *and* perpetuated by provincially standardized curricula. Likewise, Cyndy Baskin (2008) stresses that provincial curricula in Canada excludes Aboriginal views of history and diverse methods of learning (p. 29). However, after conducting research with various Aboriginal students in Ontario, Baskin maintains that some of these students articulated a lack of trust, or sense of doubt, in the 'accurate', unbiased and unproblematic representation of such knowledge(s).

Tara Goldstein (2000) asserts that the fundamental problem with Ontario's secondary curriculum is that *it is* a Eurocentric curriculum. For Goldstein and other feminists, a Eurocentric curriculum is oppressive because it is exclusive. In this case, the Eurocentric curriculum is organized by knowledge(s), materials and practices that privilege certain 'preferred persons,' most of whom are white, heterosexual, middle-class and able-bodied males (Portelli et al., 2007). Such privileging works to secure power for those who are seen as the 'traditional' founders of the Canadian nation-state (Bannerji, 2000; Jiwani, 2006; Portelli et al., 2007).

But because Eurocentrism is a cultural hegemony so deeply ingrained within Canadian institutions, as Comeau (2007) suggests, imperial and colonial discursive formations pervade many curricula. Therefore, scholars such as Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, (1994) ask us to be attentive to Eurocentrism as an "ideological substratum" that takes the "form of vestigial thinking"…and structures *contemporary* practices and representations" (p.2). Such Eurocentrism

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also structures the 'common-stock knowledge' used to 'educate' youth about identity, (in)equality and privilege (Dei, 2007a; Jiwani, 2006).

I. <u>Considering All Sides of the Representation Equation</u>

Jiwani (2006) writes that part of feminist research works to decode and deconstruct representations of 'others' in order to recognize how the dominant and 'unnamed self' is discursively established in opposition. However, for Levine-Rasky (2011), an analysis of dominance is often lacking throughout mainstream representations of intersectionality within the curriculum. She claims that the focus on individual 'differences' and oppression without addressing how these issues 'co-exist' alongside of domination, affords systems of power to persist. Moreover, Levine-Rasky (2011) writes that the disavowal of an analysis on privilege and domination is contradictory to the birth of intersectionality—a framework introduced to theorize the effects of oppression caused by the interlocking nature of power.

Therefore, the school curriculum often functions as a 'regime of truth' (Foucault, 1980), which validates imperialist and colonialist 'knowledge' and practices throughout public schooling as 'common sense'. Curriculum policy documents afford feminists like myself to attempt, as Razack (1998) maintains, opportunities to name "the organizing frames, the conceptual formulas, the rhetorical devices that disguise and sustain elites [so that] we can begin to develop responses that bringing us closer to social justice" (p.16). If we do not 'locate' and subvert dominant discourses and practices that attempt to 'make sense' of our realities within their institutional frameworks, then hegemonic knowledge(s) will go unchallenged.

J. <u>The Danger of 'Co-Opting' Feminist Issues/ Knowledge(s) & Miss G__ Politics</u>

For the Miss G__Project however, working towards social justice means bringing feminist knowledge(s) that have been historically excluded from Ontario curricula into

secondary public schooling. This group wants to contribute to social change by providing a safe

space for students to question the status quo by critically discussing the ways in which power and

oppression impact their everyday lives. In so doing, the Miss G__ Project envisions this course

to "address the intersectionality of gender oppression, focusing on racism, sexism, classism,

issues of sexuality and ability" as they interlock "within a 'white supremacist capitalist

patriarchal framework'" (Miller, 2008, p. 17; The Miss G__ Project, 2007). As a certified teacher

with research focusing on feminism and the history of education in Ontario, active group

member Michelle Miller (2008) indicates that this course is a much-needed inclusion at the high

school level towards combating oppression.

Nonetheless, she is also worried about its institutionalization. Drawing on the work of

Rebick and Roach, Miller (2008) stresses, "the problem has been, as soon as you get to the point

where the government starts to recognize that they have to deal with the issues [posed by

feminists], a process of co-option begins" (p.115). 'Co-option', as Rebick and Roach define it in

Miller's (2008) work, is the depoliticizing and 'professionalization' of feminism—"dressing up"

our politics for the public, media and government to accept (p.115). For Miller (2008), the

institutional and curricular 'co-option' of social issues and feminist knowledge(s) proposed by

the group, "could interrupt the possibility of having a truly transformative feminist presence in

schools" (p.22). Although the institutionalization of social justice agendas is a tension already

faced by many social justice groups throughout public schooling, Miller (2007) is particularly

concerned about this process based on the ways in which the Miss G__Project 'packaged' their

feminist activism.

On their pre 2011 website, Miss G__members indicated that "'high-up' bureaucrat[s] at

the Ministry called [their proposed course] a course for girls [and] as part of the backlash against

anything that empowers women (like with saaaay, feminism)", women's studies is stigmatized as being 'anti-male' (Miss G__Project, 2007). Thus, considering the reality that many policy makers, stakeholders and interests groups involved in curricula construction in Ontario are avowedly anti-feminist, the group consciously decided to appropriate hyper feminine, whitewashed and heteronormative characteristics during their campaign (Miller, 2007). Miller (2008) claims that such a lobbying technique might have made feminism 'more palatable' for the Ministry of Education— enabling the 'success' of getting their proposed course approved.

However, she is critical about the implications these campaigning strategies could have on the politics surrounding their course objectives and feminist mandate. 'Diluting' feminism as a means of establishing a 'dutiful daughter' relationship with the Ontario Ministry of Education, she stresses, could result in the implementation of a depoliticized and diluted "women and history course" that fails to challenge the status quo (p.22). For Miller (2008), this potentiality is "worse than having no women's studies course at all" (p.14). Many other feminists in relation to post-secondary mainstream women's studies courses and programs have reiterated similar claims and concerns.

K. 'Add and Stir Feminism': Mainstream Imperial Emancipatory Discourses

Some feminists argue that these programs are structured by a white curriculum, and in turn fail to have any social impact both inside and outside what some scholars call, the 'ivory towers' of schooling (hooks, 2000, p.110; Razack, 1999, p. 46). M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty (2010) claim that the institutionalization of feminism has "quantified it for consumption within the global marketplace of ideas" (p. xiv). This has resulted in what Alexander (2005) calls 'add and stir feminism'—a trivialized version of feminism that fails to challenge domination, yet employed by elite powers for the building of empire.

Alexander (2005), Mohanty (2003) and Razack (1998, 2008) elaborate on this issue, suggesting that some mainstream discourses that claim to be feminist, are often acquiesced with racist, classist and sexist stereotypes. These authors caution against the imperial deployment of 'rescue narratives' that have been heralded in 'the name of feminism' to justify the 'war on terror' and mobilize a white supremacist-capitalist-hetero-patriarchal 'new world order'. Thus, feminists like myself need to be attentive to educational and curricular discourses that 'pass' as 'progressive' yet remain aligned with Eurocentric agendas (Comeau, 2007; Dei, 2007a). But what gets deemed as being 'transformative' must also be examined on a micro level (Carr, 2007).

L. <u>The Delivery of Feminist Knowledges: Unpredictable, Imperative and Concerning</u>

Many critical and educational scholars suggest that the transmission of knowledge depends on teacher subjectivities and how course content is engaged with, reflected on, interpreted, and disseminated pedagogically (Crocco, 2007; Nelson & Pang, 2007, Razack, 1998). Miss G__members are concerned about this process of knowledge transmission. This is because, despite its content deriving from—and being related to— feminism, members indicate that this does not necessarily mean that this 'Gender Studies' course will be delivered by teachers in 'a feminist way' (Miller, 2008).

Similarly, program specialist of the Ontario Pay Equity Commission, Sandra Tam (2009), claims that secondary school teachers in Ontario rely heavily on the course content and 'teacher prompts' in structuring their "class activities" (p.2). In her 'Gender Studies' course feedback paper, she articulates her concerns about the "selection and framing" of certain "questions and examples" throughout the first 'Gender Studies' course draft (p.2). Furthermore, she stresses that the ways in which the 'teacher prompts' are currently written, are "uneven" in

applying gender to specific examples because they do not "promote thinking about intersectionality" (p.2). But as I discussed in my review of the literature, intersectionality is a complicated conceptualization of power, oppression and identity, and needs to be understood in relation to larger structures of domination.

The Miss G__Project (2007), recognizes the interdependency between identity construction and structural domination, asserting that they envision this proposed course to "explore the interlocking natures of various of kinds of prejudice and oppressions" in relation to identity ("Home", ¶4). However, as many postcolonial, critical race and feminist scholars have explained throughout the literature review I provided, there are serious limitations and consequences resulting from institutional and curricular use/conceptualizations of such issues.

M. Acknowledging the Political Realities Surrounding Curriculum Construction

Moreover, despite Miss G__'s efforts, their feminist objectives envisioned for this course may never be fully met. The construction of this course at the Ministry level in Ontario is a collaborative process that does not always consider suggestions posed by various social justice groups (Carr, 2007). The political reality in which this course is developed, involves the interests (which are generally anti-feminist) of various stakeholders (Miller, 2008). Consequently, this course is not 'owned' by the Miss G__Project, nor is it intended to represent the feminist knowledge(s) proposed by the group. Rather, this course is to become part of a coherent secondary educational program designed to satisfy set provincial standards.

This first draft of the 'Gender Studies' curriculum policy document only addresses part of what Ontario's high school programs do. Therefore, I utilize this research paper to make a discourse analysis from my particular theoretical framework. I cannot predict the ways in which teachers and students could engage with this course draft, or how they might translate it. Instead,

I am interested in examining how this draft's course content is reflective and/or contradictory to the Miss G__Project's feminist mandate. I am also interested in analyzing how 'discourses of domination' are represented throughout this draft. As such, I plan to situate and address the ways in which the content put forth by this document is 'not innocent' in terms of the ways in which it perpetuates relations of power. But in order to do so, I must first explain how antiracist and postcolonial feminist theory inform my use of an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist theoretical framework.

CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I define an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist theoretical framework. I first explain how an intersectional and interlocking framework applies to discourse. I then discuss this framework in relation to an antiracist feminist lens. Finally, I explain how I have constructed my framework in a way that helps me approach the complexity of discursive power.

A. <u>Introducing an Intersectional and Interlocking Theoretical Framework</u>

Utilizing the critiques made by many feminists throughout my review of the literature, I intend to use an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist theoretical framework to inform my discourse analysis because it is an important aspect of my identity politics. Moreover, it is a framework valorized by the Miss G__Project as part of their political mandate.

Razack (2008) argues that "systems [of oppression] *are* each other and they give content to each other…" and we need to recognize that systems of racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism and classism reinforce each other (p.62). Here, Razack insists that systems of oppression operate as one overarching structure of dominance. These interlocking systems materialize

intersectionally at the micro level within a specific context (Dei, 2007b). In terms of discourse, Jiwani (2006) maintains that interlocking systems of power structure our everyday discourses. She therefore urges us to examine how these systems intersect to form particular 'common sense understandings' of our social realities.

However, Razack (2008) explains, that an intersectional and interlocking analysis is often wrought with difficulty because of the limits of language itself. An intersectional and interlocking approach acknowledges that language is successive. Thus, my 'entry points' for making an intersectional and interlocking analysis depends on how I choose to read and interpret the different ways discursive themes are represented throughout the course draft. Here, Bowleg (2008) suggests that it is the researcher's responsibility to interpret how sex, gender, race and class intersect within their specific field of study and how social inequalities are related to these discursive categories. Therefore, my experiences and subjectivities shape my intersectional and interlocking theoretical framework (Patton et al., 2010). I explain in the subsequent section how I plan on utilizing my antiracist political subject positions as an additional conceptual lens.

B. <u>An Intersectional and Interlocking Anti-Racist Feminist Framework</u>

Razack (2003) suggests that an antiracist feminist lens seeks to examine how power is both intersecting and interlocking through an examination of the interconnected relationships among race, gender, sexuality, class and colonialism. In this case, an antiracist feminist lens utilizes critical race and postcolonial theory as a discursive strategy that attempts to "disrupt the hegemonic ways of seeing" that become (re)produced through curricular mediums (Razack, 1998, p.10).

As a means of engaging this discursive deconstructive practice, we must acknowledge that colonialism is pervasive, naturalized and engrained within our Canadian social imaginary.

Many postcolonial and critical race feminist scholars assert that colonialism is a self-legitimating hegemony that shapes our discourses, practices and social relations throughout public schooling in Canada (Comeau, 2006; Mohanty, 2003; Peters & Sinnithamby, 2010). Colonialism can also be defined as a discursive practice that utilizes certain techniques of appropriation and codification to "colonize the constitutive complexities that characterize the lives" of various people around the world (Mohanty, 2003, p. 19). As a system of domination, colonialism sustains patriarchy, capitalism, whiteness and heterosexism. Consequently, it is my objective to demonstrate how these systems interconnect at certain points throughout the course draft. In order to do so, I will now explain how I conceptualize my intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist framework.

C. Applying My Theoretical Framework to Discursive Practices of Domination

Colonialism utilizes institutional systems to (re)produce certain kinds of knowledge about 'others'. In turn, such knowledge works to normalize discursive regimes that create hierarchies of racialized, classed, sexualized and gendered representations. Thus, I use an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist framework to (re)read the representations created through such discourses. This helps me to examine how such representations function as imperial discursive processes of inferiorization ('othering').

Furthermore, I examine the interconnectedness of race, class, gender, sexuality and colonialism by employing an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist theoretical framework, in order to deconstruct such discursive regimes of power. In turn, I consider intersections of whiteness, able-bodiness, hegemonic masculinity/femininity, heteronormativity and middle-classness when rereading representational discourses relating to various social issues. I assert that such deconstructive work can help to illuminate the ways in

which these (in)visible 'fields of power' interconnect to construct curricular discursive themes (Levine-Rasky, 2011, p. 239).

Lastly, I am interested in the ways in which this 'Gender Studies' course draft addresses and/or denies the existence of certain oppressions, and in turn, the systemic pervasiveness of violence as a material consequence of interlocking structures of domination. My intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist framework also examines *the lack of an intersectional and interlocking approach to topics of study throughout the draft.* Doing so helps demonstrate how certain social issues have been 'co-opted' and represented in ways that may contribute to a continuum of normalized violence.

To summarize, postcolonial and critical race feminist theory enriches my use of an intersectional and interlocking analysis. Drawing upon such scholarship helps me trace the ways in which race, class, gender and sexuality, work as "loci of oppression and sites of difference" when they are articulated within their institutional structures (Dei, 2007b, p. 194). In turn, 'common stock knowledges' that attempt to 'make sense' of these loci *are* discourses of interlocking domination. I am interested in examining how they discursively interconnect and manifest throughout the draft. I am critical about the ways in which curricular expressions of 'knowledge' contribute to the continual discursive legitimation of domination, inferiorization and imperialism as "positive social acts" (Schick, 2009, p.118). Therefore, embracing the complexity encompassing my theoretical framework is imperative. Such an integrated theoretical framework, as Dei (2007b) argues," necessarily assume[s] non-unified, inconsistent and unequal social effects" of discursive power (p.194). As such, I intend on explicating how the course draft communicates and 'fixes' a discourse of domination (Jiwani, 2006).

But suggesting that curricular discourses attempt fixed meaning, should not imply that certain meanings cannot be resisted and suspended (Shepard, 2009). Rather, my framework helps me to identify, problematize and challenge the content put forth by the 'Gender Studies' course draft when conducting a feminist discourse analysis. And yet I contend, a feminist discourse analysis is in itself a discursive practice that attempts to subvert imposing hegemonic ideologies embedded within institutional governmental systems. In the next chapter, I discuss my methodology in conducting a feminist discourse analysis, as well as outline the scope and sequencing of my methodological framework.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

In this chapter I define what a feminist discourses analysis is, and why it is my methodology of choice. I also discuss my data sources and how they were collected. I then explain how I have organized and analyzed my data.

A. <u>Feminist Research/ Feminist Discourse Analysis</u>

Despite feminist debates surrounding 'appropriate methods' of conducting research, Cosgrove (in Leavy 2007a) asserts that there is no 'one way to do' feminist research. Although there is extensive scholarship on feminist research practice, Cosgrove maintains that feminist research methods are self-reflexive, critical of power dynamics, interdisciplinary and experimental (excerpt in Leavy, 2007a). For my methodology, I conduct a feminist discourse analysis. I define a feminist discourse analysis as a research method that recognizes that power is discursive, and thus, examines the ways in which domination is enacted through text, language and talk (Van Dijk, 2001). I intend to problematize discourses put forth by the course draft and how they construct certain gendered, classed, sexual, (dis)able-bodied and racialized identities (Shepard, 2009).

As this course draft operates as a 'regime of truth' within a Euro-colonial, white supremacist, patriarchal heteronormative institutional framework, I analyze discursive strategies used to construct both objects and subjects for the sake of 'knowledge' consumption (Leavy, 2007a). I maintain that various interlocking oppressions are (re)produced by the ways in which certain topics of study are represented. In turn, these representations are themselves imperial/colonial social constructions of intersecting and interconnected dominant discourses.

B. Data Sources

I use the Ontario Ministry of Education's first course draft of the curriculum policy documents titled: Gender Studies, Grade 11 University/College Preparation as one of my main objects of study. However, in order to examine how this course draft does and/or does not take up the Miss G__Project's course proposed tenets, I utilize the pre and post 2011 Miss G__Project websites as my other main sources of data. I will compare the course draft with what is put forth on these two websites as a methodological strategy for answering my first research question.

One secondary source of data that I use for this study is Sandra Tam's (2009) 'Gender Studies' course feedback paper. This source of data is not an object of study. Rather, I reflect back on some of the comments made by Tam to build on some of her suggestions from my own theoretical perspective. I also use various media publications and feminist scholarship to contextualize my analysis and to help support some of my arguments to address my second question.

C. Data Collection

I was able to retrieve the draft of the 'Gender Studies' curriculum policy document through a link sent to me by the Miss G__Project's mailing list back in 2009. The draft was posted on a curriculum review website, but shortly after, the site was dismantled. I saved a .pdf

version of the course draft to my hard drive and have attached a copy of it in my appendices (see page 65). I am able to access the Miss G__Project's 2011 website online. However, in order to access the pre 2011 website, a link is provided through the 'get involved/teachers resources' section on their new website. This link redirects me to their older website. I have provided a table in my appendices that outlines the groups, 'course objectives' and 'suggested topics of study' from both the 2011 and pre 2011 websites. Doing so helps me explore if the course draft engages with (or not) with these points.

Furthermore, I was able to access Sandra Tam's (2009) 'Gender Studies' course feedback paper from the Pay Equity Commission's website. This document outlines her conceptualization of this draft's limitations and makes suggestions for improvement. I collected other media sources, such as The Member Magazine of Ontario's ETFO titled, 'VOICE', which I retrieved from the Faculty of Education's faculty library at the University of Ottawa.

D. Data Analysis

In order to make an attempt at answering my first research question, I use the Miss G__Project's 'course objectives', and 'suggested topics of study' from table 1. As such, table 1 is made into two columns, where I have listed Miss G__'s tenets with numbers. I use this table (re)read against the 'Gender Studies' course draft—focusing on the 'specific' and 'overall expectations', teacher 'prompts' and learning methodology from the 'Research and Inquiry Skills' section.

Since the course draft provides a letter/number point system (ex. A1.1), I use this system to reference *where* the draft takes up Miss G__'s tenets when answering my first research question. Since I analyze the group's proposed tenets and the course draft in chronological order, I organize my answers chronologically with the same number system that I use in table 1. I also

indicate during certain points throughout question one, that there are some issues/topics that I flesh out more when approaching my second research question.

I then go back to the draft and do another (re)reading of the draft in answering my second research question. I deconstruct and decode 'specific' and 'overall expectations' and 'teacher prompts' throughout each section of the four course strands (see first page of draft) using my intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial theoretical framework. This allows me to problematize the ways in which this course draft's content is being communicated. I examine representational discourses pertaining to various social issues, where I let my theoretical framework guide my (re)reading of the course in chronological order. I then conclude this major research paper with offering a synthesis of my analysis, where I highlight discursive themes in relation to the body of literature I provided in chapter one. Finally, I share some suggestions for future use of this course draft.

CHAPTER IV: ANALYSIS/ RESPONDING TO FIRST RESEARCH QUESTION

This chapter offers an analysis of the ways in which the first draft of Ontario's new secondary 'Gender Studies' course engages with the Miss G__ Project's proposed tenets. In the sections following, I use table 1 to (re)read against the course draft in order to demonstrate where and how it takes up and/or falls short of Miss G__'s suggested 'course objectives' and 'suggested topics of study'.

A. <u>'Gender Studies' Draft's Engagement With Miss G__'s 'Course Objectives'</u>

The Miss G__ Project's proposes that this 'Gender Studies' course analyzes gender and 'its inherent' intersections with race, class, ability, sexual identity and location. This is the first 'course objective', which is seldom reflected throughout the course draft. I will problematize the ways in which intersectionality and/or an intersectional approach is represented (and/or not) in

response to my second research question. Without undermining the possibility that students and teachers can encourage each other to think intersectionally about issues put forth by the draft, it only makes explicit reference to intersectionality/ an intersectional approach in three sections.

In section A 1.3, the 'interaction' between 'gender identity' and 'other factors' is promoted in binary terms and reduced to a four-part model. Gender norms are related to either masculinity or femininity, and only include race, class and disability 'statuses' as 'interacting' forces. This model does not address sexual identity and/or location, and thus fails to acknowledge that race, class and disability are also constitutive of each other. In D 1.1 'intersectionality' is referred to as a 'specific expectation' in the 'research and inquiry skills' section. In this section, students are 'expected' '*to use terms* relating to gender theory or equity issues such as 'intersectionality'. I argue that merely using/including the *word intersectionality* is a superficial inclusion of a complex theoretical framework, and I will return to this assertion near the end of the next chapter.

The second 'course objective' proposed by the Miss G__Project is a recognition of the various ways in which 'women from diverse backgrounds have been made invisible through different interacting oppressions of traditional curricula and attempts to uncover their stories'. However, the course draft does not acknowledge that women have been made invisible through the ways in which curricula is oppressive to women. Rather, in sections A 3.4 and C 1.1 students are 'expected' to analyze gender roles throughout social spheres (such as public schooling) and research social action groups. From investigating social justice groups, students could be exposed to the ways in which the institution of public schooling and its respective curriculum are simultaneously a source of inequality and a tool to combat injustices.

Moreover, the draft does not address the ways different kinds of oppression 'interact' throughout the curricula. Although A 3.4 explicitly asks students 'how sexism can be addressed in schools', there is no acknowledgement of the ways in which sexism is implicated in patriarchy and interacts with other oppressions. Racism, classism, heterosexism and ableism are not mentioned at any point throughout the draft, let alone examined in congruence with sexism.

Miss G__'s third 'course objective' is to enable students' critical awareness about gender as a social construction and how 'it operates in institutions and cultural contexts in their own lives'. There are points throughout the draft where 'teacher prompts' and 'overall/specific expectations' are vague, homogenous, essentializing, limited and problematic. Nonetheless, the draft seeks to facilitate critical thinking about gender as a social construction. A gender perspective/analysis is applied to social roles, norms, identities and institutions. But in terms of looking at gender inequality from a cultural, structural and systemic point of view, the draft falls short of engaging with this proposed objective.

The fourth and last 'course objective' suggests that feminist, racial and sexual justice movements in education are 'deeply related to the availability' of the knowledges utilized by 'Gender Studies'. Many of these movements remain invisible within traditional curricula, thus 'Gender Studies' seeks to make these knowledges, and histories of injustices 'visible'. As such, the Miss G__Project envisions this course to give students the tools to address the institutionalization of oppression and work towards making social change (Miss G__Project, 2007). The only explicit 'visibility' of these knowledges is in sections B 1.1-3 and C 2.1-3, where historical 'waves of feminism' and the successes, and challenges faced by certain feminist and women's groups, are framed as 'social events' rather than ongoing social movements. By 'describing the context and conditions underlying struggles' (see draft, p. 3, ¶ B 1) of these

movements, students might explicate how feminist knowledges have been made invisible through the provincial curricula. But overall, the draft does not explicitly indicate how teachers might take this up with students.

B. Gender Studies Draft Engagement with the Miss G__ Project's 'Suggested Topics of Study'

Topic one, '*learning/unlearning gender: what is gender?*' is taken up throughout the draft as the main focus on the study of gender. The 'foundations course strand' introduces gender related concepts, encouraging students to recognize that gender is socially constructed. The draft then expands on gender norms, roles, identities and inequality throughout the other three course strands. Tam (2009) suggests the draft needs to incorporate clear definitions relating to gender, sex and sexual identity by drawing on various disciplines such as sociology, psychology and anthropology (p. 2). I agree that most of the terminology used in this draft should provide teachers and students with definitions before expecting them to apply these terms analytically. However, in reference to the Miss G__ Project's mandate, I claim that it is of political importance that the draft explicitly mentions that some of the terms and theories, which it represents, are related to feminism. I explain in chapter seven that some representational discourses pertaining to gender are problematic and contradictory to the Miss G__ Project's feminist anti-oppressive politics.

Topic two, '*what is sexism? What is equality? Do we have it?*' is taken up in section A 3.1-3, where issues relating to power and sexism are represented. Although students are asked if Canada is a sexist society in 'prompt' A 3.4 and why women would exhibit sexist behaviour in 'prompt' A 3.3, the terms/words 'sexism' and 'equality' are not clearly defined. The draft does exemplify how social inequalities are informed by gender stereotypes, but sexism seems to be applied to interpersonal social relations between men and women only. Also, and as I will

continue to flesh out in the next chapter, patriarchy is absent throughout the draft. Therefore, issues relating to sexism and inequality are not contextualized by this social condition.

Topic three, '*discussions on sexual differences, social constructions of femininity masculinity, homophobia, heterosexism, heteronormativity, homosexuality, transgender and intersexsed identities*', are incorporated into various 'expectations' and 'prompts' throughout the draft. In sections A 1.1-3, students are 'expected' to examine the differences between sexual identity, transgender, transsexual masculinity and femininity. These terms are then used in proceeding sections, but intersexed identities are not mentioned. Discussions related to sexual differences make up most of section B 1.3 and the beginning of B 3.1. Although words such as homophobia, heterosexism and heteronormativity are not included, homophobia is alluded to in section B 1.3 where the 'rights of sexual minorities' are discussed.

Topic four, '*self-image, healthy body image, healthy relationships, sex and sexuality*', is included throughout section A 2.1-3, where the draft 'expects' students to discuss the impact of media portrayals on men and women. Sex and sexuality are broad topics, but seem to be referenced in sections B 1.1, B 1.2 and B 1.3. Here, a gender perspective is being applied to reproductive rights, men's rights in childcare, and LGBTT marriage and adoptions rights. Sex workers are represented in 'prompt' B 3.3, but only as a means for students to discuss media portrayals of female victims of violence, which I problematize in the next chapter. Issues relating healthy sexual relationships and/or sexual activity are not included.

Topic five, '*violence against women*', is taken up in section B 3 as 'violence prevention'. Gender-based violence, 'violence against women, LGBTT individuals, and those who do not conform to masculine or feminine stereotypes' are only mentioned in a footnote on page four (see draft). Representational discourses about violence against women are included to

demonstrate how 'instances of violence' acted as catalysts, for social movements/change. In this case, violence is represented as interpersonal and individual acts of discrimination—not as a larger social or systemic issue. In turn, I problematize this discursive strategy in chapter seven of this study.

Topic six, '*media literacy*', is taken up as the entire A 2.1 section of the draft, and in section B 3.3. Here, media literacy is represented in relation to gender norms, body image and portrayals of violence. Students are encouraged to think critically and challenge popular representations of identities, but the ways in which 'bodies' are defined limits an analysis of the ways in which media portrayals of certain bodies impacts individuals in different ways.

Topic seven, '*work, histories of women in the workplace, pay-equity, women and poverty*', is included in section B 1.1 in relation to 'equal pay for equal work'. Issues relating to women and poverty are not explicitly mentioned. 'Prompt' A 3 .3 asks students about the glass ceiling' while 'expectation' A 3.1 urges students to describe power relations between men and women in the workplace. Such inclusions lack an intersectional approach and reflect white, middle class social values. In 'prompts' A 1.3 and B 3.3, students are asked to examine gender roles and media portrayals in relation to class 'status' (and other discursive categories), which I problematize in the next chapter.

Topic eight, '*law, and legal issues affecting women around the world*', is limited to sections C 1.1 and B 1.1. Students are 'expected' to 'describe the context in which oppressions caused' by legal structures in the 1960's, mobilized women's liberation. They are also 'expected' in section C 1.1 to explain the accomplishments and barriers faced by women in the fields of law, in which we have been underrepresented. But 'women' in this section is a homogenous representation, which fails to addresses variations of legal barriers faced by a diversity of

women. The draft mentions Muslim Women's Movement in B 1.1 in a list after mentioning 1960's women's liberation movement. However, these are generalized and tokenistic representations of multifaceted movements that are not only situated historically, but also geopolitically.

Topic nine, '*families, marriage and reproductive rights*', is taken up in section B 1.1-3, where such issues are discussed in relation to social movements, same-sex marriage and adoption rights. Topic ten, '*health care and children*' is not explicitly taken up within the draft as one interrelated topic. Rather, issues of inequality related to children are incorporated into discussions and representations regarding adoption rights and childcare between men, women and sexual minorities. Children are mentioned in B 2.1, represented as 'child mail order brides' and victims of globalization. Children in this case, are used to reference the 'rights' of men and women rather than the 'rights' of a child.

Similarly, topic eleven, '*women in the global economy and social policy*', is also represented in section B 2.1, where women involved in the 'globalized economy' are portrayed as victims. Women in policy making is alluded to in sections C 1.1, C 2 and B 1.1 in reference to social movements and the promotion of equality. The word 'policy' itself is not mentioned and seems to be conflated with 'rights'. Thus, the draft lacks an explicit examination of the ways in which women impact social policy or their experiences as policy makers.

Topic twelve, '*GLBTQ social and legal issues (with a focus on Canadian institutions)*', is addressed in section B 1.3 and referred to in a footnote in section B 3.1. In this case, GLBTQ legal and social issues are represented in similar ways as I discussed in relation to topics three and five. Transgender day of Remembrance is mentioned at the end of section B 3.4 in relation to violence prevention. GLBTQ issues are not discussed as they relate to homophobia,

heteronormativity and heterosexism, despite these structures helping to legitimize violence against LBGTQ individuals. Overall, 'the rights of sexual minorities' section is defined in highly heteronormative terms, which I discuss in chapter seven.

Topic thirteen, '*activism and citizenship*', is taken up in various sections throughout the draft. Representations of social actions groups are included in sections B 1.1-3, B 3.1, and C 2.1-3, while section C 3.1-3 focuses on providing students with skills 'to do' their own activism. In terms of citizenship, the draft's use of 'Canadian examples' may communicate a sense of 'national belonging', which I contend, also provides the discursive basis for exclusion. Regardless, it is not clear whether the Miss G__Project intended to complicate notions of citizenship—which is important to feminist, theorizing, as it is a concept fueled by racism, classism, heterosexism and sexism—or reconceptualize it. The focus on social activism and justice movements demonstrates the importance of community and group organizing. However, citizenship is a loaded term neither clearly defined by the Miss G__Project, nor explicitly represented/discussed throughout the draft.

Topic fourteen, '*what are(n't) we teaching/learning in literature, history, and other classes?*', does not seem to be included in the course draft. In terms of addressing the ways in which 'what we are and are not learning in school' impacts social inequality, the draft does not take up this objective directly. That should not suggest that asking students how to address sexism in schools in 'prompt' A 3.4, will not instigate an analysis about the ways in which 'knowledge' and 'information' is interconnected with power. But overall, this topic is not explicitly mentioned.

Likewise, topics fifteen and sixteen, '*what is feminism*' and '*examinations of how classism, racism, heterosexism, ableism and other oppressions interact with sexism*', face similar

representational barriers. These topics are not taken up throughout the draft. Although 'waves' of feminism and feminist movements are referenced, as I had indicated at the beginning of this chapter (section A), there is no inclusion explaining *what feminism is*. Furthermore, sexism is directly referenced and exemplified, especially in sections A 3.1-3, but as I noted earlier, there is no mentioning of racism, classism, heteronormativity or ableism.

Topic seventeen, *'history of various feminisms'*, topic eighteen, '*Canadian feminist icons and signification of these histories today'* and topic nineteen, '*future possibilities for social justice movements*?', are similar topics as they highlight the importance of feminism and feminist activism. Topics seventeen and eighteen are taken up in B 1.1, B 1.3 and C 1.1-3, included as a list of many women's groups and organizations that have had a major influence on making social change (which I had mentioned in relation to topic eight). Black feminisms, womanism, and eco-feminisms are not motioned. Despite the Miss G__ Project's emphasis on including topics related to feminism, the draft also falls short of this proposed tenet.

In response to this first (re)read of the course draft against the Miss G__'s proposed tenets, I suggest that many of the group's objectives and suggested topics *are* taken up within this curriculum policy document. However, this should not suggest that these inclusions align themselves with the group's political mandate. Therefore, in the next chapter I respond to my second research question and problematize each section of the 'Gender Studies' course draft from my intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist framework. I perform another (re)reading from this framework in order to explicate how I recognize these topics to be reflective and/or contradictive to the goals that the Miss G__Project has envisioned for this course.

CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS/RESPONDING TO SECOND RESEARCH QUESTION

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a response to my second research question. I utilize an intersecting and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist theoretical framework to conduct a second (re)reading of the 'Gender Studies' course draft. In turn, I problematize this course draft's content in order to examine the ways in which such representations provide feminist possibilities and/or could potentially reinscribe interlocking oppressions.

Section A 1. <u>The Meaning of Gender and Sex/What It Means When Framed By Dominance</u>

In relation to my theoretical framework, I find 'prompt' A 1.2 to be a crucial question for teachers to ask students because it challenges biological deterministic social assumptions that have historically legitimized gendered hierarchies. 'Prompt' A 1.1 asks students to differentiate between gender role norms and sexual orientation, which I find to be a useful distinction to make in order for students to interrogate gender and sexuality as social constructions. However, this 'prompt' (or any other section within A1), does not acknowledge how these concepts (gender role norms and sexual orientation) are mutually constitutive and in turn, intersect. For feminists like myself, examining the ways in which sexual orientation is stigmatized based on one's gender identity, illuminates how these identities are informed by a heteronormative social and institutional framework. But the entire draft fails to explicitly addresses heteronormativity altogether.

Furthermore, the draft expects students to describe 'the ways in which gender identity and norms may be socially constructed and internalized' (A 1.2) throughout various social spheres. Here, Tam (2009) suggests that the draft's focus on gender identities ignores "gender as an organizing principle that produces inequality" (p.2). From an intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist perspective however, I argue that the social, political and economic climate in which gendered identities become discursively stratified into a hierarchal

instituted system, should be addressed. Without students being 'expected' or 'prompted' to examine the ways in which white dominance, capitalism, heteronormativity and patriarchy inform gender; a more organizational/systemic analysis of it is limited.

Addressing such systems of power would also enrich the intersectional approach that is represented in 'prompt' A 1.3, which asks us about 'differing gender norms' depending on one's 'race, class and disability status'. I argue that the word 'status' articulates a hierarchal organization of identities within these categories. Similar to the question I posed above in response to Tam's course feedback, I ask, how are one's race, class, and disability 'statuses' defined? Without acknowledging the racist, sexist, classist, heterosexist and ablest context in which these 'statuses' and 'norms' are contingent, this prompt could potentially reinscribe stereotypes. Moreover, addressing these systems would afford an understanding of the ways in which certain masculinities and femininities become hegemonic based on the social privileging of certain racial, classed, able-bodied, sexual identities.

Section A 2. Representations of Gender in Media and Popular Culture/'Positive' as Problematic

Sections A 2.1, A 2.2 and A 2.3, situate gender issues in relation to the media and popular culture. The 'specific' and 'overall expectations' and 'teacher prompts' represent/discuss topics that encourage students to think critically about the ways in which our media-dominated society influences the construction of our social realities. Although this section is laden with analytical possibilities, section A 2.2 lacks an *intersectional account* of the ways in which bodies portrayed in the media impacts individual perceptions of ourselves. Tam (2009) suggests that it is "unclear" in this section whether "racialized minorities or disabled bodies are included" (p.2). However, I argue that (in)visible fields of dominance, such as whiteness, compulsory able-bodiness and heteronormativity structure these representational discourses of 'bodies'. Since

"discourses of domination" have the "power to go unnamed", essentialist definitions of male or female bodies that are being referred to in this section could be read as white, heterosexual and able-bodied (Jiwani, 2006, p.5). Therefore, this section contributes to the social privileging and (re)validation of such bodies, which in turn, works to legitimize social hierarchies.

Furthermore, section A 2.3 'expects' students to describe 'positive or transformational representations of gender identity and roles found in the media' and then lists various examples. One example that I find problematic from my theoretical framework is the reference to 'females in positions of authority—judges, secret agents and private investigators in movies' as 'positive media portrayals'. I assert that such examples are not 'positive' but rather, a discursive valorization of hegemonic masculinity. Merely aligning a homogenous definition of female with notions of authority does not challenge the ways in which 'authority' is a gendered and valued concept within our patriarchal society. I suggest that section A 2.3 itself is a trivial inclusion of 'transformative representations'—discursively 'distracting' an analysis away from the normalized and pervasive nature of white supremacist patriarchy.

Section A3. Power Relations and Sexism/Relating Power to Colonialist Patriarchal Backlash

I commend section A 3.3 and A 3.4 for including 'specific expectations' and 'teacher prompts' that provide students with the analytical opportunity to addresses sexism in Canada. Both these sections 'expect' students to understand that sexism is systemic and impacts our individual lives. However, in section A 3.1 students are 'expected' to 'describe common differences in power and privilege' between *homogenous* definitions of men and women' within the home, workplace, organizational and/or 'financial decision making' spheres. Here, I argue that this section reiterates a mainstream capitalistic conceptualization of 'gender equity' because 'common differences' articulates same/similar results between men and women with a focus on

workplace/economic privileges. Moreover, I suggest that a lack of an intersectional approach ignores *how* certain men and women come to occupy positions of power and privilege across race, class, ability and sexual differences.

'Expectation' and 'prompt' A 3.4 encourages students to think about the ways in which sexism manifests both on an individual level and on a systemic level throughout various social domains, which I find imperative to feminist theorizing. 'Prompt' A 3.3 asks 'why women might sometimes exhibit sexist behaviour, followed by a question asking 'what is meant by the glass ceiling?' This 'prompt', may not explicitly mention patriarchy, but it could facilitate an examination of the ways in which women internalize patriarchal oppression when 'competing' for advancements in public domains. However, it does not specify if certain women are sexist towards various other women or towards certain men—which is an issue that is also contingent on racist, classist and heterosexist ideologies.

Furthermore, I suggest that 'prompt' A 3.3 is problematic with its focus of women being the 'ones who exhibit sexist behaviour'. I stress that this particular 'prompt' glosses over the reality that sexism is complex and pervasive oppression implicated in patriarchy. And which has historically legitimized the subordination and violent treatment of many women by certain men. Thus, I argue that this section (A 3.3) discursively undermines the pervasiveness of patriarchy, which is also reinforced by 'expectation' A 3.2. In this case, students are 'expected' to describe the power relations between men and women within matriarchal societies and this section provides a list of names (in section A3.2) of various indigenous groups. Although the inclusion of indigenous knowledges is immensely important within mainstream/standardized curricula that often exclude such histories, I am critical about the ways in which aspects of indigenous culture are represented in this section.

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If an analysis about power relations and sexism are approached with a descriptive inclusion of matriarchal relations, why not also mention patriarchy? I assert that this is particularly important because during Canada's colonial period, patriarchal values of European settlers enabled the inferiorization and deterioration of indigenous matriarchy and culture. The arrival of Euro-Colonial patriarchy justified colonization, where Aboriginal women were stripped of their social status and subjected to various forms of violence. Although in an oppositional binary, acknowledging matriarchy might bring the word 'patriarchy' to mind, I argue that A 3.2 operates as a colonial and patriarchal discursive technique to 'keep' topics of sexism and power relations 'away from' white supremacist patriarchy.

Furthermore, as a mere *descriptive* anthropological approach to power relations and sexism, I read A 3.2 as an imperialist/colonialist discourse. Assuming that power relations between men and women 'are the same' among the eight different indigenous societies listed, ignores the complex relationship between the histories, locations and individual experiences of these groups. As such, cultural relativism is enabled by section A 3.2. In turn, this section legitimizes "anthropologies colonization mission" (Alexander, 2005, p.189).

The complexity of discursive power operating throughout the entire section of A. 3 has me 'on the fence' about the ways in which the draft represents issues relating to sexism. Without exhausting its feminist potential, I claim that this section reads as a discursive manifestation of Euro-Colonial patriarchal power. Therefore, I would caution the ways in which these representational discourses could get folded into anti-feminist backlash agendas and discursive processes of institutional 're-colonization' (Dei, 2006).

Section B 1. <u>The Rights of Women, Men and Sexual Minorities/Who's Rights are 'Right'?</u>

Sections B 1.1 and B 1.2 encourages students to describe the social and political conditions which motivated various feminist, men's and women's social justice movements throughout history. Overall these sections are immensely important for providing students with information regarding the complexities of working towards social change. Furthermore, this entire section enables students to think critically about gender and sexual stereotypes, although the word 'homophobia' is not mentioned. Despite the analytical potential that this section has to offer, there are a few discursive setbacks that I see limiting an examination of the issues introduced.

'Expectation' B 1.3 indicates that students are to analyze the success and challenges of various LGBTT movements. Without downplaying homophobic violence and the subordination of sexual minorities as an ongoing social epidemic, I argue that associating LBGTT rights with family relations, same-sex marriages and adoption rights in section B 1.3, potentially nullifies an examination of the institution of heteronormativity. Also, section B 1.3 provides an essentializing and homogenous account of LBGTT rights and sexual minorities. Which sexual minorities are being referred to? How do race, gender, class and ability inform sexual identities? Thus, the lack of an intersectional analysis also limits an examination of the various structural forces that impact the ways in which sexual identities are formed.

With regards to 'prompt' B 1.3, students are asked to discuss the role Harvey Milk played in promoting gay rights. Here, Tam (2009) urges a "Canadian example" should be referenced such as the 'Person' decision (p.3). Although this legislative example has a long and important history in Canada, Tam also returns the rights of sexual minorities to issues relating to marriage. From my intersectional and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist framework, I suggest that 'prompt' B 1.3 reinforces the image of the 'tolerable queer'. Here, I use Jaspir Puar's (2007)

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notion of the 'homo-national subject', to suggest that the socially accepted queer is usually male, white and upper class. I am not suggesting that Harvey Milk is a 'bad' or insignificant example. Rather, I am cautioning the role that 'prompt' B 1.3 plays in (re)centering LBGTT rights around white, middle-upper class, male interests. And moreover, how the centering of these values impact the perpetual social invisibility of various queer identities, such as lesbian, Trans and intersexed identities, across raced, classed, gendered and (dis)able-bodied differences.

Building on Michelle Miller's (2008) concerns, I find section B 1.1 to be a 'diluted' inclusion of feminism. In this case, feminism is reduced to a 'women and history' sort of 'survey' based inclusion of women's rights and feminism. This should not suggest that a *history* of women's rights and feminist social justice is not 'useful' for critical thinking. Instead, I caution the 'in the past' framing of this section and its potential contribution to post-feminist ideologies. Furthermore, this section (B 1.1) is followed by 'expectation' and 'prompt' B 1.2, where it introduces an examination of issues regarding men's rights and movements seeking to 'improve the male gender role'. Although this section encourages thinking about the roles that men and masculinity play in gender equity movements, this 'expectation' is complicated by 'prompt' B 1.2.

This section (B 1.2) asks students to 'agree' or 'disagree' with men's involvement in pro-feminism, men's liberation, anti-sexism, and organizations supporting male victims of rape and domestic abuse. Although I think this 'prompt' has the potential to help students examine masculinity as a gender construct, I argue that it may also contribute to backlash against the social advancements of women. My reasoning for this is based on the way in which men are represented as 'victims' in section B 1.2. Although certain men *are* victims of hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal violence, the lack of an intersectional and structural framing,

disavows an analysis of how and *which* men come to be victims—which is also contingent on issues of race, racism, sexuality, heterosexism and class and classism. But as the 'prompt' is unclear about which men are victims, and by whom, I claim that this 'prompt' runs the risk of feeding into anti-feminist agendas. As a subsequent section following B 1.1, this particular representation (B 1.2) functions as a competing discourse against feminism and 'the struggle for women's rights'. Consequently, this section discursively 'steers away' from acknowledging positions of male privilege and dominance.

Section B 2. World Issues/ 'Add Global Victims and Stir'

In section B 2, students are asked to analyze 'a range of gender and sex equity issues in developing and newly industrializing societies'. The section as a whole is shorter in length compared to other sections throughout the draft, yet 'crams' a wide range of complex issues into three paragraphs. Although this section addresses important issues relating to globalization (B 2.1), environmental degradation (B 2.2) and 'gender equity promoting' organizations (B 2.3), like Tam (2009), I am critical of the "theoretical 'us and them' effect" this section establishes (p.1). Tam (2009) suggests that this section focuses too much on the "effects on men and women in developing societies" without addressing the ways in which industrial/developed societies "are also affected and "contribute to predicting a racial order" (p.1). I concur that a more 'local' contextualization of global issues would help students recognize the complex ways in which we become implicated in processes of power.

However, if this section is to be rewritten and renamed "something like 'Local Experiences of Inequality in a Global Context", as she recommends, I am not confident that the us/them binary will discursively be alleviated (Tam, 2009, p.1). This is because without including the historical, cultural and geopolitically specific knowledges, histories and

experiences of gender equality within the societies and/or individual being 'analyzed', section B 2.1 runs the risk of ahistoricisizing, and homogenizing people's lives. How can students 'know' gender issues relating to men and women in 'developing societies' if we do not know what gender and/or gender equity might mean within those societies? Although the impact of globalization is detrimental, I insist that B 2.1 reads as an imperialist discourse. Imposing what 'we think we know' about the impact 'our local inequalities' have on a 'global ' scale is an imperialist tactic that could lead to the discursive inferiorization of 'others'—reducing 'sweat shop workers' and 'mail order brides' as 'helpless' objects of study and in 'need of rescue'. This "add global victims and stir perspective", to use Mohanty's (2003) notion, provides the normative Euro-Colonial context and narrative of global issues in mere descriptive terms. This section does not consider the complexity of individual realities and the agencies of people who live them (p.239). Therefore, I caution the role that this particular representational discourse might have towards the legitimation of racist ideologies by discursively (re)producing positions of superiority and inferiority.

Section B 3. <u>Violence Prevention/Discursive Perpetuation of Violence</u>

This section provides information and examples of 'instances of gender-based violence which acted as catalysts for positive change' (B 3.2), so that students can 'understand a range of…violence prevention'. The 'expectations' and 'prompts' in sections B 3.2 and B 3.3, represent 'violence perpetuated by women' and the 'impact on men and women of portrayals of… violence in the media'. Although it is important for students to think critically about how violence is depicted and naturalized through the media, and what sort of action has been done to challenge violence, overall, I find this entire section (B 3) problematic.

Like Tam (2009), I argue that ignoring the violence of rape, violence occurring in intimate relationships, and the "profound effects such violence" has on women, limits an understanding of the pervasiveness of violence (p.3). Tam (2009) also comments on 'prompt' B 3.2, suggesting that using "women's internet bullying or women's malicious gossiping without addressing the male forms of these activities", or referring to violence experienced by LBGT and racialized women "diminishes the effectiveness of a gender analysis of violence" (p.3). Although I agree with her comment, from an intersecting and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist framework, I argue that 'prompt' B 3.2 represents a homogenizing definition of women. Furthermore, the 'prompt' itself, is a gender stereotype. Why is it assumed that women would perpetuate internet/gossip-based violence?

Moreover, I claim that "referring to the violence experienced" by various women, as Tam (2009) suggests, would benefit from a more structural examination (p.3). For instance, 'prompt' B 3.3 asks students what 'effect does the portrayal of violence in the media ha[ve] on its victims?' This 'prompt' continues to ask how female victims are represented in the media and if they 'arouse sympathy.' Then this 'prompt' questions, 'does this sympathy change according to class, religion, race or occupation of the victims?' This 'prompt' concludes by asking, 'what if victims are sex trade workers'? I suggest that the "superior-because-sympathetic" framing of 'prompt' B 3.3 is problematic (Comeau, 2007, p.160). 'Sympathetic knowledge', as Comeau (2007) argues, is an imperialist expression of superiority, which infantilizes 'others' and colonizes the lived realties of various groups of people in order to project imperial 'missionary' fantasies.

Although 'prompt' B 3.3 might enable a critical analysis towards challenging victim blaming narratives across identity differences, I suggest that such an examination is limited.

'Prompt' (B3.3) disavows an analysis of the ways in which class, religion, race and occupation (sex trade) are interrelated and produce variegated manifestations and justifications of violence. Without acknowledging racism, classism, sexism and heterosexism, this 'prompt' could enable the perpetuation of victim blaming discourses, deriving from racist, sexist and classist stereotypes.

Jiwani (2006) claims with her use of Patricia Hill Collins, "while violence certainly seems central to maintaining *separate* oppression…violence may be equally important in structuring *intersections* among these hierarchies (p.15). Therefore, intersections of race and gender put racialized women at the lower end of an intricate hierarchy of white supremacist and patriarchal power—demonstrating how racial and gender oppression interlock in complex ways and make certain female bodies more vulnerable to violence (hooks, 1994b, Jiwani, 2006).

In Canada, young females are the predominate target of violence by younger males. Also, race and ethnicity are indicated to be the most frequent motivation for hate crimes (see Statistics Canada, '*Violent Victimization in Canada, 2009*'; Birch, 2010, p.27). Thus, I find this section to be particularly detrimental as it ignores the systemic pervasiveness of violence, lacks an intersectional and interlocking approach, and discursively contributes to the social justification of a continuum of patriarchal-racist violence. In turn, I ask, how can students begin to examine the ways in which violence prevention can be initiated if the structural forces that are implicated in violence are not addressed?

Section C1. Contributions and Challenges/Women As The 'Problem'

Section C 1 is a fairly short section within the "C. Change Agenda" course strand of the draft. I think including this section nearing the end of the draft helps reiterate the breadth of possibilities available to students towards making social change. However, focusing on the

'accomplishments and challenges' faced by 'significant historical and contemporary individuals in fields in which men of women have been traditionally underrepresented' ignores other forms of underrepresentation. Which men and women have been underrepresented? Who is 'a significant historical/contemporary individual?' What makes them significant? Who decides on their significance? Failing to acknowledge how such (under) representation is implicated in structures of power limits an examination of the ways in which certain 'fields' are defined by various intersecting raced, classed, gendered, sexual and (dis)abled hierarchies.

Furthermore, I want to demonstrate how 'expectations' C 1.2 and C 1.3 are competing discourses through the ways in which they are phrased. C 1.2 urges students to assess the ways "*women* have *affected positive and negative changes…*" in male dominated domains, while C 1.3 'expects' students to "explain the *causes and effects of male under underrepresentation…*" in female dominated domains. Although these sections (C 1.2 and C 1.3) encourage students to think critically about the gendered nature of social arenas, I argue that these sections also contribute to backlash against the social advancements of women throughout various social domains. This is because C 1.2 suggests that women 'are the cause' of positive *and* negative changes within spheres dominated by males—inferring that such domains are 'inherently male-centered'. C 1.3 on the other hand, seems to 'blame' the female centeredness of certain domains *for* male underrepresentation and seemingly 'in need' of male presence. Moreover, these sections (C 1.2 and C 1.3) lack an intersectional approach, providing homogenous definitions of men and women.

Section C2. Empowerment/The Politics of Forgetting

'Expectations' C 2.1, C 2.2 and C 2.3 urge students to demonstrate, evaluate and describe various, strategies, methods and accomplishments made by social justice groups. I assert that this

section communicates the importance of organizing, collective consciousness raising and community building. I find 'prompt' C 2.2 particularly imperative because it asks students to explain the ways in which the Native Women's Association of Canada has 'attempted to address discrimination against Aboriginal Women'.

Although the draft misrepresents this organization in terms of its title (calling it the Canadian Native Women's Association), I am optimistic that students will be confronted with serious issues that are often excluded from—and perpetuated by—mainstream curricula and institutional/state agendas. However, my concern regarding this 'prompt' is the way in which it is phrased. Why does the 'prompt' ask, 'how has the NWAC addressed discrimination' instead of 'what discriminations do Aboriginal women face and how has the NWAV addressed such?' Or 'how *and why* has the NWAC addressed discrimination?' Without acknowledging Canada's colonial history and the racialized, gendered, sexual, and classed inequalities that such a history established, I argue that this 'prompt' ignores the historical and systemic conditions in which the social subordination of Aboriginal women is situated.

Section C 3. <u>Social Action Skills/Prescribed Emancipation?</u>

The entire C 3 section focuses on encouraging students to design, organize, strategize and evaluate various ways in which a 'specific needs related to sex or gender equity' can be addressed and challenged. I commend the curricular valorization of various methods, designs and strategies listed in this section—such as zines, rap songs, petitions, letters, and lobbying, to name a few. I think having this section included in the course draft encourages a creative, critical and communal space for students 'to do' activism.

For feminists such as myself, the ideological distance between theory and practice that has been established by mainstream institutional education is contradictory to feminist research

paradigms. Having this section within the secondary curriculum enables students to engage with "theory as liberatory practice" and use their experiences with 'doing activism' towards producing new/nuanced theories (hooks, 1994a). Although this course draft functions as a standardized curriculum policy document, I hope that the suggested social action skills included in this section are not the *only* strategies 'expected' from students.

Drawing on my experiences of being a teacher's assistant for a post-secondary level women's studies 'activism' course, I am critical about the institutionalization of activism. I claim that 'course based' activism can limit students' creativity, pressuring them to 'do activism in a certain way'. Within a Euro-colonial institutional framework, I find this particularly troublesome because certain hegemonic epistemologies define what 'counts' as 'good activism'. Thus, I caution the standardization of activism and its fostering of a superficial conceptualization of community, where some students may not find themselves reflected in the agendas and methodologies of learning /'doing social justice'. Although I am weary of such issues, this should not suggest that the same limitations will arise in relation to the 'Gender Studies' course. Rather, I think that this section, overall, is an immensely important inclusion within this curriculum policy document.

Section D 1-D 4. Research and Inquiry Skills: Exploring /Using & Describing ≠Understanding

Sections D 1.1 through D 4.2 are part of 'course strand D. Research and Inquiry Skills'. I analyze this last section as a whole because each of the four subsections (Exploring, Investigating, Processing and Creating and Communicating) are short, and collectively make up one page of the draft. Many of the methods outlined in this entire section are valuable to feminist research methodologies, such as surveys, interviews, presentations, use of multimedia, and poster- making. However, this entire section seems to be dedicated to ensuring that students are

able to 'learn' and 'share' 'knowledge' in a standardized fashion. Acknowledging that the standardization of curricula is a current reality contextualizing this course, my following analysis may seem unfair. However, I critique this section based on my particular theoretical framework and in relation to the Miss G__Project's feminist mandate.

Section D 2.2 'expects' students to 'select relevant information' (D 2.2). I question, what is relevant information? Who makes that decision? I am critical of the social and institutional values that are placed on certain 'knowledges' and 'information'. Not only am I concerned about the methodological boundaries this erects, but also, I caution that this 'expectation' could open up a space for the recursive reproduction of hegemonic knowledge.

Moreover, section D 1.1 merely 'expects' students to use terms relating to feminism (i.e. intersectionality, power relations, gender norms) that are central to feminist theorizing. Although important, I am doubtful that memorizing and 'using them' will necessarily facilitate an understanding of them and/or encourage students to think critically about them. In sum, I find this section useful towards learning about different methods and designs for research and inquiry, but I ask: does this section reflect feminist methodologies? Or does it benefit the standardization of curricula throughout Ontario schools—contributing to the institutional practice of surveilling student 'success'?

In sum, my use of an intersecting and interlocking antiracist postcolonial feminist postcolonial theoretical framework, demonstrates that many of the issues/topics taken up by this course draft are not aligned with the Miss G__Project's feminist anti-oppressive politics. Thus, I utilize the subsequent chapter to discuss how I recognize discursive trends explicated by both my (re)readings of this draft to be related to the body of literature reported throughout chapter one. From this, I am afforded the opportunity to explain how I recognize this research paper to be

contributive to existing scholarship. Moreover, I use the following section to provide a discussion regarding the limitations of this study, infer my concluding remarks and make future suggestions premised in feminist optimism.

CHAPTER VI: SYNTHESIS, LIMIATTIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize my analyses made in the previous sections. I explain how the body of literature I reviewed informed both my (re)readings of the course draft. I then discuss how I see my study to be limiting yet contributive to existing literature. I then conclude by outlining future suggestions for this course draft that reflect my own feminist agenda for change.

A. <u>Synthesis in Relation to Body of Literature</u>

If the Miss__G Project intends to challenge classism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism and racism, then the draft needs to provide students with the feminist knowledges that seek to dismantle such systems. But as both (re)readings reveal, such a mandate is limited by the ways in which the Miss G__Project's 'course objectives' and 'topics of study' *are and are not* take*n* up within the 'Gender Studies' course draft. For instance 'course objectives' and 'suggested topics of study', which are not included (such as 'suggested topic' sixteen), also have something to suggest about discursive power. In relation to the body of literature, I argue that the very absence of words such as, racism, classism, heterosexism and ableism discursively silences the existence of such oppression and in turn, secures dominance.

It was outlined in my literature review that mainstream notions of gender and gender equity do not challenge the status quo, but rather help sustain it. My analyses demonstrate that various representations, discussion and/or 'prompts' regarding gender inequality reflect mainstream conceptualizations of gender. My theoretical framework allowed me to explicate

intersections of (in)visible fields of power underscoring essentializing, dichotomous and *competing* representations of gender. Gender inequality between homogenous definitions of men and women are discussed/'promoted' in ways that privilege capitalistic, heteronormative, patriarchal, white supremacist social interests. Likewise, the heteronormative framings of representational discourses relating to LBGTQ issues were also discursively aligned with such.

As feminist scholars asserted in the body of literature comprising chapter one, mainstream notions of gender throughout the course draft contribute to anti/post-feminist backlash discourses against social justice for women. I claim that such is made possible through the competing discourses relating to topics surrounding men's and women's (in)equality in sections C 1.2 and C1.3. In turn, these backlash discourses also impact the ahistorical and essentializing portrayal of gender-based violence (section B 3) in which the salience of institutional and systemic racist patriarchy is exculpated.

I also discussed in the body of literature that the use of intersectionality within curricula documents is limited and often problematic. In relation to the course draft, both my (re)readings reveal that intersectionality and/or an intersectional approach was either absent, and/or limited. The draft utilizes an intersectional approach towards an examination of identities and social inequality. But an understanding of the mutually constitutive nature of identity is lacking. An intersectional approach is often modeled hierarchically into a three or four 'separate' categories without addressing larger social structures of power in which differences are stratified (Levine-Rasky, 2011). Therefore, like many scholars stressed in my literature review, I demonstrated in both my (re)readings of the course draft that the use of intersectionality could potentially foster discursive processes of 'othering'. In turn, such discursive representations perpetuate various racialized, gendered, sexual and classed stereotypes.

Furthermore, from my second (re)reading of the draft using my theoretical framework, I argue that discursive impositions of hegemonic knowledge onto various cultural and geopolitical contexts enables imperialist and colonizing representations of 'others'. In relation to my review of the literature, my theoretical framework demonstrates that homogenous, tokenistic and ahistorical representations of gender relations/gender issues about 'others', contribute to discursive processes of 'othering'. I argue that these imperialist/colonialist and colonizing representational discourses about 'others' are racist constructions of differences, through which a nexus of racism, classism and sexism is legitimized.

Although the concept of race is not always explicitly mentioned when representing differences, positions of subordination and domination are legitimized through socially constructed narratives of 'victimhood'. My second (re)reading of the draft shows those representations of 'global victims' and 'female victims of violence' are imperial framings of 'others' in which racist patriarchy is legitimized. Moreover, I claim that such representations are also reflections of normalized discursive regimes that reiterate 'common sense' understanding of various racialized, classed, sexual and gendered hierarchies.

To summarize, as many scholars caution throughout the existing literature, my analyses of the 'Gender Studies' course draft reveals that mainstream notions of gender, intersectionality and (in)equality, *are* entrenched throughout this curriculum policy document. Although this course draft encourages students to think critically about gender norms and identity, a critical and anti-oppressive dialogue is limited by the discursive emptying of the Miss G__'s feminist politics underscoring their proposed topics of study. In response to both my critical (re)readings, I argue that the course draft is a depoliticized version of the feminist issues and knowledge(s) that are politically important to the Miss G__ Project.

Moreover, the institutional framing of this standardized curriculum policy document has resulted in the discursive co-option, or colonizing if you will, of the Miss G__Project's feminist mandate towards sustaining a 'hidden' Euro-Colonial white-supremacist-capitalistic-patriarchal institutional/state agenda. Such was made evident from my second (re)reading with use of my theoretical framework, where I demonstrated how dominant discourses (re)produced by interlocking structures of colonialism imperialism, racism, sexism, ableism, classism and heterosexism, intersect and take shape in various ways throughout the course draft. Therefore, the curricular content put forth by this draft is informed by—and contributive to—'discourses of domination' mediated as 'common stock knowledge'. Consequently, this course draft is implicated in hegemonic knowledge production and as such, reproduces to some extent, a discursive regime of interlocking domination.

B. <u>Limitations of Study</u>

One limitation introduced by my analysis is based on the role I play as the researcher of this study. As an able-bodied, bi-racial, queer woman, my own identities have informed my (re)readings of the 'Gender Studies' course draft. I must also acknowledge that I am complicit in the very modes of Eurocentric knowledge production in which I contested throughout this major paper. The structure, format and style of this research paper are a reflection of this complicity. Moreover, I am currently participating in processes of 're-colonization' as a registered student at a Euro-colonial academic institution situated on stolen indigenous grounds (Dei, 2006).

Another limitation of this study comes from my immediacy to scrutinize this course draft for excluding and/or ignoring certain issues without acknowledging that many 'suggested topics of study' could not possibly 'fit' into this draft. I am aware that part of the process in

constructing curricula at the Ministry level is to recognize that not all issues/topics can be covered in one course, nor a seventy-five minute class.

C. <u>Contributions</u>

Despite these limitations, the body of literature has helped me examine the discursive trends utilized by curricula to legitimize hierarchal social relations with the 'knowledge' put forth by this document. In turn, I claim that my major research paper contributes to a feminist 'anti-colonial' discursive framework that seeks to resist what Alexander (2005) defines as, 'add and stir feminism'. In turn, an 'anti-colonial' discursive framework works as an extension of feminist praxis, to resist neocolonial processes of domination and oppression through the schooling system. For Dei (2006) by accepting the 'neo', we are accepting the normalization of oppression as a continuum. Instead, I want my major research paper to function as a discursive contribution, similar to the scholarly work outlined in my review of the literature that challenges the ways in which hegemonic knowledge is discursively 'imposed'.

D. <u>Concluding Remarks/Suggestions</u>

Since this course draft is laden with white, heteronormative, capitalist, ablest and patriarchal ideologies, I stress that this course serves the social (re)privileging of certain student bodies. In turn, some students may not see themselves reflected in this 'Gender Studies' course. Here, I suggest that students need to have a 'say' in what this course 'should' teach, rather than policy-makers and stakeholders, deciding what issues count as "teen appropriate", as Tam (2009) infers in her course feedback paper (p.1). I encourage teachers to consider this draft as a guideline, rather than a 'banking system of knowledge' check list (hooks, 1994a). I ask teachers to afford students the opportunities to make 'revisions' of this course draft by facilitating a

critical dialogue—allowing classroom conversations (and collective/individual silences) to direct this course down new epistemological paths.

For future educators who might be 'teaching from' this curriculum policy document, I urge us to reflect on our own social positions and subjectivities in order to examine how one is either "helped or hindered", as Dei (2003) writes, by the Euro-colonial context in which we engage and communicate our knowledge(s). We must consider history, context and power in tandem when seeking to understand how larger interlocking forces shape our identities and 'knowledges'.

We must ask ourselves, how do our experiences and privileges inform my (re)reading of this course draft? How have I come to know these issues/topics? What do I not know about them? Asking such might inspire us to learn about issues put forth by this draft from alternative sources, which are not prescribed by standardized and hegemonic formations of 'knowledge'. We must 'dig deeper' and elsewhere, if you will, to learn/unlearn the complexities of social and political issues that often become trivialized, depoliticized and colonized when institutionalized and administered on paper. Moreover, posing such questions to ourselves affords the realization that there are some things that we just cannot know. We must acknowledge that the perpetual drive to secure our knowing does not come without consequence. So, I ask us to embrace, what feminist Elizabeth Ellsworth (1989, 2005) so eloquently alludes to in her work, an unpredictable pedagogy of the unknown that affords us new unlimited future possibilities.

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Table 1: MISS G__PROJECT'S PROPOSED TENETS FROM 2011 & PRE 2011 WEBSITE

Course Objectives	Suggested Topics Of Study
1) Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study that analyzes gender and its inherent intersections with class, race, ability, sexual identity, and location. 2) It recognizes how women of diverse backgrounds have been made invisible through the different and interacting oppressions of traditional education curricula and attempts to uncover their stories across various disciplines. 3) It also offers critical analysis of gender constructions and gender roles and relations and aims to sharpen students' critical awareness of how gender operates in institutional and cultural contexts in their own lives. 4) The history of these movements (Feminist, racial and sexual justice education activism) is deeply related to the availability of these knowledges in education and yet these are also movements whose histories are typically made invisible in traditional curricula. By making visible these histories of resistance to injustice, Gender Studies also gives students the tools and opportunities to participate in and author social change in their lives and communities.	1) Learning/unlearning gender: what is gender? 2) What is sexism? What is equality? Do we have it? 3) Discussions on sexual difference, social constructions of femininity and masculinity, homophobia, heterosexism, heteronormativity, and sexual diversity including homosexual, transgender and intersex identities 4) Self-image, healthy body image, healthy relationships, sex and sexuality 5) Violence against women 6) Media literacy 7) Work and histories of women in the workplace, pay-equity, women and poverty 8) Law and legal issues affecting women around the world 9) Families, marriage, reproductive rights 10) Health care, children 11) Women in the global economy, social policy 12) GLBTQ social and legal issues (with a focus on Canadian institutions) 13) Activism and citizenship 14) What are(n't) we teaching/learning in literature, history, and other classes? 15) What is feminism? 16) Examinations of how classism, racism, heterosexism, ableism and other oppressions interact with sexism 17) History of feminisms (including Western feminisms, Black feminisms, womanism, Islamic feminisms, other non-Western women's movements, lesbian feminisms, eco-feminism...) and other social justice movements 18) Canadian feminist icons significance of these histories for women today. 19) Future possibilities for social justice movement(s)?

See .pdf File Attached to Email Titled**: GenderCourse.pdf**