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ASSERTING POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES: CROSS-TEXTUAL READINGS OF EZRA-NEHEMIAH AND INDIGENEITY IN CANADA

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

In 2009, during a G20 Summit Meeting press conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper proudly insisted that Canada has "no history of colonialism."[1] I profusely disagree. Actually, I would argue that the history of colonialism in Canada is very well documented, and I am certain that many Indigenous and non-Indigenous people would attest to this as well.

Colonialism for Canada's Indigenous peoples, however, differs from the colonialism experienced by, say, the Indigenous peoples of Ghana. In Canada, as Jace Weaver states, the Indigenous peoples remain as "victims of internal colonialism."[2] To clarify this point, Weaver differentiates "classic colonialism" from that of "internal colonialism." Classic colonialism entails a "small group of colonists" occupying and dominating a land to which they are a minority. Internal colonialism, on the other hand, entails the Indigenous peoples being "swamped by a large mass of colonial settlers who, after generations, no longer have a

[1] "What He Was Talking About When He Was Talking About Colonialism," Aaron Wherry, Rogers Digital Media, http://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/what-he-was-talking-about-when-he-talked-about-colonialism.

[2] Jace Weaver, "From I-Hermeneutics to We-Hermeneutics: Native Americans and the Post-Colonial," *Semeia* 75 (1996): 164-65. Frideres and Gadacz frame the process of the internal colonization of Canada's Indigenous peoples as consisting of six components: 1. The French and British colonizers intrusion into Canada via settlements; 2. Colonization's adverse impact on the "social and cultural structures" of the Indigenous peoples; 3. The external political control over Indigenous peoples; 4. The forced state of Indigenous communities' economic dependence; 5. The inadequacies of social services "in such areas as health and education"; and, 6. Structural and systemic racism. René R. Gadacz and James. Frideres, *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* (Toronto: PearPrentice Hall, 2008), 3-5.

[metropolis] to which to return." [3] The European colonial occupation of Ghana, thus, is an example of classic colonialism, and their subsequent independence is realized as a post-colonial condition, temporally speaking. On the other hand, the Canadian Indigenous peoples' have continued to be "controlled by those who conquered them,"[4] as the British imperial power remained in Canada, with the current head of state being Queen Elizabeth II, more commonly referred to as "the Crown."[5] Thus, the "heavy hand of federal plenary power still rests heavily upon [Indigenous] affairs."[6]

"Post-Colonial" vs. "Postcolonial"

The question begs, then, as to whether or not it is appropriate to employ the term "postcolonial" within a Canadian context. After all, technically speaking, Canada is not in a "post-colonial" condition. But I think a better understanding of what is inferred by the term "postcolonial" will shed some light on this issue. According to the *Encyclopedia of Postmodernism*, "postcolonial"

> … designates the state of peoples and regions formerly colonized principally by western imperial nations, and the study of the material and cultural implications of that history and its aftermath.[7]

[3] Ibid., 165.

[4] Ibid., 164.

[5] "Role of the Crown and the Governor General," Parliamentary Framework, House of Commons, 2015, http://www.parl.gc.ca/About/House/compendium/web-content/c_d_rolecrowngovernorgenerale.pdf.

[6] Weaver, "From I-Hermeneutics," 165.

[7] Lawrence Phillips, "Postcolonial," *EoP*: 299.

Thus, the definition of "postcolonial" carries with it both an implied temporal and theoretical denotation. R.S. Sugirtharajah writes that the term "postcolonial" refers to more than just "chronological markers of 'periods,' 'eras,' or 'aeons…'" subsequent to the conclusion of imperialism. A critical inference inherent to this term is the "anti-colonial" reactions to colonial influences and the attempt to "instil a new sense of national pride and purpose."[8] It is concerned with both the "state of affairs" during the era of colonialism, as well as the "state of affairs" that followed its cessation.[9] I will be expanding on this in the first chapter, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics."

For now, Bradley Crowell provides a helpful distinction by identifying the hyphen-less term "postcolonial" as being specific to the *critical discourse*; whereas the hyphenated "post-colonial" is a designation of the *period of time that followed the end of colonial rule*.[10] These distinctions will be employed throughout this thesis.

It is safe to say that the temporal meaning of the term post-colonial does not apply to Canada's Indigenous peoples. Postcolonial, as a term, has a theoretical or critical inference that I consider relevant to the Indigenous context. Weaver also concedes that it can be "a useful tool for analyzing Native literatures."[11] Moreover, as Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin contend:

> [T]he literatures of African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific

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[8] R.S. Sugirtharajah, "Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation," in *Voices From the Margin: Interpreting the Bible in the Third World*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006), 65.

[9] R. S. Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World: Precolonial, Colonial, Postcolonial Encounters* (Port Chester, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 246.

[10] Bradley L. Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies and the Hebrew Bible," *CurBR* 7 (2009): 217.

[11] Weaver, "From I-Hermeneutics," 166.

> Island countries, and Sri Lanka are all post-colonial literatures…. What each of these literatures has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial.[12]

It is from this perspective that my own postcolonial approach will unfold. My analysis frames the experience of colonization as being essential to the Indigenous peoples' assertion of uniqueness, or "otherness," from that of the mainstream dominant society. Stuart Hall identifies the Indigenous peoples' negative experience of colonisation as having "provoked the attempt to recover an alternative set of cultural origins not contaminated by the colonising experience." [13] However, he concludes that any attempt to return to an uncontaminated "cultural origin" is improbable, as "the long-term historical and cultural effects of the 'transculturation' which characterised the colonising experience proved, in my view, to be irreversible."[14]

Terminology: Indian, Aboriginal or Indigenous?

I will use the term Indigenous throughout this thesis. I use Indigenous rather than the term "Aboriginal," because "Aboriginal," from within a Canadian context, has been defined in Section 35 of the 1982 *Constitution Act* to include three groups of Indigenous peoples, as it reads: "In this Act, 'aboriginal peoples of Canada' includes the Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples

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[12] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2.

[13] Stuart Hall, "When Was 'the Post-Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, eds. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 246.

[14] Hall, "When Was 'the Post-Colonial,'" 246-47.

of Canada."[15] Although this thesis will deal with the colonial impositions that have impacted the Aboriginal population as a whole, such as the Indian Residential Schooling System, the focus of this thesis is strictly on the first group listed—the "Indians." Thus, as the term "Aboriginal" has legal implications to three distinct groups of Indigenous peoples in Canada, I will not be using it in this thesis as a reference to one specific group. Moreover, the term "Indian," though it continues to serve a legal function in Canada, is considered an offensive term to Indigenous people. More on this will be discussed in chapter four, "Asserting Indigenous Identity Vis-à-vis *The Indian Act*." Instead, "First Nations" has more appropriately identified the Indigenous peoples that have been historically defined as "Indians," and includes those who are status, non-status, and treaty.[16]

In reality, though, there is no one collective identifier that will satisfy everyone. Thomas King, in his novel *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America,* points out that "there has never been a good collective noun because there never was a collective to begin with."[17] Still, I have chosen the term Indigenous because it has gained global recognition as an appropriate identifier for all people who are original inhabitants of a land, and who have been directly impacted as a result of hegemonic marginalization and colonial domination. For instance, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz notes that the

[15] "Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada," Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982, Part 1 of 2, Justice Laws Website, http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-16.html#h-52.

[16] Having "status" entails being recognized legally as an "Indian" as it pertains to *The Indian Act,* whereas a "non-status Indian" would not be recognized as such. Being a "treaty Indian" entails having status and belonging to a First Nation that has signed a historical treaty with the Crown.

[17] Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), xiii.

United Nations Sub-Commission on the Protection of Human Rights defines "Indigenous" as such:

> Indigenous populations are composed of the existing descendants of the peoples who inhabited the present territory of a country wholly or partially at the time when persons of a different culture or ethnic origin arrived there from other parts of the world, overcame them, and, by conquest, settlement or other means, reduces them to a non-dominant or colonial condition; who today live more in conformity with their particular social, economic and cultural customs and traditions than with the institutions of the country of which they now form part, under a State structure which incorporates mainly the national, social and cultural characteristics of other segments of the population which are predominant.[18]

As such, and for the sake of this thesis alone, I will be using the term *Indigenous* in strict reference to the First Nation peoples, except in cases where "*Indian"* is used in discussion regarding Euro-Canadian legal, conceptualizations and policies.

Main Goal of This Thesis: A New Way of Thinking

My postcolonial perspective, as it is represented in this study, was largely inspired by the professional experience I have gained working with Indigenous communities in Alberta.[19] As an Indigenous person myself, this professional experience has spurred an internal desire to give a voice to a part of my life that has been largely silenced by the dominant western society that has largely influenced my ideological framework. Thus, an extensive portion of this study is dedicated to content relating to Indigenous issues, and this is directly reflective of both my cultural context as well as of my professional experience.

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[18] Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, "The First Decade of Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations," *P&C* 31 (2006): 60, http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0130.2006.00342.x/epdf.

[19] I have worked with Alberta's Ministry of Indigenous Relations (previously Alberta Aboriginal Relations) since 2013, and previously as an Indigenous Youth Worker with various Human Services agencies.

Broadly speaking, this study will be examining the historical imposition of colonial ideologies upon the Indigenous peoples. The purpose of this thesis is, ultimately, in its appeal to understanding Indigenous issues[20] in a new way, i.e. to advocate a new way of thinking about Indigenous issues that acknowledges their colonial past while considering their ongoing journey toward emancipation and self-determination.[21] Essential to this objective is my postcolonial perspective on the biblical texts of Ezra-Nehemiah, which will provide a unique reading that I will employ in this thesis. So while the biblical exegesis in this study pales in comparison to the overall indigenous content, it is a crucial hermeneutical strategy that will enhance my understanding of the current status of Indigenous peoples' identity.

Chapters of This Thesis

The organization of this thesis is broken into five chapters. In the first chapter, I will elaborate on "postcolonialism" as a theoretical and critical discourse. Of importance here is understanding how postcolonialism has developed as a discourse, what its overall purpose is, and the way in which it is being employed as a hermeneutical strategy in biblical studies and in this thesis.

As noted, essential to this thesis is the acknowledgement of colonial acts and injustices committed against Canada's Indigenous peoples. Thus, I will use the second chapter to examine the colonial agenda of assimilating the Indigenous peoples into

[20] I do not use the term "issues" to mean "problems," as is commonly the case. Rather, I mean it in the general sense, to imply "matters," "concerns," "topics," etc.

[21] A new way forward, the logical continuation of this goal, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

mainstream society, and the role of the Oblate missionaries in the advancement of this colonial agenda. Specifically, I will expose the Euro-Canadian conjecture that civilization was synonymous to Christianization, and how this advanced the ideology of aggressive assimilation via the "Indian" Residential Schooling system.

Chapter three, as noted above, will contain my own postcolonial reading of Ezra-Nehemiah. The focus will be on the repatriated Jewish community's experience of crisis due to being colonized, and how this played into their assertion of a community identity that was characterized by exclusivism in the pluralistic context of the Persian Empire.

In chapter four I will be exposing the colonial ideologies that motivated the creation of *The Indian Act*. Of note in this chapter is the colonial conceptualization of the "Indian" as an uncivilized savage, and the policies developed and implemented for over a century that reflected this conceptualization. Of greater note, though, is the Indigenous peoples' resiliency and, like the post-exilic Jewish community, their assertiveness in determining their own future and cultural identity. This will become the basis for asserting Indigenous identity vis-à-vis *The Indian Act.*

Finally, chapter five will exhibit how my postcolonial reading of Ezra-Nehemiah has enhanced my understanding of Canadian Indigenous cultural identity. The goal is, ultimately, to advance a new way of thinking about "postcolonial" group identity formation as it relates to both the post-exilic Jewish community as well as the Indigenous context.

CHAPTER ONE
POSTCOLONIALISM IN THE MATRIX OF POSTMODERN HERMENEUTICS

To understand the conception of the postcolonial movement requires an examination of the historical and imperialist context of European colonialism. Imperialism is the imposition of structures and ideologies—religious, cultural, political and/or economic—by dominant empires upon subjugated lands and peoples. By extension then, colonialism is the "political manifestation of imperialism when it includes geographical control."[22]

Most recently, colonialism entailed the geographic establishment of European expansionist "settlements." This typically included "invasion, conquest, strategic genocide, the relegation of local rulers to subservient roles."[23] It also entailed the exploitation of local resources and industry, as well as the acculturation of indigenous peoples, and imposition of the dominant Western civilization; "thereby producing the illusion of European superiority and the normalization of colonial relations."[24]

Thus, postcolonialism emerged from this hegemonic context as a "penetrating critique of colonial expansion and domination, and the lasting effects on the people and institutions subjected to its rule."[25] As a critical discourse, it developed alongside the changing socio-political landscape of post-colonial societies. At its root, then,

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[22] Musa W. Dube, "Toward a Post-Colonial Feminist Interpretation of the Bible," *Semeia* 78 (1997): 15.

[23] József Böröcz and Mahua Sarkar, "Colonialism," *EGS*: 229.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies," 219.

postcolonialism is a serious response to the perpetual imposition of hegemony and colonial dominance.

Being an offshoot of postmodernism, postcolonial discourse contests the dominant ideologies of modernism that have, for so long, dictated Western thought and ideology. As such, it remains largely suspicious of modernism's empirical nature and challenges the assumptions that are often associated with mainstream disciplines. In this sense, postcolonialism is an inquisitive practice that disputes "the inherent problems of disciplinary studies." [26] As a reading strategy, postcolonialism developed under the postmodern hermeneutical framework—along with ideological criticism, liberation theology, and hermeneutic of suspicion, all of which will be discussed to some extent in this chapter.

Postcolonialism is a complex approach that incorporates a number of hermeneutical strategies, and as such I will utilize this chapter to present a framework for my own postcolonial critical and hermeneutical approach. This is not to suggest that postcolonialism is a broad and indefinable discipline, but just that it welcomes the constant interaction of various sub-disciplines, while also critically engaging those sub-disciplines by synthesizing the positives while correcting deficiencies.

Thus, in this chapter I will first discuss some of the influences that led to the development of postcolonialism. For example, ideological criticism is tactically akin to postcolonialism in its attempt to subvert dominant ideologies. Consequently, this will be employed as a key strategy in this thesis in order to assert Indigenous identity vis-à-vis

[26] Jeremy Punt, "Postcolonial Biblical Criticism in South Africa: Some Mind and Road Mapping," *Neot* 37 (2003): 62.

colonial suppression of *The Indian Act*. I will also offer a more comprehensive discussion on the "what?," "who?," and "why?" of postcolonialism—i.e. What is its purpose? Who engages in it? And why is it a meaningful discourse? Lastly, I provide a few examples of how postcolonialism has been applied as a biblical reading strategy within particular post-colonial contexts.

Ideological Criticism

A primary goal of Ideological Criticism is to unveil embedded ideologies within textual artifacts that are otherwise silenced or hidden behind a dominant ideology. In doing so, the ideological critic employs a hermeneutic of suspicion[27] against universal and objective claims: "ideological criticism problematizes, undermines, and ultimately subverts such claims."[28]

At the same time, the reader engages the text from their own unique historical and cultural context, which inevitably influences their interpretation. In this sense, Ideological Criticism is subjective and contextual. As such, an ideological critic has a rather unique encounter with a text where meaning becomes a product of his or her own ideologies coupled with the "complex nature of power relations" that produced the text.[29] *The Postmodern Bible* frames Ideological Criticism as such:

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[27] "Hermeneutic of Suspicion" was coined by Paul Ricoeur, and ultimately aims to unveil a meaning within a text that is hidden or silenced. In Thiselton's words, Ricoeur's understanding of a hermeneutic of suspicion was to probe "underneath the classical and projected text" to discover its true meaning. Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 233. Cf. Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970).

[28] George Aichele, et al. *The Postmodern Bible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 278.

[29] Ibid, 273.

> Ideological criticism has as its primary purpose the task of exposing and charting the structure and dynamics of these power relations [class dominance, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and gender] as they come to expression in language, in the conflicting ideologies operating in discourse, and in flesh and blood readers of texts in their concrete social locations and relationships.[30]

Indeed ideologies exist in every culture,[31] and thus permeate the literature from each unique socio-cultural context. This is especially evident with the Bible. Biblical texts were not written in a vacuum but were developed within very specific contexts and with specific ideologies and agendas. The culture, geography, and context were in a constant state of flux. Thus a wide array of ideologies are embedded within each unique text.

As with most literature, there is an inextricable linkage between politics and biblical texts.[32] Hence, when reading biblical texts through an ideological lens, the reader is challenged to set aside traditional interpretations and assumptions and to engage in an ethical discourse with the text to expose these ideologies.[33]

Robert Warrior, for instance, provides an ideological reading of the Exodus and Conquest stories that lie in stark contrast to traditional readings. Traditionally, the Exodus and Conquest stories amplify the ideological voice of liberation and hope from an Israelite perspective.[34] YHWH delivered His message to the Israelites through Moses in Exodus 3.16-

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[30] Ibid., 273-74.

[31] Not all ideologies are all bad either. Some political agendas are good and some political agendas are bad. Discovering which is which requires critical analysis.

[32] Ibid., 274.

[33] Ibid., 275.

[34] Note the subjective perspective of such a reading.

17, acknowledging the oppression that they had suffered in Egypt, and promising to deliver them from their oppression and lead them to an affluent land, flowing with milk and honey.

Where traditional readings highlight the liberation of the Israelites from slavery and oppression and subsequent deliverance to the Promised Land, Warrior highlights the overlooked subjugation and annihilation of the Canaanites, who were indigenous to the land of Canaan.[35] Though Warriors' article will be discussed in further detail later on, what it ultimately accomplishes is what any ideological critic is tasked to do: Read against the grain and produce "some degree of struggle and rupture in what would appear to be the natural expectations readers bring to their reading of texts."[36] Consideration is generally not given to the indigenous inhabitants of the land of Canaan, as the story is not about them.[37] Thus, according to *The Postmodern Bible*, Warrior's reading,

> …serves as a critique of the normative character of liberationist readings of Exodus by suspiciously searching out his own specific culture and experiences for an understanding of liberation that is suppressed by the dominant reading strategy.[38]

A key component of Warrior's reading strategy is his employment of a hermeneutic of suspicion. As *The Postmodern Bible* notes above, he employs a hermeneutic of suspicion to effectively extract the colonial ideologies of the Conquest story, and considers them in light of his own cultural experiences and context.

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[35] Robert Allen Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today," *C&C* 49 (1989): 261-265.

[36] Aichele, *The Postmodern Bible,* 278.

[37] It is a well-known adage that "history is written by the victors."

[38] Aichele, *The Postmodern Bible,* 286.

In this case, Warrior's article may be more accurately categorized as a postcolonial reading strategy, under the framework of ideological criticism. Jeremy Punt describes postcolonialism as a form of ideological criticism in that one's own ideologies—i.e. their own socio-political and cultural context—influence their interpretive efforts. However, he adds, it is an extension of ideological criticism in that its focus is on the disparate interaction between the colonizer and the colonized, with a keen emphasis on the misconstrued conceptualization of the "other"—being "savage" or "uncivilized"—as a hegemonic manipulation.[39]

Postcolonialism, thus, developed as a critical response to imperial systems and structures, such as colonial expansion. As a reading strategy, it serves the purpose of drawing out the colonial ideologies that exist within specific texts, especially texts that have been developed from within a colonial context.

Colonialism and Orientalism

Rhonda Hammer identifies colonization as a "sophisticated and multileveled ideological process," and refers to Fanon's employment of the Hegelian "master/slave dialect." She compares the colonizer and colonized to that of the master and slave. She states that "the master needs to be recognized by the slave as the master and hence convince the slave of her or his inherent inferiority and 'otherness.'"[40]

This certainly coincides with Edward Said's discourse on *Orientalism,* one of the many inspirations in the inauguration of postcolonialism as a critical theory. *Orientalism* exposed

[39] Punt, "Postcolonial Biblical Criticism," 63.

[40] Rhonda Hammer, "Postcolonialism," *EST*: 577.

a belief or perception of Eastern societies from a Western lens. Specifically, it highlighted the structures employed to dichotomize the "familiar" or "occident" Western European culture against the "oriental" or "other" Eastern cultures.[41]

> Said demonstrated both that the constructions of colonized peoples were systematic and conscious, but also that many fields of knowledge institutionalized in the west as defamers of so-called objective truths were in fact implicated in the production of repressive discourses.[42]

Said's critique illuminated what he called "Orientalist Structures and Restructures" that the imperial western cultures created for the Eastern "Orientals," identifying them as uncivilized apart from Western influence. His intent was to reveal these dominant structures so that the colonized could be made aware of the "dangers and temptations of employing this structure upon themselves or upon others."[43] As Hammer writes: "It is in this sense that the colonized become their own oppressor, in that they exert the colonizers' imaginary suppositions of inferiority upon their own self-esteem."[44]

Alexander Macfie notes that the concept of orientalism was serving European imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and "enlisted in the service of American imperialism" following the Second World War.[45] Thus, colonialism was alive and active as recent as the mid nineteenth century. However, by the 1970's it was effectively a

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[41] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Random House Inc., 1978).

[42] Phillips, "Postcolonial," 311.

[43] Said, *Orientalism,* 25.

[44] Hammer, "Postcolonialism," 577.

[45] Alexander Lyon Macfie, *Orientalism* (Florence, KY: Routledge, 2014), 92.

dead game, leaving what had remained as "colonial" to be passed off as "something else."[46]

Frederick Cooper adds:

> To some, the trend that has come to call itself postcolonial theory reflects the growing awareness that colonial societies could not be seen as 'out there,' a consequence of European expansionism that could be clearly marked and eventually exercised. Rather, the incorporation into a European-centered system of physical, political, and cultural power of a large portion of the world's population via colonization profoundly shaped European as well as Afro-Asian History.[47]

Colonialism leaves an insidious impression upon colonized societies that remains well beyond the cessation of a colonial regime. According to Peter Phipps, *Neocolonialism* was a concept produced out of the anticolonial movement in South Africa in the 1960s, and essentially reflects the continued domination, economically and culturally, of the colonizer over the colonized: "[C]olonizers were able to maintain indirect control through myriad trade, military, and legal agreements, facilitated by a willing and corrupt elite in the decolonized states."[48]

As a preface to the continuing discussion on postcolonialism, I think it is important to discuss the differences between postcolonialism and liberation hermeneutics, as both are very similar in nature. Moreover, by doing so I think an important question will be answered: Are Biblical texts colonial by nature?

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[46] Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 232.

[47] Ibid., 34.

[48] Peter Phipps, "Neocolonialism," *EGS*: 1233-34.

Postcolonialism vs. Liberation Hermeneutics

As hermeneutical strategies, postcolonialism and liberation theology are closely related in that they both aim to eradicate hegemonic interpretations. As well, they are emancipatory by nature by speaking on behalf of the "oppressed minorities, whether in a colonial situation or as a minority within a majority culture."[49] However, liberation theology, Sugirtharajah argues, remained largely entrenched in a modernistic framework; i.e. it remained "Christocentric" with an "unconscious conviction that the Bible cannot err".[50]

Consequently, and though it began as a "socially progressive" theology, liberation theology "remained largely conventional and theologically cautious," and as a result it ended up "reflecting upon the theme of biblical liberation rather than being a liberative hermeneutics."[51] As such, liberation is found within the Bible, and scripture remains the focal point of discussion. Thus the "hermeneutical suspicion with which ideological interpretation of the text is viewed, is not accorded to the Bible."[52] For the liberation theologian, then, the biblical text is not seen as colonial by nature, but rather it has been interpreted to support colonial agendas. More will be discussed about opposing views shortly.

For postcolonialism, however, liberation is not limited to texts, as Sugirtharajah writes:

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[49] Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies," 219.

[50] R.S. Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism and Biblical Interpretation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 113.

[51] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 242-43.

[52] Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 114.

> [P]ostcolonialism will argue…that the idea of liberation and its praxis must come from the collective unconscious[53] of the people. It sees liberation not as something hidden or latent in the text, but rather as born of public consensus created in democratic dialogue between text and context.[54]

Postcolonialism suspiciously examines and often denies the conventional theologies appropriated to Biblical texts.

Revisiting Robert Warrior's theological critique the Exodus story, the majority of readers connect with the "oppressed" Israelites who are receiving liberation, but in doing so neglect the plight of the Canaanites who are in turn oppressed as a result of the emancipatory action. Warrior employs a hermeneutic of suspicion in reading the Exodus story for its dominant ideology of liberation, and thereby interprets the story in such a way that speaks to his own Indigenous context.

Similarly, Laura Donaldson offers a rather unconventional perspective for the Book of Ruth. She reads Ruth's story through an Indigenous woman's lens, and ultimately interprets what is traditionally a story of Ruth's divine conversion as a negative story of consensual assimilation into a new culture and religion.[55] Donaldson highlights the relatively ignored sister of Ruth, Orpah, as the story's true protagonist for Cherokee women, saying:

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[53] "Collective unconscious" was a term coined by Carl Jung to mean, as he states: "… that the unconscious contains not only personal, but also impersonal, collective components in the form of inherited categories or archetypes." In other words, it implies that there are elements of the collective unconscious that are common to all people. Carl Jung, "The Personal and Collective Unconscious," in Lee A. Jacobus, *A World of Ideas: Essential Readings for College Writers* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2006): 483-97.

[54] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 262.

[55] Laura E. Donaldson, "The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth Through Native Eyes," in *Vernacular Hermeneutics*, ed. R.S. Sugirtharajah (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press Ltd., 1999), 29.

> To Cherokee women… Orpah connotes hope rather than perversity, because she is the one who does not reject her traditions or her sacred ancestors… Orpah chooses the house of her clan and spiritual mother over the desire for another culture.[56]

Donaldson re-reads the Book of Ruth to speak to her own context, as in traditional Cherokee culture, women played a significant role as heads of household.[57] It is no surprise, then, that Donaldson points to Orpah's loyalty to her natural mother as a biblical message of cultural empowerment for Indigenous women.

From a South African perspective, Musa Dube would argue that the Bible is a colonizing text by nature, as it "has repeatedly authorized the subjugation of foreign nations and lands."[58] She likens reading the Bible as an African Indigene to that of a "perilous" and "sinister" journey, wrought with "dangerous memories of slavery, colonialism, apartheid and neo-colonialism."[59] Dube interprets Biblical antagonists, such as Pharisees and "foolish Galatians,"[60] as not simply "static historical persons," but as an enduring manifestation of all those who are not Christian. As such, while these groups may be interpreted to represent African Indigenes in one particular place and time, they may be used to represent another group of peoples in another.[61]

Perhaps the best way to delineate the contrast between the two is to say that liberation hermeneutics operates from within a Christian context while postcolonialism does

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[56] Ibid., 34.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Musa Dube as quoted in Lazare S. Rukundwa, "Post-colonial Theory as a Hermeneutical Tool for Biblical Reading," *HvTSt* 64 (2008): 343.

[59] Dube, "Toward a post-colonial," 13.

[60] See, Gal. 3:1.

[61] Dube, "Toward a Post-Colonial," 11-14.

not operate from any particular religious confine whatsoever.[62] In this sense, Liberation hermeneutics is limiting in that particular presuppositions dictate the interpretation of scripture. That is, in its understanding of the Bible as the infallible word of God, liberation hermeneutics would suggest that biblical texts are not colonial by nature, but have been interpreted as such to support colonial and oppressive regimes. Postcolonialism, however, does not operate with those same presuppositions and, thus, allows the interpreter to make his or her own judgement regarding the colonial nature of biblical texts.

I would like to now briefly discuss the "what?," "who?," and "why?" of postcolonialism. What is the intention of postcolonialism? Who engages in it? And why is it a meaningful discourse?

Postcolonialism: A Methodology

What is Postcolonialism?

> [The] purpose of postcolonial discourse is not only to investigate how peoples and cultures were violated, but also to investigate the entanglement and entrenchment of European and American powers which sponsored, sanctioned, and sustained such atrocities.[63]

The above quotation by Sugirtharajah briefly describes the overall purpose of postcolonialism. It clearly extends beyond simply inspecting the history of physical and psychological injustices inflicted by imperialist governments upon the colonized. Just as Edward Said accomplished with *Orientalism,* postcolonialism involves examining the

[62] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 261-62.

[63] Sugirtharajah, "Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation," 65.

cultural, political, and socio-economic impacts of colonial domination, by exposing the "power and politics" of colonialism as expressed in textual artefacts.[64]

As a methodology, postcolonialism focuses on the strategic conceptualization of the colonized by the colonizers and the subsequent response by the colonizers to this imposed conceptualization, in an attempt to "articulate their identity, self-worth, and empowerment."[65]

Identity is a crucial concept when it comes to postcolonialism, and will have a significant bearing on this thesis. With the conceptualization of the "other"—a fabricated perception of eastern "Orientals" by western society—the colonized often end up succumbing to the fabricated conceptualizations of their inferiority. Stuart Hall phrases it this way:

> Not only, in Said's 'Orientalist' sense, were we constructed as different and other within the categories of knowledge of the West by those regimes. They had the power to make us see and experience *ourselves* as 'Other'.[66]

Roy Fabian, a Dene Chief of the K'atl'odeeche First Nation in the Northwest Territories, shared this powerful insight regarding the affect that such oppressive conceptualizations have had on Canada's Indigenous peoples. He says that

> When you are talking about oppression, there is a process that goes on. [First] there is a process that demeans us, that belittles us and makes us believe that we are not worthy, and the oppressed begin to develop what they call cultural self-shame and cultural self-hate, which results in a lot of frustration and a lot of anger. At the same time this is going on, because our ways are put down as Native people, because our cultural values and things are put down, we begin to adopt our oppressors' values

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[64] Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism,* 21.

[65] Ibid., 11.

[66] Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory: A Reader,* ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrismann (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 395.

> and, in a way, we become oppressors [of] ourselves…Because of the resulting self-hate and self-shame we begin to start hurting our own people [and ourselves].[67]

Ultimately, postcolonialism aims at exposing, dissecting and confronting these conceptualizations. The goal is to restore self-esteem and revitalize the identity of the colonized that was forcefully supplanted by hegemonic ideologies and structures.[68]

Who Can Engage in Postcolonialism?

Postcolonialism is a useful discourse for anyone who is impacted, directly or indirectly, by the ruinous ramifications of colonialism. In fact, postcolonialism is beneficial to any attempt of subverting cultural homogenization, national domination, and dissolving oppressive institutions. Thus, there are no 'rights' asserted when one engages in postcolonial discourse; as Sugirtharajah states, it "would be lamentable to resort to personal experience as a hermeneutical trump card."[69]

A victim of colonialism does not have more of a right to engage in postcolonialism than someone who has not been victimized by colonialism. Postcolonialism is, in a sense, an oppositional perspective—opposing the colonial structures, systems, and ideologies (a reading against the grain). But it is not a monolithic approach as it is inclusive and welcomes a vast audience and employs an array of critical disciplines or theoretical tools: "as long as

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[67] Roy Fabian as quoted in *Choosing Life: Special Report on Suicide Among Aboriginal People* (Ottawa: Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1995), 27-28.

[68] See chapter four of this thesis.

[69] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 270.

they probe injustices, produce new knowledge which problematizes well-entrenched positions and enhance the lives of the marginalized."[70]

Moreover, postcolonialism is as serviceable for the victims as it is for the perpetrators of colonialism, as both parties can critically engage, or "confront," the structures and ideologies that perpetuated the colonial regimes in the first place.[71] Furthermore, as Sugirtharajah states:

> Postcolonialism does not mean that the colonized are innocent, generous and principled, whereas the former colonizers, and now the neocolonizers, are all innately culpable, greedy and responsible for all social evils. Not only is such a notion an inverted form of colonialism but it also absolves the Third World elite from their patriarchal and vassalizing tendencies.[72]

Suffice it to say, then, that postcolonialism involves a vast array of complex perspectives and approaches of dealing with colonial injustice: "[postcolonialism] provides a platform for the widest possible convergence of critical forces…to assert their denied rights and rattle the centre."[73]

Why is Postcolonialism Meaningful?

Perhaps of greatest importance is the practicality of postcolonialism, i.e. its application to present day issues. To this, Sugirtharajah writes:

> [Postcolonialism's] usefulness will not be judged by its ability to offer a critique of the complex heritage that colonial occupation produced. Its critical relevance will be apparent when it has a bearing on the issues that cause concern to our people, such as housing, education, homeland, healthcare, social security and the justice system….

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[70] Ibid., 258. This is, in large part, what this thesis is about.

[71] Sugirtharajah, "Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation," 65.

[72] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 250.

[73] Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism*, 13.

> The task of postcolonialism is ensuring that the needs and aspiration of the exploited are catered to….[74]

Lazare Rukundwa further adds:

> Biblical hermeneutics must allow the scriptures to breathe life and respond to the context that motives its reading…. Life must be found… among the poor, the marginalized, among the voiceless and the hybrids whose identity is constantly being contested. At the same time, the purpose of this very life is to change the lives of the colonizers by making them recognize the sameness in the *other.*[75]

Thus, the merits of postcolonialism are twofold. First, it will be measured by the role it plays in affecting real change in the lives of those in the present that have been impacted by colonialism. Second, it will be measured by the sustainability of those changes for future generations. In addition, postcolonialism must affect real change in those nations and peoples that perpetuated such oppressive hegemonic ideologies and structures in the first place.

With specific relevance to my own postcolonial approach, the objective is two-fold. One, to inspire a new way of thinking about the issues. And two, to bolster the societal status of the Indigenous "other" by giving them a voice, and for their voice to demand equality in the minds and actions of the dominant society. In Canada, this entails acknowledging the historical hegemonic power relations of the government, as well as the Church, over the Indigenous peoples. This hegemony has been prevalent in the implementation of historical, and current, policies that were designed to govern all facets of Indigenous peoples' lives.

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[74] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 274-75.

[75] Rukundwa, "Post-colonial Theory," 345. Cf. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

This history needs to be considered in view of the current status of Indigenous cultural identity, and it demands a new way of thinking about Indigenous issues.

So far I have discussed postcolonialism in general terms, i.e. as an overall theoretical/critical approach. Though the scope or focus may change among disciplines, the practicality of postcolonialism as a discourse remains consistent throughout. Of importance to this chapter and thesis, though, is postcolonialism's contribution to biblical hermeneutics. For Sugirtharajah, this entails placing colonialism at the heart of the Bible, by focusing on "expansion, domination, and imperialism" as "central forces" to biblical interpretation and narrative.[76] With that said, I would like to now focus on how postcolonialism has been incorporated into the realm of biblical studies.

Postcolonialism: A Biblical Reading Strategy

As noted above, Dube reads the Bible as a colonizing text. In her perspective, "biblical characters shift and change with time" so that what is presented as a Gentile alien in the biblical text may be a savage Indian or African in another place and time.[77] Punt also agrees that biblical texts have acted as a catalyst for the "colonial endeavour."[78] Rukundwa adds that "the Bible, as a text, was produced and circulated under imperial rule, to the extent that it was at the service of colonial expansion."[79] Propaganda was used to contrast the "civilized, articulate, self-sustaining" colonizer from the "helpless, disorganized, and evil" colonized.

[76] Sugirtharajah, *Postcolonial Criticism,* 25.

[77] Dube, "Toward a Post-Colonial," 13-14.

[78] Punt, "Postcolonial Biblical Criticism," 69.

[79] Rukundwa, "Post-colonial Theory," 343.

Dube adds that the uncivilized savages were often "put side by side with those in control" so as to "validate the domination of the former by the latter."[80] For example, Michael Prior highlights how the book of Joshua—a conquest story where "Israelites killed in conformity with the directives of God"—was among the texts utilized by Euro-imperial powers to support colonialism by depicting Indigenous peoples as the "counterparts of the Hittites, the Girgashites, and others."[81]

As was briefly mentioned earlier, Robert Warrior shares similar sentiments regarding the Conquest story as it relates to North American Indigenous peoples. John MacLean, a Methodist missionary who lived among the Blood Tribe in Southern Alberta for nine years from 1880-1889, shares an interesting account in relation to this matter. In his book titled *The Indians: Their Manners and Customs,* MacLean shares that

> A strange argument was used to justify the policy of the people of the United States for the expulsion of the Indians from their lands. This was based upon the theory of the origin of the American Indians elaborated by Dr. Ezra Stiles, President of Yale College, in a sermon preached by him at Harford, in 1783, before the Governor Trumbull and the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, entitled, 'The United States elevated to Glory and Honor.'
>
> President Stiles considered the Indians to be the Canaanites expelled by Joshua. One branch coasted along the Mediterranean to its mouth, and was then wafted by the trade winds to the coasts of Mexico and Peru. Another branch travelled north-eastward, and from Asia went from island to island through the northern archipelago until America was reached…. Naturally those interested seized upon this theory, and felt justified as modern Israelites in expelling the Canaanites from the land."[82]

This example is obviously more than just a simple comparison of the North American "Indians" to that of the Canaanites, as President Stiles attempts to actualize the Indigenous

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[80] Dube, "Toward a Post-Colonial," 16.

[81] Michael Prior, *The Bible and Colonialism: A Moral Critique* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 34.

[82] John MacLean, *The Indians: Their Manners and Customs* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1889), 268-69.

peoples as the genuine descendants of the Canaanites. This belief was used to validate his colonial scheme of dispelling the Indigenous peoples to the margins of society or even, perhaps, ridding them of the land altogether.

Biblical Texts: Sword and Shield

Rukundwa's postcolonial approach, however, sees biblical texts as having been "marked as powerful rhetorical instruments of imperialism," as well as containing "a voice of justice that energizes faith to challenge injustice committed against the weak."[83] Thus, in a sense, his postcolonial approach seems to suggest that scripture has acted as both a sword against, and shield for, the minority; i.e. Biblical texts act as a catalyst for subjugation and alienation, on one hand, and liberation and decolonization on the other. As such, it is the postcolonial hermeneutician's responsibility to consider texts for their influence upon colonial/hegemonic practices; and how to apply them for justice's sake.

Niels Lemche argues that a critical evaluation should be devoted to the colonial exegesis of a text, and not to the text itself. He states that a hermeneutic of suspicion would allow a third-world theologian, the "other," to expose how the "imperialism linked to the European tradition of understanding the Bible represents an abuse of the biblical text." This would allow for the biblical text to offer its own unique meaning to the colonized or marginalized other, as the text itself would be emancipated from the "domination of European exegesis."[84]

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[83] Rukundwa, "Post-colonial Theory," 340.

[84] Niels P. Lemche, *The Old Testament Between Theology and History: A Critical Survey* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 324.

Cross-Textual and Encultured Readings of Biblical Texts

Crowell highlights the following three ways in which postcolonialism has been integrated into biblical studies: Firstly, by exposing the function of the Bible as a colonial mechanism by examining "archives, newspapers, personal accounts, biblical commentaries, sermons," etc. Secondly, by producing postcolonial biblical readings that challenge conventional dominant interpretations, and/or reflect the historical and cultural context of the colonized. Lastly, I will examine the text's own "colonial entanglements." Using a historical-critical approach, the intent is to identify and expose the imperial and colonial context that had a bearing on the composition of the text.[85]

This thesis will focus, to some degree, on all three forms of postcolonialism. Special attention will be given, in the next chapter, to the way in which early missionaries interacted with Canadian Indigenous peoples. Specifically, I will examine the Oblate missionaries' cooperation with the Canadian government in establishing the Residential Schooling System that was effectively an aggressive attempt to assimilate the Indigenous peoples into mainstream Euro-Canadian society. In the third chapter, I will be providing an enhanced reading of Ezra-Nehemiah, examining the development or formation of the marginalized/colonized identity as being a direct response to crisis experienced during their colonial subjugation.

To further categorize postcolonial readings of biblical texts, Crowell identifies two primary modes of interpretation: *Cross-Textual Reading* and *Encultured Reading*.[86] *Cross-*

[85] Crowell, "Postcolonial Studies," 220.

[86] Ibid., 227.

Textual Reading involves a juxtaposition of traditional indigenous stories and texts, cultural or historical, with that of biblical texts, so as to "illuminate a new understanding of the Bible within the postcolonial setting."[87] Or as Archie Lee puts it: "One text will act as the context from which the other is read."[88] Lee offers a *Cross-Textual Reading* of Isaiah 56-66 by considering it alongside the "cultural-political text" of post-colonial Hong Kong.[89] He describes the post-colonial Hong Kong community as having a "hybridised"[90] identity—i.e. an amalgamation of traditional Chinese and British cultural and socio-political identity.[91] Lee then juxtaposes this post-colonial Hong Kong identity against that of the repatriate Jews that returned from Babylonian exile, stating:

> Returnees from the Exile have to face a new community and a whole new situation which are almost entirely strange to them. Any interpretation of the complex situation that wilfully neglects or is simply ignorant of the socio-political and religio-cultural settings of the period of return and restoration is at best misleading, if not naively distorting.

Lee promotes the inclusivist nature of Isaiah 56-66 (as well as Chronicles, Jeremiah, Jonah, and Ruth), with its Gentile acceptance and openness to "foreign elements" in "its construct

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[87] Ibid.

[88] Archie C. C. Lee, "Returning to China: Biblical Interpretation in Postcolonial Hong Kong," *BibInt* 7 (1999): 161.

[89] Ibid., 162.

[90] *Hybridity* is another concept that was influential in the development of postcolonialism. It is a term introduced by Homi K. Bhabha to describe a sort of "settler-native" identity—one that is, following decolonization, comprised of both the Indigenous culture as well as the dominant colonizer's identity. Bhabha describes Hybridity as such: "Hybridity is a problematic of colonial representation and individuation that reverses the effects of the colonialist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis for its authority…The Hybrid object…retains the actual semblance of the authoritative symbol but revalues its presence by resisting it as the signifier." Homi K. Bhabha, "Signs Take for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority Under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," in *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 2004), 162-64.

[91] Lee, "Returning to China," 159-60.

of identity."[92] His belief is that a healthy political landscape with improved social conditions, for Hong Kong, is only attainable by embracing an inclusive mentality, like that of the repatriated community in Isaiah, and acknowledging hybridity as an inevitability that is not necessarily negative.[93] Lee's article will be revisited later in discussions regarding my own postcolonial reading of Ezra-Nehemiah.

Donaldson's reading of the Book of Ruth, and Warrior's take on the Exodus and Conquest story, are a couple examples of *Encultured Readings* of biblical texts. Donaldson, again, accentuates Orpah's decision to return to her mother's home as a biblical illustration of cultural and spiritual empowerment for Indigenous women. Her interpretation of the Book of Ruth is atypical in that it elevates Orpah as the story's protagonist vis-à-vis Ruth.

Warrior on the Exodus and Conquest

As noted earlier, I would like to expand on Robert Warrior's interpretation of the Exodus and Conquest story. Warrior effectively re-reads the Exodus and Conquest story in such a way that reflects his own cultural and historical experience. In so doing, he offers a rather paradoxical interpretation to that of the traditional reading by empathizing with the Canaanites, the Indigenous people who were invaded and annihilated from their own land. Warrior highlights YHWH's covenant[94] with the Israelites as consisting of two themes: deliverance and conquest.[95] For Warrior, YHWH the Deliverer is inextricable from YHWH

[92] Ibid., 171.

[93] Ibid., 172.

[94] Genesis 15:18, 21 and Exodus 3:17.

[95] Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," 262.

the Conqueror. Thus, any emancipatory rendering of the Exodus text must be considered alongside the conquest text, with its implications on the Indigenous Canaanites. Otherwise, as Warrior states, "The leading into the land becomes just one more redemptive moment rather than a violation of innocent peoples' rights to land and self-determination."[96]

Such hegemonic oppression is an unfortunate recurrence in history, as noted earlier, since North American Indigenous peoples have been historically referred to as Amalekites and Canaanites, or, "in other words, people who, if they would not be converted, were worthy of annihilation."[97] In concurrence with Sugirtharajah's call to place colonialism at the heart of biblical narrative and interpretation, Warrior argues that the Canaanites should be placed at the heart of "theological reflection and political action." He envisions that, perhaps,

> If they are true to their struggle, people will be able to achieve what Yahweh's chosen people in the past have not; a society of people delivered from oppression who are not so afraid of becoming victims again that they become oppressors themselves, a society where the original inhabitants can become something other than subjects to be converted to a better way of life or adversaries who provide cannon fodder for a nation's militaristic pride.[98]

In Warrior's opinion, emancipation for Indigenous people is not to be found within the Biblical texts, as perhaps a liberationist theologian would suggest, but will come from the Indigenous peoples themselves.[99] Or in reiterating an earlier sentiment from Sugirtharajah, liberation "must come from the collective unconscious of the people."[100]

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[96] Ibid., 264.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 265.

[100] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 262.

Chapter Summary

Colonialism not only involved geographical domination, but also involved the subsequent socio-political, economic, religious, and cultural domination of Indigenous peoples at the hands of imperial powers. Postcolonialism, thus, arose as a critical discourse from within this hegemonic context, and evolved in accord with the changing socio-political scene of a post-colonial location. It was inspired by Edward Said's discourse on *Orientalism,* among other influences, for its insight regarding the dominant Western conceptualization of the Eastern oriental, or "other." The "other" stands as a universal representation of the groups of peoples and nations that have been conceptualized as inferior, barbarous, and uncivilized by the dominant Western imperial society. As such, postcolonialism has become available as a relevant discourse to all locales and peoples seeking to undermine the perpetual oppression experienced as a result of an unbalanced power relationship.

As a literary criticism, postcolonialism intersects with an array of critical disciplines, while, at the same time, challenging those very same disciplines for what they lack. It is tactically akin to Ideological Criticism and Liberation Hermeneutics, in that it is every bit concerned about subverting dominant ideologies and eradicating injustice, as it is about reinvigorating hope and justice for society's marginalized peoples. It is a useful tool for both the perpetrators of colonialism, as well as for its victims. In this sense it is a very dynamic and practical discourse.

When applied to Biblical hermeneutics, it places colonialism at the crux of interpretation. The intent is to expose the influence of colonial "expansion" and "domination" on the overall development of the biblical narrative, as well as its influence on the interpretation of the text. I highlighted two ways, *Encultured Readings* and *Cross-Textual*

Readings, that postcolonialism engages biblical interpretation and presents new meaning to the text by speaking to the history of colonialism and its impact on the reader's cultural context. My own study will be employing a Cross-Textual Reading of Ezra-Nehemiah against that of historical policies concerning Canada's Indigenous people. As discussed in the introduction, my postcolonial hermeneutical strategy will be the focus of my third and fourth chapters. The goal is to advocate a new way of thinking about cultural identity formation for colonized peoples as being a product of experienced crisis and perpetual subjugation.

I will use the next chapter to employ a broader postcolonial perspective that will expose the hegemonic ideologies and systems that sustained a colonial structure aimed at aggressively assimilating Canada's Indigenous peoples into mainstream Euro-Canadian society via the Indian Residential Schooling system.

CHAPTER TWO
A POSTCOLONIAL PERSPECTIVE ON CANADA'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLING SYSTEM: OBLATES' ROLE IN THE COLONIAL AGENDA OF ASSIMILATION

In the progression of this study, I was confronted with the reality that I had to be aware of my own religious beliefs for the sake of fully engaging in a postcolonial mindset. While I am of Dene Suline (Chipewyan) descent, this is not to say that my postcolonial perspective exists at the expense of my Christian faith. Rather, my intent here is to take a postcolonial approach that is objective and not dictated by my own existing ideological framework. In a sense, by doing so, I am emancipated from attached ideologies that might otherwise determine the direction that this study may go. After all, that is what postcolonialism is all about—challenging the generalized acceptance of dominant ideologies that exist as a result of perpetual hegemony and dominance.

Prior to delving into the biblical text, though, I am going to apply a broader postcolonial perspective so as to expose and challenge the very systems, ideologies and structures that contributed to the colonization of Canada's Indigenous people. This chapter focuses on the role that the Church played—in cooperation with imperial powers—by instituting colonial strategies for the sake of assimilation. As Crowell writes:

> Throughout the history of Western imperial expansion, the Bible was at the center stage of the ideological colonization of subjected groups. Commercial and territorial colonization went hand-in-hand with the major missionary movements of the seventeenth through twentieth centuries. The establishment of missions, Bible translations, religious education, and conversion of subjected people were all part of the larger colonial projects.[101]

[101] Crowell, *Postcolonial Studies*, 221.

Crowell argues that Biblical ideologies were a significant driving force in the colonization of the Indigenous people in North America, as a false reading of the Bible acted as an ideological compass for the colonizer's actions.

It should be noted that this chapter is not a review of the cruelties and unjust acts committed against Canadian Indigenous peoples at the hands of European colonizers: There has been plenty written on that. Moreover, the North American Indigenous are not exempt from any history of violence, nor are they innocent of any forceful attempts of expanding their territories: "It was not rare for one group to attack another to acquire food or products, or to force acquiescence in the aggressor's use of hunting of fishing territories."[102]

Regardless, postcolonialism is not "a discourse of historical accusations,"[103] but rather aims to expose oppressive hegemonic structures and ideologies that have been imposed upon the colonized peoples by dominant societies. In so doing, it challenges and incites change in the colonizer's way of thinking and, ultimately, in their relationship with the colonized. It also *lobbies* for justice on behalf of the marginalized, constantly seeking to eradicate the very structures and ideologies that enforced such oppressive injustices.

One such example was the European's use of Indian Residential Schooling System as a means of imposing the oppressive ideology of "proper western civilization" upon Canadian Indigenous peoples. What eventually became recognized as the government's aggressive attempt to assimilate the "Indian" population into mainstream Euro-Canadian society, the Residential Schooling System targeted Indigenous youth as being the key to dealing with the

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[102] J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 12.

[103] Rukundwa, "Post-colonial Theory," 343.

"Indian problem."[104] It was designed to offer a controlled environment wherein the culture, customs and practices of Western Europeanism can be imposed upon the Indigenous youth. Various Christian churches largely administered these institutions, and thus the propagation of Christianity was just as integral to their objective, if not inextricably linked to it.

I want to make it clear here that this chapter is not intended to present the notion that the nineteenth century missionaries had as an agenda to colonize Indigenous peoples and adversely impact their cultural identity. In fact, their primary objective was evangelization, whilst also tending to the health and well-being of the Indigenous peoples. Nonetheless, the missionary movement, along with fur trading, etc., offered a mechanism through which colonialism reached the Indigenous peoples.

Jean and John Comaroff contend that early European Missionaries acted as "agents of colonialism," stating that they were "the most active cultural agents of empire, being driven by the explicit aim of reconstructing the "native" world in the name of God and European civilization." [105] Moreover, Howard Adams argues that the Catholic and protestant missionaries were just as damaging to Indigenous culture and society as the European settler or soldier.

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[104] Duncan Campbell Scott, the Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs from 1913-1932, first used the phrase "Indian problem." The context was his expressed support for the implementation of Bill 14 and the ongoing structure of *The Indian Act*. Scott is quoted as saying: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem… our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department." Brian Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), 50.

[105] Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 6-7. Although their discussion was in relation to the nineteenth-century interaction between British protestant missionaries and the Indigenous peoples of Tswana, the notion that European missionaries carried the work of European colonialism is considered on a global scale, as Elizabeth Elbourne states: "Missionaries were, in effect, agents of a first wave of globalization." Elizabeth Elbourne, "Word Made Flesh: Christianity, Modernity, and the Cultural Colonialism in the Work of Jean and John Comaroff," *AHR* 108, 2003: 436.

> Conversion to Christianity was a powerful force in the destruction of native culture and religion, and the imperialists fully understood how useful missionaries could be in subjugating colonized peoples.[106]

He adds that the missionaries may not have been aware of their specific function within the "imperialist scheme," and that their naivety in the scheme was a colonizing advantage. The missionaries were so utterly devoted to Christianizing the "heathens" that many even risked their own lives for its purpose.[107] This again represents a sincere spiritual cause.

The history of missionary contact with Canada's Indigenous peoples is quite extensive, and far too wide a scope for the purpose of this thesis.[108] The Protestants and Anglicans played a prominent role in spreading Christian influence among many Indigenous communities. However, as I myself am of Chipewyan descent, I chose to concentrate on the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (Oblate), and their missionary activity in Canada's Northwest region during the nineteenth century, as they were the primary missionaries who influenced many of the Dene tribes.[109]

In this chapter I will examine the European colonizers employment of the Indian Residential Schooling System, in the nineteenth century, as a tool of imposing hegemonic ideologies upon the Indigenous peoples in an aggressive attempt to assimilate them into the dominant mainstream society. This aggressive action had a significantly damaging and, in

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[106] Howard Adams, *Prison of Grass: Canada from a Native Point of View* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1989), 31.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Cf. Bart West, *Amazing Race: Roman Catholic and Anglican Missionaries in the Canadian Northwest, 1818-1875* (M.A. thesis, Concordia University of Edmonton, 2013).

[109] Martha McCarthy, *From the Great River to the Ends of the Earth: Oblate Missions to the Dene, 1847-1921* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1995), xvii.

some cases, irreparable impact on many Indigenous cultures. Unfortunately, it was often biblical principles and ideologies—such as Jesus' provision in Matt. 28:19 to go out and make disciples of all Nations—that spearheaded European colonial contact with the Indigenous groups through missionary vocations.

I will also provide some background into the traditional beliefs, customs and practices of the Indigenous peoples—with an emphasis on the Dene[110] where possible—in order to provide some perspective to the largely calamitous cultural shock that they experienced through the Residential Schooling System. This will be especially evident when considering the traditional educational practices of Indigenous peoples, with an emphasis on skill development that is practical for community purposes, against that of the more structured and disciplined westernized education that focused on the individual.

As I will be focusing on the Oblate missionary activity, examining the historical context of the Oblate society will especially reveal greater insight into the framework of biblical principles that guided their missionary activity. Ultimately, in conjunction with government policies, this will demonstrate how their missionary activity contributed to the colonial attempt of fully assimilating Canada's Indigenous peoples.

Missionary Movements to Canada's Northwest

As Crowell stated, the Bible was very much at the heart of European colonial expansionism in North America. In fact, Lemche identifies the Bible as being a "privileged text" over the

[110] The Dene consists of five major tribes of the Northwest Athabasca Region, each of which with its own unique language: 1) Chipewyan; 2) Slaveys; 3) *Gens de la Montagne;* 4) Yellowknives; and 5) Tlicho or Dogrib. Ibid., 14-15.

last eighteen hundred years of the developing Western civilization. He adds that the "church and the state were in alliance from the days of Constantine the Great and formed the background of later Western colonialism and imperialism."[111] As such, Christian influence kept pace with the rapid expansion of European colonialism in Canada in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, primarily through missionary vocations.

Bishop Joseph-Norbert Provencher was one of the first Catholic missionaries to attract attention to the missionary need in Canada's Northwest. In 1818, he had been appointed a permanent missionary post near the Red River region in Manitoba. Provencher believed that there was a lack of clerical and financial support in the vastly developing Northwest of Canada in mid-nineteenth century. Financial assistance would come in the likes of support from the Hudson's Bay Company. Clerical assistance, however, was difficult to achieve. For years he attempted to recruit secular priests[112] who were unattached to religious orders, but concluded that: "only a religious congregation could provide a missionary thrust that was united and disciplined."[113] Thus, it was Eugene de Mazenod and his missionary society, the Oblates, who responded to Provencher's appeal.

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[111] Lemche, *The Old Testament Between*, 317.

[112] A secular priest, also known as a diocesan clergy, is a clergyman who does not belong to any specific religious order. The secular clergy "makes no profession and follows no religious rule, he possesses his own property like laymen, he owes to his bishop canonical obedience, not the renunciation of his own will, which results from the religious vow of obedience; only the practice of celibacy in Holy Orders is identical with the vow of chastity of the religious." "Secular Clergy," Auguste Boudinhon, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 13 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912), <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13675a.htm>.

[113] Raymond J. A. Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel to the Indians and the Metis* (Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 1996), 16.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate

Eugene de Mazenod founded the OMI in 1815.[114] They had an evangelistic emphasis on serving those bound to the margins of society (the poor, servant, sick, prisoner, and dying) in order to advance the gospel to those "whose need is the greatest."[115] A key Biblical principal for the Oblates is read in Mark 2:17: "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Among those with the greatest need were the "uncivilized," who remained unexposed to the gospel. As to their instructions, when abroad on missions, William Woestman summarizes:

> In the *Instructio* for the foreign missions the missionaries were told that the promotion of the material and social progress of the people was part of their mission work as a means for the greater success of their ministry…. Schools were to be opened for the teaching of Christian doctrine along with the fine and practical arts necessary for good Christians and citizens**.** The missionaries were to instruct the people in the requirements of civil life that they might live in peace with each other and with other tribes."[116]

Of importance here is how living a Christian life was synonymous with living a good "civil life." Their mandate extended beyond merely preaching the doctrines of their faith to instructing others on how to live out that faith. The Oblates adhered to ultramontane[117] beliefs, which prevented any sort of syncretism within their mission work. That is, their goal was to spread a faith with a keen adherence to Roman Catholic doctrine that was untainted

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[114] William H. Woestman. *The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate: A Clerical Religious Congregation With Brothers* (Ottawa: Faculty of Canon Law, 1995), 21.

[115] Ibid, 164.

[116] Ibid, 166.

[117] McCarthy describes ultramontanism as such: "Ultramontanism ("beyond the mountains" seen from the perspective of northern Europe) began in the seventeenth century with the exertion of papal authority over that of the various national branches of the Roman Catholic Church. In the nineteenth century, with the rise of the liberal secular states, the claim to primacy of papal authority in matters that concerned church and state was emphasized as well." McCarthy, *From the Great River***,** 211.

by secular or syncretized beliefs and practices. Robert Choquette writes this of the Oblate's ultramontane beliefs:

> The ultramontane mindset is characterized by a profound distrust of the modern, liberal, secular societies that were the products of the French Revolution. The ultramontane Catholic sees Satan and his minions everywhere… In sum, for an ultramontane Catholic, human beings cannot be trusted; they must be protected from themselves.[118]

It was the perfect Christian mindset that would demand a societal adaptation by all of its new converts.

Oblate Contact with Indigenous Peoples of the Canadian Northwest

Missionary Oblates Pierre Aubert and Alexandre Taché arrived at Red River in 1845. From there, Taché travelled with Louis-François Laflèche (a secular priest who had arrived in Red River in 1844) to establish a mission post at Île-à-la-Crosse. Due to health complications, Laflèche remained at this post until 1849, when he was summoned by Provencher to return to St. Boniface. Taché continued travelling north and sustained an itinerant mission throughout the Canadian Northwest, until ultimately returning to St. Boniface in 1854 in order to succeed as Bishop of the Diocese following Provencher's passing.[119]

Martha McCarthy writes that Taché's visit to Fort Chipewyan in 1847 had really initiated "Oblate missions to the Dene of the Athabasca District, and the subsequent rapid expansion into the Mackenzie District."[120] Along with their primary evangelistic intent of

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[118] Robert Choquette, *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995), 4.

[119] Ibid., 40-43.

[120] McCarthy, *From the Great River*, xvii.

winning converts, the Oblates sought to improve the Dene's seemingly poor living conditions by "providing medical care, education, and help in times of need."[121] The missionaries soon realized that their initial objective of converting the Dene would not be immediately met, but would only result, if ever, after a relationship was firmly established and sustained over a long period of time.[122]

In order to establish effective communication, the Oblates learned the Dene languages. They also provided them with booklets and hymns translated in their native languages.[123] A more thorough understanding of the Indigenous language was the only way in which the missionary could properly convey their message. If they were not proficient in their understanding of the language then they would not appeal to their audience. Raymond Huel writes that in some cases, "the Indians claimed that the missionaries spoke like children and, hence, they would be treated accordingly."[124]

The missionaries also became educated in Dene beliefs, and utilized the parallels with their own beliefs as evangelistic tools. McCarthy references the theory of "inculturation" to describe the relationship between the Oblates and Dene, saying: "According to this theory, the Christian message must assume its own life within many cultures without destroying them."[125] For instance, in Taché's *Sketch of the Northwest of America,* written in 1870, he writes:

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[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid., 2-3.

[123] Ibid., 5.

[124] Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel*, 31.

[125] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* xviii. Ruy Costa defines inculturation as an "apologetic method focused on the translation/interpretation of a received text for a given culture...." Though inculturation is often

> The Indians of the Northern Department, even before the arrival of missionaries amongst them, were possessed of some religious ideas, at least some biblical traditions, easily recognized, interwoven with the gross follies and superstitions which encompass them.[126]

One such example, as McCarthy notes, is the traditional Chipewyan belief that a "great flood" had once consumed the land. McCarthy adds:

> Instead of Noah's ark, however, a small floating island proved to be the refuge for humanity. Some Oblates viewed Dene beliefs of this kind as remnants of Biblical revelation, clouded by the mists of centuries of oral retelling, which they could clarify by their teaching.[127]

By the late 1850's, the Oblates had firmly established themselves among the Dene tribes. Abel highlights that along with restlessly learning the Dene languages and translating religious material, the missionary would also conduct two masses a day and constantly visit the people to provide medical assistance and spiritual counselling. Upon learning specific tenets of the faith, the Dene would be offered baptism. From there, they would be encouraged to adhere to church doctrine, as well as observe specific ceremonies and holy days—such as Christmas, Easter, Immaculate Conception Day (December), and the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (August)—after which they would be given their first communion.[128]

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seen as synonymous to contextualization, Costa identifies the difference, saying: "contextualization sees this [same] translation/interpretation as a dialectical process in which text and context are interdependent." Ruy O. Costa, "Inculturation, Indigenization, and Contextualization," in *One Faith, Many Cultures,* ed. Ruy O. Costa (Cambridge, Mass.: Orbis Books and Boston Theological Institute, 1988), xii.

[126] Alexandre A. Taché, *Sketch of the Northwest of America,* trans. Donald Roderick Cameron (Montreal: Printed by J. Lovell, 1870), 117.

[127] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* 74.

[128] Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005), 117.

McCarthy emphasizes that it was by no means the intent of the Oblates to alter or damage the Dene culture and way of life through their ministry. Instead, their intentions were to provide a better lifestyle for those who needed it most. As was the case with Mazenod and his missionary activity in France, the heart of their evangelistic outreach of the Oblates was to reach out to the poor and marginal of society. The Oblates, in general, were not known for being intrusive and imposing. Rather, they maintained relations with Indigenous peoples that was, "responsive and interactive in nature."

Thus, any Dene conversion to Catholicism was done so "on their own terms, in conformity with their own cultural and spiritual understandings." Nonetheless, McCarthy concludes that

> Though they did not consciously seek to impose secular 'civilization,' Western thought and the cultural aspects of Christianity were inseparable from their religious message and the social changes they encouraged.[129]

These western cultural influences differed greatly from the traditional Dene way of life, and would ultimately prove to have a major impact on the sustainability of the traditional culture for those children who were subjected to the Residential Schooling system. In order to develop a fuller understanding of the way in which the Government and church missionaries affected Indigenous culture, it is necessary to briefly examine Indigenous cultural beliefs and practices, especially in regards to educational practices, prior to the imposition of westernized socio-cultural practices.

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[129] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* 74.

The "Indian" Way of Life: A Positive Perspective by Missionaries

Taché's book provides a helpful glimpse into the nineteenth century Canadian Northwest geography and population. In a discussion regarding the "Indian" way of life, he comments that the mainstream reference to the "Indians" as "savages" should not be interpreted as a negative descriptive term conveying them as barbarous, the way it is today. Rather, *it should simply reflect their contrasting lifestyle in comparison to western civilization*. He writes:

> …in their manner of life there is something wild, or, as opposed to the term *civilized* applied to nations practicing religion, living under a form of government, obeying laws, and following arts and industry.[130]

There was also a common assumption that Indigenous people spoke incoherent form of language, but Taché is quick to dismiss that false notion too.

> The dialects are not inarticulate sounds, as some have unhesitatingly asserted; they are not mutilated, unintelligible, meaningless fragments; no, on the contrary, they are true language, expressive of all the ideas which occur to the mind, and all the feelings of those who speak them. Their idioms convey to you…all that fills the minds of these poor children of the forest, whom you probably decline to acknowledge as fellow-beings; equally well do they express all that you could desire to say to them.[131]

Contrary to popular belief at the time, Taché notes that the Indigenous peoples spoke a unique dialect that contained all the emotional expressions and vernacular present in any language. He also contested a common misconception of the Indigenous peoples as being less than a human being by appealing to their children, with their need for affection, affirmation, and guidance just like any other child.

Regarding wealth and possessions, Taché adds: "Money wealth is unknown…its value and use are unknown to Indians."[132] This led many to assume that they were living in

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[130] Taché, *Sketch of the Northwest,* 110.

[131] Ibid., 114.

[132] Ibid., 111.

extreme poverty. For the Indigenous peoples, though, this was far from the truth. They were a people grounded in community values and did not emphasize individual wellbeing and prosperity, but rather concentrated on holistic community wellbeing. To this, Miller writes:

> [I]n Indian society…prestige was established and maintained not by piling up and hoarding wealth, but by distributing it among their followers. Generosity was a defining characteristic of these societies…Sharing and redistribution of material goods were not just admired but required; acquisitiveness and selfishness were abhorred and shunned.[133]

Evidently, as much as the Oblates desired to reach out and influence the lives of the Indigenous, the Indigenous influenced the lives of the missionaries. They depicted a sense of communal living that more so reflected early Christian living as is seen in early Church writings, than it did the Oblate's own nineteenth century European Christian living.[134] They lived within their means in providing sustenance. The Dene, for example, were primarily caribou hunters, and thus were "the closest to being an affluent society, since their major food and clothing resource was relatively stable and plentiful."[135]

Being hunters entailed that the Dene were nomadic by nature. Their dwelling was dependent on their resources, and their resources were constantly in motion. Taché was astonished by this reality, as he expresses, quite beautifully, the Indigenous peoples' lifestyle:

> Without a house, as a rule without even a fixed abode, skin tents, (loges) huts of bark or of branches, or even of snow and ice, often the Almighty's great chamber, without other roof than the starry or cloudy firmament—these are the Indian's habitations, and he changes them at will.[136]

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[133] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 11.

[134] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* xviii.

[135] Ibid., 13.

[136] Taché, *Sketch of the Northwest,* 110.

By referring to their home as anything that falls beneath the "Almighty's great chamber," Taché is speaking to their free and adventurous spirit. They were not controlled or subjected to societal confinements, such as establishing a fixed home and career. They did not neglect to experience the fullness of creation, and rather than seeking to control it, they yielded to it's oscillate, bewildering, and yet majestic nature.

Adams writes that there was a unique way in which the Indigenous peoples operated as a society prior to colonization. Within individual tribes, there was no specific individual who would have been considered the leader of the tribe for as long as they lived. Rather, the tribe would undergo a process of electing an individual as a leader for a specific purpose, and once that purpose was fulfilled, or when the tribe decided to elect a new leader, that individual would no longer assume a leadership role. This leader, or chief, was there more so for the purposes of lending wisdom and advice, rather than direction and instruction.[137]

A Wrong Turn for the Oblates? The Political Effects of Ultramontanism

Perhaps it was initially the intentions of the Oblates to simply share their own theological perspective. As was discussed above, they educated themselves in Indigenous peoples' culture, practices, and beliefs. Then utilized points of religious intersection as evangelistic opportunities. These teachings, along with the established trust and relationships, resulted in the conversion of many Indigenous peoples. In fact, Taché discussed having the most missionary success with the Dene, for instance, stating: "nearly all the [Dene] family have accepted our holy religion, and the great majority of them faithfully observe its important

[137] Adams, *Prison of Grass*, 16-20. NB. Indigenous communities had different forms of government, and this is simply an example of one form.

obligations."[138] However, as John Grant writes: "An Oblate mission, whatever it might offer by way of education and good works, existed chiefly for indoctrination in the Roman Catholic faith and the cultivation of piety."[139]

The Oblates held ultramontane beliefs, and thus desired to conform their converts to the traditional Roman Catholic mould. In order to ensure that their Indigenous converts were maturing properly in their faith, the missionaries needed a way in which they would be able to both monitor and dictate their behaviour and actions. Such an opportunity came in the likes of education, seeing as a school and a set curriculum would provide for a monitored environment that would ensure control over what the Indigenous peoples were being taught. But, before I continue a discussion on the Residential Schools, I think it is important to juxtapose it with that of the traditional Indigenous system of education.

Indigenous Peoples' Educational System: Pre-Colonization

In *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*, Miller offers a comprehensive overview of early Indigenous peoples' education in North America prior to the imposition of Europeanized education. To be fair to the numerous tribes or communities across the continent that are unique in their respective cultural, societal, and religious practices, Miller recognizes a commonality among them in their educational approaches that he refers to as the "Aboriginal system of education." Regarding this traditional system, Miller writes:

> The common elements in Aboriginal education were the shaping of behavior by positive example in the home, the provision of subtle guidance towards desired forms

[138] Taché, *Sketch of the Northwest,* 133.

[139] John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 112.

> of behavior through the use of games, a heavy reliance on the use of stories for didactic purposes, and, as the child neared early adulthood, the utilization of more formal and ritualized ceremonies to impart rite-of-passage lessons with due solemnity.[140]

In many Indigenous tribes, such as with the Dene, it was not a common practice to strike children when they misbehaved. Instead, and as Miller notes, teaching children was a gentle but effective process, and discipline was more often met with "embarrassment or warning stories rather than physical punishment or loss of privileges."[141] The collective community would subtly participate by directing the children toward more appropriate means of conduct.

There was also a common respect among Indigenous communities for individual autonomy, i.e. an individual's right to live their life their own way, without the imposing influence from another. For example, with regards to children, Miller writes that they had a significant amount of freedom for "self-expression," and the "use of direct, coercive techniques of behaviour modification" was rarely, if ever, implemented.[142] Much of early childhood education came in the form of play, and more often than not had a bearing on the development of relevant skills that would be useful to them as an adult, e.g. young boys playing with bows and arrows would prepare them to grow up as warriors and hunters.[143] The adult participation in the children's learning system was subtle but purposeful. By constantly listening to and observing the adults as they completed daily tasks, the child's

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[140] J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 17.

[141] Ibid., 18.

[142] Ibid., 19.

[143] Ibid., 22-23.

education followed naturally: "In many of the activities in which children tagged along with adults, an implicit purpose was for the young ones to 'look, listen, and learn' from the model of adult behaviour."[144]

This type of education differs significantly from that of the dominant Western type. In fact, Rev. Peter Jones, an Indigenous convert to Christianity, offered a report regarding Indigenous education, noting his negative perception of parental influence:

> It is a notorious fact, that the parents in general exercise little or no control over their children, allowing them to do as they please. Being thus left to follow their own wills, they too frequently wander about the woods with their bows and arrows, or accompany their parents in their hunting excursions… I am very anxious to see Manual Labour Schools established amongst our people, that the children may be properly trained and educated to habits of industry and usefulness.[145]

Thus, the European colonial's response was to establish a system and structure that would separate the Indigenous children from their parents, at a very young age, and offer a controlled environment wherein they could advance the process of assimilation.

Civilizing the "Indian": Religious and Social Expectations

Miller also provides some helpful context with regards to the establishment of Indian Residential Schools by considering the temporal social status of Indigenous peoples within the larger framework of the vastly expanding British North America. The relationship between Indigenous peoples and Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth century was one that largely "promoted interracial cooperation" as the Europeans were "dependent on

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[144] Ibid., 21.

[145] Reverend Peter Jones as quoted in Alison L. Prentice and Susan E. Houston, *Family, School & Society in Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), 222.

the indigenous population for the conditions that would allow them to harvest fish, furs, and souls…."[146] This relationship then shifted in the eighteenth to early nineteenth century to one of "diplomacy and military alliance," as the Indigenous peoples offered a means of transportation as well as military assistance in the Europeans endeavour for geographical control of North America.[147] Following the War of 1812, though, Miller writes that the relationship changed significantly, and at the expense of the Indigenous peoples:

> The arrival of an age of peace, immigration, and agriculture in British North America meant a dramatically different relationship between Natives and newcomers, a shift in relations that explains the effort of state and church to assimilate Aboriginal communities through residential schools…The fundamental factor was that the Indians were no longer essential to the realization of the goals that non-Natives were pursuing in North America.[148]

With the value of the Indigenous people quickly dissipating in the eyes of the Euro-Canadians, a concerted effort was made to assimilate them into the dominant Western society. As Miller highlights, this was a joint effort made by both the governing state and the Church. After all, Christianization was synonymous with civilization.

Following 1830, the governing body responsible for developing Indian policy no longer saw the Indigenous peoples as a military ally, and thus regarded "[the Indians] as social and economic problems who would benefit from Christianization and the adoption of sedentary agriculture."[149] For the church and state alike, the question was not as much about whether or not it was ethically right to assimilate the Indigenous peoples into mainstream

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[146] Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision,* 61-62.

[147] Ibid., 62.

[148] Ibid.

[149] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 128.

Western society, as it was about deciding on the most effective means of accomplishing this task. For both, the already established schooling system made the most sense, as its daily schedule would allot equal time for both study as well as the development of horticultural and cultivation skills.[150]

These established "Indian" schools were "manual-labour schools," and were primarily operated and funded by the various protestant, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches from the early to late nineteenth century. These schools, as noted, equally emphasized a religious curriculum as well as a skills development program. Derek Smith refers to this system of education as the "pedagogy of work," i.e. the schooling system would prepare Indigenous children from a very young age to conform to the religious and social expectations of Western civilization.[151] These expectations were realized as "disciplined habits of work" that would "effectively prepare industrial school inmates for full participation in the emerging Canadian society and economy."[152]

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[150] Grant, *Moon of Wintertime,* 86. Though this will be discussed in chapter four, "Asserting Indigenous Identity Vis-à-vis *The Indian Act*," I wanted to make a brief comment about *The Gradual Civilization Act* of 1857. The act included a provision that "Indians" who were adequately educated, "debt-free, and of good moral character" could ultimately forfeit their "Indian" status and become "enfranchised" as full-fledged British Canadian citizens. This act was followed over a decade later by the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869, which further outlined provisions by which an "Indian" can gain recognition as a true citizen of Canada. See, "An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian affairs, and to Extend the Provisions of the Act 31st Victoria, Chapter 42**."** Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada: www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010204/11001 00010206. As appealing as this must have appeared to the government who chalked these Acts up, they were not received with the same enthusiasm by Indigenous peoples. What they revealed, however, was the government's perception of social and cultural superiority, and the subsequent perception that an inferior and less advanced civilization would be privileged to assimilate. Yazzie refers to this type of thinking as "Social Darwinism." That is, an assumption "that an elite has the moral and legal right to shape the destinies of Indigenous minorities." Robert Yazzie, "Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Colonialism," in *Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision,* ed. by Marie Battiste (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 46.

[151] Derek G. Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization' and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools for Native Peoples in Canada, 1870-95," *Anthropologica* 43 (2001): 257.

[152] Ibid., 257-58.

The Rise of the Residential Schools

The Government's direct involvement in the Residential Schooling saga was, perhaps, officially initiated when the Dominion of Canada purchased the lands owned by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1870. Choquette states:

> Thereafter, in fulfilling its constitutional responsibilities as guardian and supervisor of Indian interests, the Crown sought to regulate and control Indian life, schools included.[153]

Beginning in 1871, the Canadian government entered into Treaty agreements with Canada's Indigenous groups, which outlined, among other items, Federal responsibility for education on Indigenous peoples land.[154]

Then, in 1879, Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald assigned Nicholas Flood Davin to examine the "policy of aggressive assimilation" implemented for the Indigenous peoples living in the United States. Davin's report, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*, was submitted and formed the backdrop for the same aggressive approach to be implemented in Canada through the Indian Residential Schooling System. Of the report, Grant writes that Davin:

> …proposed a system of industrial schools, with funds supplied and standards set by the state, but then recommended for them practically the same system of contracting with the missions…The situation on the plains called for immediate action, and the churches had a reservoir of experience in Indian education that could not quickly be duplicated.[155]

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[153] Choquette, *The Oblate Assault,* 218-19.

[154] "Treaties With Aboriginal People in Canada," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, http://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100032291/1100100032292.

[155] Grant, *Moon of Wintertime,* 158.

Davin also stressed the importance of separating the children from their families at a very young age—a recommendation that was earlier expressed by Egerton Ryerson in 1847, as well as by Sir Robert Bagot in 1844, then Governor General of the Province of Canada.[156] The government accepted Davin's report and recommendations, and this entailed that the Churches would henceforth play a prominent role in the collaborative effort to educate and assimilate the Indigenous peoples into the Euro-Canadian mould.[157]

There were two forms of Residential Schools. The first was the Boarding School, and the second was the Industrial School. Choquette writes that the Industrial Schools differed from Boarding Schools simply in that they were "a chain of better funded residential schools," implemented by Canadian government, following 1883, but still administered by the Churches. Both types of Residential Schools would enrol Indigenous children at the very young age of 6 or 7, and "systematically endeavoured to remove the Indian from the child" by superimposing upon the children the dominant Western customs, culture, and beliefs, whilst condemning traditional ones.[158]

It is very clear that education was a key component of the government's aggressive attempt of civilizing the Indigenous peoples. John Milloy expands on the emphasis that the government placed on education, saying:

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[156] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens*, 135. Another important aspect of the Indian Residential School saga was the compulsory attendance for all Indigenous children between the ages of seven and fifteen years. Compulsory attendance became law in 1920 with the passing of Bill 14, which is primarily known as the amendment to *The Indian Act* that enabled the involuntary enfranchisement of "Indians" "against their will." Regarding the new compulsory attendance law, Titley writes: "the superintendent general was empowered by means of truant officers and penalties to compel the attendance at school of all Indian children…." Titley, *A Narrow Vision,* 90-1.

[157] Grant, *Moon of Wintertime,* 158.

[158] Choquette, *The Oblate Assault,* 219.

> [The] connection between schools and citizenship, and thus between education of First Nations cultural extinction, remained a particularly regrettable aspect of Federal policy. Each successive Indian Act in the period under review, carried enfranchisement provisions…The 1876 Act, for example, provided that anyone earning a university degree or 'admitted…to practice law,' or 'who may enter Holy Orders…shall ipso facto become and be enfranchised under this Act.' And, of course, the residential schools continued to operate with federal funding until 1986.[159]

It is also clear that the government viewed the various Christian churches, with their already established schooling systems, as a key component to the overall realization of their assimilationist goals. Still, McCarthy argues that westernized education, "was not integral to [the Oblates] own role as missionaries to the Dene," nor was it viewed as "essential to the Christianization of the Dene."[160] Nonetheless, education remained, on a larger scale, a primary mode of evangelization for all Christian churches, and thus forced the Oblates to integrate it as a priority into their own agenda, i.e. if they had any hope of keeping pace with the Christianization of the Indigenous peoples.

Oblate's and Schooling: Christianizing and Civilizing Through Education

Eugene de Mazenod had initially emphasized the missionaries' primary role as preachers of the faith superseding their role as educators. However, their missionary expansion into Canada's Northwest region really cemented education as a key evangelistic tool, and there were multiple reasons for this. First and foremost, the Oblate`s emphasis on formal schooling increased in accordance with the Church Missionary Society's emphasis on schooling.[161]

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[159] John Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism: A Century of Dishonour, 1869 – 1969," *NCFNG* (2008): 5, http://fngovernance.org/publications/research/indian_act_colonialism_a _century_of_dishonour_1869_1969.

[160] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* 169.

[161] Ibid., 155-57

Moreover, by 1851, Mazenod had made his expectations clear going forward with regards to schooling for children at respective missionary outposts. In his "Instruction on Foreign Missions," Mazenod writes:

> [T]here must be in each mission, where it is possible, a school in which, under the wise direction of a master, the children may learn, along with Christian doctrine, secular knowledge which is useful to learn concerning the arts of contemporary living.[162]

In order to ensure that the Indigenous peoples were truly conforming to the Roman Catholic faith, in both belief and action, Mazenod henceforth required that the Oblate missionaries implement a system of education through which they could monitor and control the Indigenous peoples' activity. Education would also ensure that the Indigenous children would be equipped and prepared "to live and function within a sedentary, civilized society," that was quickly being dominated by "traditions and values of western European civilization."[163]

Seeing as there were simply not enough Oblate missionaries to staff all the schools, many of the Oblate's Residential Schools were staffed by members of the Grey Nuns. This joint effort was significant for a few reasons. First of all, it was an opportunity for the growing Canadian female institution to participate in Church missionary activity. [164]

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[161] De Mazenod, as quoted in Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 262.

[163] Huel, *Proclaiming the Gospel,* 99.

[164] McCarthy notes that the Grey Nuns "would be a priceless asset to the missionary effort of an entirely male clergy." She adds that the Church Missionary Society had "wives who proved invaluable auxiliaries to their endeavour," and the hope was that the Grey Nuns would "offset the activities of some of the wives of [Hudson Bay Company] servants who spread CMS teachings antagonistic to the priests…" McCarthy, *From the Great River*, 157-59.

Moreover, it marked an era for Roman Catholicism in which education, as it correlated with civilization, would play a prominent role in the Church's overall missionary approach.[165]

Residential Schools were built and staffed by the Oblates and Grey Nuns in the Northwest that "dominated" the regions of Providence, Fort Chipewyan, and Fort Resolution.[166] Their curriculum provided for both religious instruction as well as basic "secular" instruction, i.e., reading, writing, mathematics, etc.[167] Grant provides the following description of the expectations that were consistent pretty well amongst all Residential Schools:

> In view of this concern not merely to impart instruction but to change work habits and personality patterns, the residential school was geared for a total impact on the child. It was to be 'something like a Christian home' and saw itself very much *in loco parentis*. Long lists of rules set the limits of acceptable behaviour, and corporate punishment was a regular feature of school life. The enforcement of European standards of cleanliness and tidiness also had high priority."[168]

One of the common rules implemented at the schools was the banning of traditional Indigenous languages. Though it has undoubtedly contributed to the detriment of many Indigenous groups' language,[169] "it was hailed in its time as contributing to 'the spiritual and

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[165] Ibid., 157.

[166] Ibid., xix.

[167] Ibid., 160.

[168] Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*, 178.

[169] Taylor makes the following alarming statement regarding the status of Indigenous languages in Canada: "Those few Aboriginal groups that have retained their heritage language guard it jealously, and those whose language is endangered are attempting restoration. In Canada, for example, it is estimated that of 53 Aboriginal groups, only the Cree, Ogibway, and the Inuit have any chance of having their language survive. Donald M. Taylor, *The Quest for Identity: From Minority Groups to Generation Xers* (Westport: Praeger, 2002), 46-47. More information can be found online at, the *Site for Language Management in Canada*, https://slmc.uottawa.ca/?q=native_peoples_languages.

temporal welfare of these people' and even as 'having marked effect on nearly the whole tribe.'"[170]

Smith argues that the Government and Churches, who were facilitating these structures of dominance, were doing so behind the veil of religious virtuosity that was assumed to benefit society as a whole.[171] Adams views this persistent imposition of religious life as indicative of the Oblate's ethnocentrism. As such, in Adams' opinion, there is seemingly little that separates the missionaries from the colonizers. He writes:

> [The missionaries] maintained that Europeans had the right to rule over Indians because natives had only barbaric institutions; therefore, Indians should serve their natural masters and place themselves under the protection of the white man.[172]

This statement is reminiscent of what Rhonda Hammer is referring to when comparing the colonizer and colonized as a "master" and "slave," respectively. This is a very strong statement to make, and I am not sure that it appropriately portrays the relationship between the Oblates and the Indigenous peoples. Certainly not, if as McCarthy argues, it was not the genuine intentions of the Oblate missionaries to calamitously affect Indigenous people's culture. Perhaps the missionaries were unaware of the significant role that they played in the British colonial scheme of assimilating the Indigenous peoples. However, Christianization was viewed as being synonymous with civilization, and this entailed that cultural imposition would come part and parcel with their evangelistic attempts. As such, there is a valid argument that would suggest the Oblates were a cooperative partner in the

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[170] Ibid., 179.

[171] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 260.

[172] Adams, *Prison of Grass,* 31.

overall implementation of oppressive policies aimed at assimilating the Indigenous peoples of Canada.

In the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time? Oblate's Role in the Aggressive Assimilation of the Indigenous Peoples

McCarthy speaks to the historically positive relationship that the Oblates maintained with the many Indigenous groups with whom they came in contact, including the Dene. Regarding Residential Schools, for instance, she emphasizes that the Oblates were, so to speak, handcuffed by government policies. When the government assumed control of providing education to the Indigenous peoples, as outlined in the Treaties, it made more practical and economic sense for the administration of these schools to continue under the direction of the churches that had established them. Likewise, considering that the Oblates financial situation when it came to sustaining these schools was in dire straits, they were left with no other option but to enforce government policies at their schools "as the only way to insure government support for their schools."[173]

Thus the Oblates and Grey Nuns incorporated the government's policies and regulations into their curriculum—policies that had a dramatic impact on the Dene, as with all Indigenous groups:

> It was the government [that] enforced policies of assimilation, which imposed rules that only English or French should be spoken. This had a devastating effect, causing many children to lose their knowledge of their Native tongue. When the children returned to their home communities incapable of speaking their Native language, they were unable to join in prayers with their community. This separated them from the religious life of their families as well.[174]

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[173] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* 169.

[174] Ibid., 167.

Despite being regulated by government policies and operating with a destitute budget, the Oblates were able to keep the school doors open and provide sustenance to numerous Dene children, many of whom were orphaned.

Moreover, McCarthy writes that: "For both boys and girls, the loss of family life during the years they spent at school was keenly felt and had enduring effects…."[175] The experience was also painful for the parents who had their children separated from them, and when the children returned, the parents "recognized the inadequacies of the school system to prepare their children for the life they would lead."[176] To this, McCarthy writes:

> When they assumed responsibility for Dene children, neither the Oblates nor the Grey Nuns foresaw that these children would be unable to readapt to Dene life, nor be equipped for any other kind of life. It took some years before this recognition became widespread. Even when the acknowledgement took place, school policy still held that it was better to attempt to inculcate a Western type of education than to adapt the school to Dene culture.[177]

This Westernized system of education proved to be "totally alien to Dene culture" and was entirely "impossible for them to adapt to their own lives."[178] Regardless of how well intentioned the Oblates were by initially envisioning a "Dene Roman Catholic living in the bush"[179] following graduation from the schools, the government's policies and regulations forced them to emphasize cultural aspects that reflected and emphasized dominant Western society.

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[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid, 163.

[179] Ibid., 169.

Smith, on the other hand, argues that the missionaries, and Oblates in particular, seemed to deliberately exercise mass "cultural replacement" or "cultural destruction," by the use of the Residential schooling system as a tactic in their Christianizing Indigenous peoples.[180] Smith re-examines John Tobias' analysis of "protection, civilization, and assimilation"[181] as cultural "projects of governance" regarding Indian policy development in Canada. In general agreement with Tobias' overall themes of governance, Smith ultimately detracts from the analysis due to its overemphasis and focus on state-governed policies. Moreover, he disagrees that these policies are to be primarily understood in the context of a particular period of time, e.g. policies of "civilization" delineating the period following 1812, when, as Miller put it, the government no longer saw the Indigenous peoples as necessary players in the realization of the goals set out by Euro-Canadians. Instead, his analysis considers the role of non-state structures, such as the Churches, as being "elaborately interconnected" with the government in their "political rationales, practices, routines, projects and programs of action" in dealing with Canadian Indigenous peoples.[182]

Smith also highlights that in addition to the implementation of education, Mazenod wrote in his 1856 *Instructions on Foreign Missions,* that the missionaries:

> …neglect nothing which will assist nomad tribes to renounce the customs of their wander life and to choose for them locations where they may learn to build houses, to cultivate the land and to familiarize themselves with the first arts of civilization.[183]

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[180] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 261.

[181] See, John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada,* ed. J.R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 127-44. I will be discussing Tobias' article in further detail in chapter four, when I present the dominant ideologies that motivated the development and implementation of historical "Indian" policy.

[182] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 257.

[183] De Mazenod, as quoted in Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 261.

For Smith, these instructions draw clear parallels with that of Davin's report, as he cites the commonalities being:

> [D]iscouragement of nomadic ways, persuasion of Native peoples to settle permanently and to occupy permanent housing, acquisition of skills in the 'artis of civilization,' selection of lands and locations for Indian communities on their behalf, allotment of land in severality rather than as common property.[184]

From this perspective, the Residential Schools were designed specifically to counter the points at which the Indigenous peoples' culture would deviate from the Europeanized cultural norms. Indeed, there existed numerous cultural differences. Smith calls the Schools "powerful instruments" of "intense surveillance and individuation of a population," as they allowed for the expedited acculturation of the Indigenous peoples—producing "obedient, law-abiding citizens" as well as "faithful, moral, and virtuous Christians."[185] As such, he argues that the schools "must be understood as a joint venture in governance" [186] by both the State and Church:

> Secular and mission concepts of how to handle "the Indian problem" intersected in Davin's report as in so many other locations. They became inter-locked in complex, mutually reinforcing strands of practices such that it is difficult to disentangle them historically and analytically, precisely because they were elaborately interconnected throughout nineteenth century cultural politics.

Smith is clearly not convinced that the Oblate's hands were tied by government policy that forced them to reluctantly adhere to strict policy and programming, as McCarthy would suggest. Instead, he sees the Oblates, along with the other Christian denominations administering the Residential Schools, as being collaborative partners in the overall

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[184] Ibid., 264.

[185] Ibid., 263.

[186] Ibid., 266.

employment of key colonial structures that perpetrated hegemony and assimilation. In concluding his analysis, Smith cites a profoundly revealing statement that was made by a Rev. Fr. A.M. Carion, an Oblate cleric from the Kamloops Indian Residential School in 1895:

> We keep constantly before the mind of the pupils the object which the government has in view... which is to civilize the Indians and to make them good, useful and law-abiding members of society. A continuous supervision is exercised over them, and no infraction of the rules of morality and good manners is left without due correction. (Cronin, 1960: 215)[187]

The Oblates were fully aware of the government's intentions of assimilating the Indigenous peoples, and they were willing to cooperate in implementing the policies aimed at accomplishing this task. In fact, this is evident in the apology that was offered by the Oblates, in 1991, as McCarthy notes: "[The Oblates] apologized for the abuse caused to the Natives by the very existence of the residential schools, their attempt to assimilate Indigenous peoples, and the important role played by the Oblates in carrying out that purpose."[188]

A New Way of Thinking

> [T]he schools were indeed a puzzle for the Native peoples, a puzzle of misrecognition so characteristic of relations of domination and wide-scale cruelty, that they were undeniably a source of personal and community despair." [189]

In 2008, former Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered an apology to the Indigenous students who had been subjected to the Indian Residential Schools. In his apology, Harper stated: "There is no place in Canada for the attitudes that inspired the Indian Residential

[187] Ibid., 268.

[188] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* 168.

[189] Smith, "The 'Policy of Aggressive Civilization,'" 260.

Schools system to ever prevail again…." [190] Ironically, and as was mentioned in the introduction, it was only a year later that Harper insisted that Canada did not have a history of colonialism. Unfortunately, this mentality expressed suggests that his original apology was perhaps merely a publicity maneuver. It is exactly this type of thinking, or attitude as Harper called it, that postcolonialism seeks to confront and eradicate. In claiming no responsibility for colonial actions, Harper is doing an injustice against the Indigenous peoples whose culture and identity have been historically afflicted by colonialism.

The number of Indigenous children that attended the Residential Schooling system, from the mid-nineteenth century until the late twentieth century, is estimated at over 150,000.[191] The journey to reconciliation and renewal for these people and their families is an ongoing process, and will take time. Hearing the stories of Residential School survivors, remembering those who have passed, and refusing to forget this dark period of Canadian history is essential to the healing and education required in this process.[192] Furthermore, a fundamental element to this process is the recognition of Indigenous peoples' right to self-determination. This concept will be discussed in greater detail in the fourth chapter, "Asserting Indigenous Identity Vis-à-vis *The Indian Act*." Here, suffice it to say that in order for this right to be fully asserted, the non-Indigenous community, and government

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[190] The full apology from Stephen Harper, former Prime Minister of Canada, can be read online at: "Statement of Apology to Former Students of Indian Residential Schools," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100015644/1100100015649.

[191] "Residential Schools," Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, http://www.trc.ca/web sites/trcinstitution/index.php?p=4. This number includes First Nations, Metís, and Inuit children. The last Residential School in Canada closed in 1996.

[192] The recommendations made by the TRC also need to be addressed, as they are essential to the overall process of National healing and reconciliation. The "Calls to Action" can be read at: "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action," TRC 2015, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution /File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

particularly, need to "listen" to the Indigenous peoples. Warrior phrases the historical relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples as such:

> Liberals and conservatives alike have too often surveyed the conditions of Native Americans and decided to come to the rescue, always using *their* methods, *their* ideas, and *their* programs. The idea that *Indians might know best how to address their own problems* is seemingly lost on these well-meaning folks.[193]

Considering the colonial history and hegemonic relationship of Euro-Canadians with the Indigenous peoples, this would require a new way of thinking. Though this new way of thinking may not have been reflected in Harper's statements above, it is certainly reflected in a testimony provided by René Fumoleau, an Oblate missionary who worked with the Dene in the Northwest since 1953. In recalling a meeting he had once attended with a number of Dene leaders, Fumoleau writes:

> After sitting in a corner of the meeting room for the first three days, I asked the person who had invited me: "Why did you invite me anyway?" But he only looked at me and walked by. It took me a bit of reflection, but I figured he was telling me something like this:
>
> '*You listen to us discussing the future of our nation, trying to shape our destiny and the destiny of our children. We're trying to break off the bonds of oppression and to decolonize ourselves; we're struggling for self-determination. Isn't it a great honour for you to witness what we're doing? You and the clergy have been talking for us for so long! Don't you think that we also have something to say? And are you willing to listen to us?'*[194]

This is a very powerful example of the type of thinking, when it comes to Indigenous issues and matters, that is needed going forward. "Listening" may be a very small gesture, but it has an enormous impact on the overall process of the restoration of Indigenous cultural

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[193] Warrior, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians," 1-2. Emphasis added.

[194] René Fumoleau, "Are You Willing to Listen?" in *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada,* eds. John Bird, Lorraine Land and Murray MacAdam (Toronto: Irwin Publishing, 2002), 260.

identity.[195] This type of thinking prioritizes the voice of the Indigenous peoples, and breaks the colonial bond of hegemony. This type of thinking undermines the dominant Euro-centrism that preceded it, and is thus a significant step toward reinstating justice for the Indigenous peoples.

Chapter Summary

As noted in the first chapter, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics," a key objective of postcolonialism is to "investigate the entanglement and entrenchment" of Euro-centrism which "sponsored, sanctioned, and sustained" colonialism.[196] This chapter, thus, was dedicated to offering a broad postcolonial perspective on the colonial systems and structures that were forced upon Canada's Indigenous peoples. To be more exact, I looked at the Indian Residential Schooling system as an oppressive structure that was intended to expedite the colonial agenda of assimilating Canada's Indigenous peoples into mainstream Euro-Canadian society. The assumption of Christianization being synonymous to civilization proved to be a key ideological principle that reinforced the colonial's assimilationist agenda. As such, the role that the Churches played in the colonial agenda was paramount to its perceived success.

This became evident as I examined the Oblate's missionary activity among the Dene tribes in Canada's Northwest region during the nineteenth century. It is clear that the governing bodies responsible for overseeing the activities of Indigenous peoples in Canada

[195] This, again, will be unpacked in greater detail in the fourth chapter, "Asserting Indigenous Identity vis-à-vis *The Indian Act*."

[196] Sugirtharajah, "Postcolonial Biblical Interpretation," 65.

considered the churches and missionaries as vital instruments to the realization of their goal to rid the land of "the Indian problem." What is not clear, however, is whether or not the churches, and specifically the Oblates, considered the "Indians" a problem that needed to be remedied. Certainly their religious zeal and ideological framework motivated their endeavour to reach out to those peoples whom they considered to be the "poorest" and "in the most need," regardless of its implication on their own health and safety. Furthermore, as McCarthy argues, the Oblates made every effort to connect on a personal and cultural level with the Indigenous peoples, exemplifying an "inculturated" approach to missions that convinces McCarthy of the "comparatively light" impact that the Oblate's "Western civilization efforts" had on their missions to the Dene.[197]

On the other hand, evidence seems to suggest that the Oblate's well-intentioned efforts to improve the lives of the Indigenous peoples had a significantly adverse impact on their culture and lives. Indigenous children were taken from their homes, at a very young age, and forced to live, for long periods of time, away from the influences of their families and culture. This displacement wrought mass affliction on the children's cultural identity, and only served to disorient them when they returned home. In this sense, though, the Oblate's actions should not be considered independently from federal policies, and the assimilative agenda that accompanied them. In order to continue to receive funding and, thus, maintain operations of their schools, the missionary schools were forced to adhere to the curricular and procedural policies established by the government. The Oblate's compliance to these oppressive policies, administered within these hegemonic institutions,

[197] McCarthy, *From the Great River,* xviii.

ultimately contributed to the overall colonial attempt to aggressively assimilate Canada's Indigenous peoples into mainstream Euro-Canadian society.

CHAPTER THREE
ASSERTING JEWISH IDENTITY VIS-À-VIS THE PERSIAN EMPIRE IN EZRA-NEHEMIAH

> The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever is among you of all his people, may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and rebuild the house of the Lord, the God of Israel—he is the God who is in Jerusalem. And let each survivor, in whatever place he sojourns, be assisted by the men of his place with silver and gold, with goods and with beasts, besides freewill offerings for the house of God that is in Jerusalem.[198]

In the first chapter, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics," I discussed how a postcolonial hermeneutical strategy seeks to place colonialism at the crux of biblical interpretation for this thesis.[199] As a subgenre of postmodernism, a postcolonial biblical reading often aims to expose and subvert traditional, or normative, interpretations that have historically been leveraged for the advancement of imperialistic and colonial agendas. It is a discourse that gives a voice to the otherwise silenced and marginalized "other." I also highlighted how postcolonialism is a very dynamic and relevant Biblical reading strategy for generating a broader hermeneutical agenda in which to view and consider an array of interpretations.

Many postcolonial biblical readings do present a subverted interpretation of the biblical text.[200] Others, though, engage the text in such a way that it informs their own

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[198] The Persian Emperor Cyrus as quoted by a Jewish subject in Ezra 1:2-4.

[199] See, Sugirtharajah, *Biblical Criticism,* 25.

[200] Cf. previous discussion on Warrior's article, "Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians: Deliverance, Conquest, and Liberation Theology Today," and Donaldson's article, "The Sign of Orpah: Reading Ruth Through Native Eyes," in chapter two, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics."

postcolonial perspective, thereby yielding a new meaning to their historical and cultural context.[201]

My own postcolonial hermeneutical strategy will be taking the latter approach. So even though I will be situating colonialism at the heart of biblical interpretation for this thesis, it is not for the sake of presenting a subverted reading. Instead, I will be juxtaposing a Cross-Textual reading of Ezra-Nehemiah with that of Canada's historical "Indian" policies, with specific emphasis on *The Indian Act*. In this way, the biblical text will "act as the context"[202] from which the colonial "Indian" policies will be understood, i.e. an informed reading.

More specifically, I will be reading the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah[203] through an Indigenous lens, and examining the prominent ideology of exclusivity as it relates to the repatriate Jew's *negotiation* of post-exilic identity. By *asserting,* I mean that post-exilic Jewish identity, as presented in Ezra-Nehemiah, was established as a clear response to their colonial context, but required incessant attention due to the socio-cultural milieu that was post-exilic Judah in the shadow of the Persian Empire. Importantly, in both cases the governing powers played a crucial role in not only the subjugation of the colonized groups, but also in empowering the groups toward an autonomous rejuvenation of cultural identity and community building**.**

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[201] See discussion on Lee, "Returning to China."

[202] Lee, "Returning to China," 161.

[203] For the most part, the topic of date and authorship is not relevant to my own postcolonial reading of the text. As such I will not be dealing with it in this study. I will simply be engaging the texts for what they say. Steinmann offers a comprehensive overview of the ongoing debate of date and authorship, but ultimately concludes that any position is "tentative and subject to revision." For more information on this topic, see Andrew E. Steinmann, *Ezra and Nehemiah* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 2-21.

The structure of this chapter will begin with a brief discussion on identity as it is considered through a postcolonial lens, i.e. how the dominant ideologies and hegemonic structures influence post-colonial identity formation. I will then examine the historical struggle and identity crisis that the repatriate Jews faced as a result of colonization, followed by the *self-directed* rebuilding of their community identity as presented in the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah.

Postcolonial Identity

> It has to be taken seriously that typical post-colonial identity can no longer be assumed to be monolithic.[204]

Postcolonialism has, as a primary objective, the goal of re-building, or renegotiating, the identity of the colonized and marginalized "other." Sugirtharajah writes that postcolonialism recognizes the process of identity formation as involving "mutual interdependence and transformation."[205] He elaborates that such an identity must consist of "the intertwined histories of the colonizer and the colonized." In so doing, an identity is constructed that "transcends the modernist notion of assimilating the marginalized and the minorities into one monolithic cultural whole."[206] What results, then, is a hybridized identity, i.e. an identity that is comprised of both the traditional culture of the colonized, as well as including components from the colonizer's culture.[207]

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[204] Lee, "Returning to China," 167.

[205] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 248.

[206] Ibid., 249.

[207] In the next chapter, I hope to leverage this idea in relation to the current status of Indigenous cultural identity. I am not suggesting that there is any "going back" pre-colonization for Indigenous peoples in this thesis. Implied by a hybridized identity is the notion that a complete return to some "fixed origin" of

Though Donald Taylor does not use the term "hybridized" in reference to group identity formation, he does recognize the inevitability of cultural "elements" from the dominant mainstream society being included in the formation of the marginalized/colonized group's identity. Nonetheless, Taylor emphasizes that

> … clarity of any redefined collective identity can only be determined in contrast to competing collective identities. That is, a collective identity can only be recognized and understood as such by the manner in which it differs from the collective identity of other groups. Simply put, identity definition is a comparative process.[208]

Thus, what becomes evident is that there is a specific response in the development of identity by those peoples subjected to colonization. For the repatriated Jews, this process can be understood in their establishment of a strict religious lifestyle based on Torah, and separating themselves from the "pollution" and uncleanliness of the land and peoples surrounding them.[209] Ezra-Nehemiah narrates this process and presents the separatist attitude as a counteraction to the very things that they believe had led to their exile in the first place.[210]

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cultural identity, prior to colonialism, is not realistic. What I argue, though, is that a new way of thinking can lend to this type of hybrid existence with mutual peace and benefits in Canada.

[208] Taylor, *The Quest for Identity*, 120.

[209] This is the primary purpose of the purity and kosher food laws in Leviticus 11-15. See, Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1966). It also relates to the prohibition of intermarriage; though this was still possible if the Gentile was willing to convert. Patten recognizes Gentile conversion during the exilic period as being justified on the basis of covenant, not law. During the exile, Law was emphasized and enforced to avoid syncretism, and as "a response to the political and religious crisis of that time" (Deut. 23:3-8). Still, and with regards to conversion, he cites Ruth's marriage to Boaz as resulting from the "covenant-like commitment of Ruth to Naomi: 'Your people will be my people and your God my God [Ruth 1:16]." See Malcom Patten, "Multicultural Dimensions of the Bible," *EvQ* 85 (2013): 195-210.

[210] Cf. 2 Kings 17:7-23. This specifically relates to the northern Kingdom of Israel and to the Assyrian Empire. But the theological principles are the same for Judah.

Still, as Sugirtharajah notes, there is no denying the social and cultural influence that a dominant colonial society will have on its colonized population. The social, cultural, political and economic landscape is dictated by the dominant mainstream society, and this reality inevitably injects itself into the historical narrative of the colonized. What results is an unavoidable incorporation of socio-cultural elements of the dominant population into the colonized construction of identity. This will be unpacked in greater detail in the next chapter regarding the current status of Indigenous identity in all its plurality, but is also, though implicitly, present in the narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah.

Colonial Context for Ezra-Nehemiah's Exclusivism

The sixth through the fifth century B.C.E was a fundamental period in the development of Jewish[211] identity.[212] Interestingly there seems to have been a sense of vibrancy for the faithful Israelites while in exile. Charles Torrey writes that, though in deportation from their homeland, the Israelite's devotion to "Jerusalem and the sacred province in which it lay" was more alive than ever before.[213] John Kessler comments on the religious piety expressed by

[211] I am aware of the debate regarding the identification of the community of repatriates as 'Judeans' or 'Jews.' For the sake of simplicity in this thesis, I refer to Holmgren's analysis that concludes: "The people known as 'Israel' before the Exile are now identified as 'Jews.' Frederick Carlson Holmgren, *Israel Alive Again: A Commentary on the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids: WM. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), xiii.

[212] Though I recognize that the phases of post-exilic restoration—that is, phases 1 and 2 of the temple reconstruction, and Nehemiah`s reconstruction of Jerusalem`s walls—is a significant topic, I will not be addressing it in this thesis. For more, see J. Kenneth Kuntz, *The People of Ancient Israel: An Introduction to Old Testament Literature, History, and Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), 395-418; and Norman K. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 420-23; 428-38.

[213] Charles C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), 285. Cf. some indicators of apathy in the postexilic prophets Haggai and Malachi.

the primary characters of Ezra and Nehemiah as being indicative of this religious vibrancy while in exile. Of Nehemiah, Kessler writes:

> It is assumed… that the necessary knowledge to inform these qualities [of piety and orthodoxy] was present and available to him in the east. Furthermore, as in the Ezra narrative, the reader is probably meant to assume that this knowledge has been faithfully and meticulously preserved and passed down, despite the Babylonian/Elamite Diaspora from its geographical roots.[214]

Nonetheless, Kessler describes the Jews' experience in exile as being a "fundamentally aberrant phenomenon—a manifestation of the brokenness of the relationship between Yahweh and his people."[215] This basic ideas of this aberration can be found in 2 Kings 17:7-23:

> And this occurred because the people of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God… and walked in the customs of the nations… and they served idols… They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings he gave them. They went after false idols and became false, and they followed the nations that were around them, concerning whom the Lord had commanded them that they should not do like them… Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of his sight… Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord their God… And the Lord rejected all the descendants of Israel… So Israel was exiled from their own land to Assyria until this day.

The result of this brokenness is summarized in Ezra 9:7, a prayer concerning intermarriage, which reads:

> From the days of our fathers to this day we have been in great guilt. And for our iniquities we, our kings, and our priests have been given into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, to plundering, and to utter shame, as it is today.

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[214] John Kessler, "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Ezra-Nehemiah: The Role of History, Social Location, and Tradition in the Formulation of Identity," in *Community Identity in Judean Historiography: Biblical and Comparative Perspectives,* eds. Gary N. Knoppers and Kenneth A. Ristau (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 133.

[215] Ibid., 137.

Thus, when the Persian King Cyrus released the decree that granted them entitlement to their homeland of Judah, their full intent was in establishing an "exemplary, pristine, and holy community, able to implement fully Yahweh's statutes…."[216] They were empowered by imperial superiority, and thus made it an urgent matter to address particular social and religious issues as a means of preserving their identity as a distinct people.[217]

With regards to the royal Persian decree, Joseph Blenkinsopp calls it a "policy of clemency," as it reversed the Babylonian acts of deportation.[218] The subjects under Persian rule would have obviously received this "policy of clemency" favorably. But it was more than clemency: It was a policy that, by rebuilding indigenous communities, provided security for the empire.[219] Moreover, as Blenkinsopp notes:

> The edicts quoted in Ezra 1:1-4 and 6:1-5 allowed diaspora Jews to collect funds with a view to returning and building the temple, restored the sacred vessels confiscated by Nebuchadnezzar, and even decreed that the project should be financed out of the royal treasury. [220]

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[216] Kessler, "The Diaspora in Zechariah 1-8 and Ezra-Nehemiah," 136.

[217] Under Cyrus' Decree, the Persian Empire seemed to have a genuine desire to grant some geographical, religious, and community freedom. Cf. Ezra 1:1-4 and Neh. 2:1-10. However, one should note that this was probably not totally altruistic. Of course, the likely political agenda behind the policy was to keep alien states and people groups loyal to Cyrus and less troublesome. The Persian Empire lasted longer than both the Assyrian and Babylonian Empires under this policy.

[218] Blenkinsopp recognizes the historical existence of this Persian policy, stating: "Cyrus' cylinder announced a policy of clemency to the peoples deported by the Babylonians and of appeasement of their deities who had been exiled with them…." Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminister Press, 1988), 61-62.

[219] This has a clear correlation to Canada's governing strategies and policy implementation as it relates to the Indigenous population. This will be discussed further in the next chapter.

[220] Ibid., 61-62.

The exilic period would have obviously led to "problems of integration and problems of distinction"[221] for the repatriates in their return. Joachim Schaper considers the formation of Jewish identity during the Second Temple period as being a response to the vastly different socio-political landscape of post-exilic Judah/Yehud.[222] As such, Schaper concludes: "a new political, social, and cultural formation had to emerge from the ruins of the old system…."[223] Tamara Ezkenazi adds that the repatriate's exilic history demanded a redefining of identity upon their return to Judah, as the "political, geographical, and religious boundaries that typified pre-exilic life were no longer fixed."[224] To this, Eskenazi writes:

> [Ezra-Nehemiah] can be read as a response to such challenges in which identity is no longer a given, no longer automatically established by virtue of geographical location or even genealogy. Instead, [Ezra-Nehemiah] shows that identity needs to be assessed and (re)defined within a panoply of existing options and categories, as well as diverse constituencies; it also shows that conclusions need to be re-evaluated as time goes on.[225]

Along with the new socio-political context of post-exilic Judah, the repatriates faced dissidence from both outside of, and from within, their community. External opposition came in the likes of "the people(s) of the land" [226] in the building of their religious

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[221] J. Assmann as quoted in Joachim Schaper, "Torah and Identity in the Persian Period," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context,* eds. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, and Manfred Oeming (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 34.

[222] Schaper, "Torah and Identity in the Persian Period," 28.

[223] Ibid., 34.

[224] Tamara Cohn Eskenazi, "Imagining the Other in the Construction of Judahite Identity in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelites Identity in the Early Second Temple Period,* eds. Ehud Ben Zvi and Diana V. Edelman (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2014), 231.

[225] Ibid.

[226] See, "people of the land" (Ezra 4:4); "peoples of the land" (Ezra 6:21; 10:2, 11; Neh. 9:24; 10:30, 31) "peoples of the lands" (Ezra 3:3; 9:1, 2, 11; Neh. 9:30, 10:28).

infrastructure. Classified as 'foreigners'[227] or 'others' within the text, Saul Olyan notes that these people included the non-repatriated men who claimed to worship YHWH, the foreign women who had married Jewish men, and the children of these relationships.[228]

Charles Fensham recognizes that it would have been impossible for contact to be avoided between the repatriate community and the foreign people, and as such foreign influence was inevitable.[229] He notes that a natural response by the repatriates would have been to accept foreign elements into their own community so as to "live in peaceful coexistence," which would have, in turn, enabled the process by which "intermarriage became possible." Thus, once "intermarriage was allowed, the purity of the religion of the Lord would be in jeopardy…"[230] Olyan considers "purity" as being a dominant ideology that is present with the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah. Sharing a similar thought to that of Fensham, Olyan recognizes the "foreigners" as being the "pollution" that threatens "the purity of the land and even Israel's continued existence…."[231]

The repatriates' repulsive attitude toward these "people of the land," or "foreigners," is the primary basis for the texts' seemingly central theme of exclusivity. Jeremiah Cataldo understands the repatriate's abhorrence of foreign influence as not simply a deterrent from potential sin, but as an accusatory statement for their exilic condition, as he writes:

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[227] See, Ezra 10:2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 44; Neh. 9:2; 13:3, 26, 27, 30.

[228] As for the children, Olyan makes an interesting point, stating: "Before Ezra-Nehemiah, these children would have been classified as Judeans on account of their paternity… see texts such as Gen. 46:20; Exod. 2:21 (cf. Judges 18:30); 2 Sam. 3:3; Ruth 4:17; 1 Chr. 7:14." Saul M. Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah as a Tool to Reconstitute the Community," *JSJ* 35 (2004): 2.

[229] Charles Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1982), 18.

[230] Ibid.

[231] Olyan, "Purity Ideology in Ezra-Nehemiah," 4.

> The 'foreigner', who could also have been a Judaean who had remained in the land during the Babylonian Exile, became the object upon which the radical consequences of exiles were cast: permanent dissociation from Yahweh, homelessness, and perpetual subjugation…[232]

Cataldo, above, presents the repatriate's attitude of exclusivism as being a direct response to their colonial experience in exile. Dalit Rom-Shiloni, in fact, recognizes group exclusivity, in general, as a characteristic response to times of tribulation, as he writes:

> … nations, or groups within a nation, tend to redefine their collective identity on specific occasions, particularly under threat or distress. This occasional process of reidentification constantly involves reconstructing boundaries of otherness within and between groups. Hence, using the social-psychology categories of ethnicity and in-group/out-group definition (often called "inclusion" and "exclusion").[233]

Consequently, as Holmgren states, the survival of the repatriate community was only possible "if assimilation with peoples of other religious traditions was halted…."[234]

Understanding the above context, and its influence on the development of a post-exilic attitude of exclusivism, is essential insight into gaining a more thorough understanding of the process of Jewish identity formation.[235] Part of this process involved clearly defining who was to be included within this group, as well as delineating the boundaries activity for the group's members. This will have a bearing later on in this thesis.

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[232] Jeremiah W. Cataldo, "The Other: Sociological Perspectives in a Postcolonial Age," in *Imagining the Other and Constructing Israelites Identity in the Early Second Temple Period,* 13-14.

[233] Dalit Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah: Shifts of Group Identities within Babylonian Exilic Ideology," in *Judah and the Judeans,* 127.

[234] Holmgren, *Israel Alive Again*, 5.

[235] Eskenazi offers a comprehensive perspective on this a process outlined in Ezra-Nehemiah. Ultimately she identifies the inextricable link between the formation of Jewish identity with that of the construction of "the house of God." Her three stage process is outlined as such: Building of the Temple (Ezra 1-6) > Building of the Community as the House of God (Ezra 7-10) > Jerusalem being established as the House of God (Nehemiah 1-7). Eskenazi, "Imagining the Other in the Construction of Judahite Identity," 233-36.

Identity of Members and Membership Status

The way in which Ezra-Nehemiah presents the identification of the post-exilic Jewish community members is, seemingly, pretty straightforward. Based on the designation "repatriates" provided above, it seems rather obvious that it consisted primarily of those individuals who were of Jewish decent, and had been among the number of returned exiles. Ezra 10:8, for instance, refers to a meeting consisting of the members of "the congregation of the exiles." Elsewhere, they are referred to as the "returned exiles,"[236] or quite simply as the "exiles."[237] Moreover, there are lists of repatriated "exiles" in both Ezra (2:2-61) and Nehemiah (7:6-63) that appear to act as a "communicative and political tool."[238] By this, Yonina Dor implies that the lists in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7 seem to act as a "membership register" for the exclusive true Jewish community.[239] Regarding these lists, Rom-Shiloni states:

> Another and even more powerful device to advocate *entirety* is the common use of lists in Ezra-Nehemiah; the repatriates are categorized within specific subgroups, the totality of which builds a complete community… In sociological terms, *entirety* is the most accurate and detailed conceptual framework by which to establish in-group/out-group categories, to designate who is considered part of the community and who is not.[240]

Since not all the exiled Jews returned to Judah, the repatriated group really represents a remnant of the exilic Jewish population.[241] In Ezra 2:59-63, we read that there were a

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[236] Ezra 4:1; 6:16, 19, 20; 8:35; 9:4; 10:7, 16.

[237] Ezra 1:11; 2:1; 4:1; 10:6; Neh. 7:6.

[238] Yonina Dor, "The Rite of Separation of the Foreign Wives in Ezra-Nehemiah," in *Judah and the Judeans,* 175.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah," 132-33.

[241] See Ezra 1:4; 9:8, 15; Neh. 1:3.

number of returnees who could not prove their ancestral ties with the Israelites, and so they were "excluded from the priesthood as unclean." Grabbe makes an interesting point regarding the fact that both 2 Kings and the end of Jeremiah seem to suggest that only a "minority of the population" of Judeans were exiled.[242] Lester Grabbe then asserts: "The texts [Ezra-Nehemiah] refuses to admit that there were Jewish inhabitants of the land after the deportations under Nebuchadnezzar…."[243]

Andries Breytenbach and Wouter van Wyk agree that some of the local population, the people of the land, were actually of Judean descent but were, nonetheless, excluded from the community of returned exiles.[244] Rom-Shiloni concurs and argues that the author of Ezra-Nehemiah has excluded, from their corporate identity, those of Israelite descent who were not deported by Nebuchadnezzar.[245] Grabbe adds: "In the eyes of the author of Ezra, these peoples were no longer kin; the only 'people of Israel' were those who had gone into captivity."[246]

Consequently, this created a sort of "inner-conflict" with those that historically share the Israelite/Jewish faith.[247] For instance, in Ezra 4,[248] the peoples of the land, presented

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[241] See 2 Kings 24:14 and Jeremiah 52:28-30. Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998), 136.

[243] Ibid., 138. Blenkinsopp identifies the population who had remained in the land as being "composed of the agrarian class." See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 66.

[244] Andries. P. B. Breytenbach and Wouter C. van Wyk, "The Nature of the Conflict in Ezra-Nehemiah," *HvTSt* 57 (2001): 1258-59.

[245] Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah," 133.

[246] Lester L. Grabbe, *Ezra-Nehemiah* (London: Routledge, 1998), 138.

[247] Breytenbach and van Wyk, "The Nature of the Conflict in Ezra-Nehemiah," 1258-59.

[248] See, Ezra 4:1-6.

here as "adversaries of Judah and Benjamin,"[249] offer assistance in building the temple and claim to worship and serve YHWH. The repatriate leaders swiftly reject this request, stating: "You will have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God…" Blenkinsopp interprets the "foreigners" request to share in the temple construction as an overt attempt at sharing control over the "temple itself with all that implied."[250] Breytenbach and Wyk suggest that some of the motivation behind the construction of the temple was due to its significant political and economic implication, as they state:

> [A] reconstructed temple would ensure growing numbers of people flocking to Jerusalem – where the Judaeans would then effectively control the temple. And by controlling the temple, the Judaeans would also be in a position to control both the local economy and society at large.[251]

For Blenkinsopp, though, the importance of maintaining control over the temple had far more socio-religious implications for the repatriated community as:

> Effective control of the 'redemptive media,' in effect the sacrificial system, translated into social control, including the ability to dictate terms for qualification as members of this entity. It is this situation more than anything else which created the conditions for the emergence of sectarianism in the Second Temple period... Control of and access to the temple would continue to be an important factor in the social and religious life of the Jewish community well beyond the Persian period.[252]

For the Jews, the significance of maintaining control over their religious institutions and structures implied that they had a degree of control over *determining their own future*. On a

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[249] Although these people may have shared ancestral ties with the repatriates, they are clearly identified as being enemies to the repatriates throughout Ezra-Nehemiah. These people are constantly referred to as "foreigners" for the purpose, as Dor stresses, "to make them hated."
Dor, "The Rite of Separation," 175.

[250] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, 107.

[251] Breytenbach and Wyk, "The Nature of the Conflict in Ezra-Nehemiah," 1259.

[252] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah,* 69.

similar note, the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, in Nehemiah 3-6, also had strategic importance. Breytenbach and Wyk note that the walls would have offered security for the repatriates' religious expression, as well as provided them "a base from which they could exclusively further their own economic interests without taking anyone else into consideration."[253]

Such control also extended to ensuring that only the elected and pure could partake in Jewish religious practices and festival celebrations. Rom-Shiloni states that this would have solidified their role as "heirs to and the guardians of historical traditions," and thus building "a powerful argument advocating their exclusive status as the one and only legitimate community of Judeans, Jews, people of Israel, people of God."[254]

One of the major conflicts in both texts, which threatened the exclusive status that they worked so hard at establishing, is the community member's marriage to foreign women.[255] Philip Brown identifies the possibility that Ezra's predominant concern was the survival of the repatriated community, and any affiliations outside of this group were

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[253] Breytenbach and Wyk, "The Nature of the Conflict in Ezra-Nehemiah," 1261.

[254] Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah," 133.

[255] See, Ezra 9&10; and Neh. 13:23-30. There is debate regarding the exact identity of the "foreign wives" and "peoples of the land" as stated in Ezra-Nehemiah. As was discussed earlier, Dor assumes that these people should be identified as the Israelite descendants that were not originally deported. Dor, "The Rite of Separation," 174-76. On the other hand, and even though the foreign women were unidentified in Ezra, some were clearly identified as "women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab" in Nehemiah 13.23. Thus, Blenkinsopp identifies these foreign women and children as just that—foreign women and children. In labeling the Jews as a cult, he states a requirement in maintaining cultic membership is to partake in cultic practices. In Nehemiah 13.1-3 there is a reference to Deut. 23.3, which reads: "No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord." To this, Blenkinsopp writes: "But if those of foreign descent are forbidden entry to the temple, they cannot participate in the cult and are thereby excluded from membership in the community… hence, finally, the need to exclude ritual taint requires the dissolution of marriages contracted with nonmembers and the dismissal of both the women and their children." Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Judaism: The First Phase: The Place of Ezra and Nehemiah in the Origins of Judaism* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009), 144-45.

deemed a threat. Thus, "only marriage to those within the bounds of the *golah* community was acceptable."[256] Moreover, Brown senses that there is an underlying political intent, stating that the extreme action was "designed to safeguard the returnees' ethnic identity and thereby assure continued land-tenure rights in Judah from the imperial government."[257] Holmgren adds that even though the list of persons who married foreign women is quite low in comparison to the overall community, he states that "these marriages threatened the special character of the Jewish community because those entering such marriages were priests, Levites, and, probably, upper-class laypersons."[258]

Ezra 10 and Community Excommunication

There is also an important aspect of the Jewish community's membership status that will have direct relevance to my next chapter regarding First Nations' community membership. That is, the strict exclusivity of the group with their emphasis on purity and obedience meant that the members could lose their status as members of the group. For instance, in Ezra 10.7, 8, we read of a summons throughout Judah and Jerusalem to all the "returned exiles" to assemble at Jerusalem. The consequence for failing to show up at the assembly would result in excommunication, as it reads: "and that if anyone did not come within three days, by order of the officials and the elders all his property should be forfeited, and he himself banned from the congregation of the exiles." With regards to this, Blenkinsopp observes that the repatriates:

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[256] Philip A. Brown, "The Problem of Mixed Marriages in Ezra 9-10," *HTSBS* 162 (2005): 443-44.

[257] Ibid., 441.

[258] Holmgren, *Israel Alive Again,* 72.

> [Held] their own assemblies (Ezra 10:8, 14), maintained control over its members, and exercised the right to excommunicate deviants including those who failed to take part in its assemblies (Ezra 10:8; Neh 13:3).[259]

Once they were granted a return back to the land of Judah and Jerusalem, the repatriate Jewish community made it a priority to establish critical social, religious, and even political, boundaries as a means of preserving their identity as YHWH's chosen people. Their identity emphasized maintaining "purity" and sanctity that clearly distinguished them from the "uncleanliness" of the "people of the land." However, it appears as though not just anyone could be included in the group. Rather, it was exclusively those who had returned from exile. Hence, they were called the "congregation of exiles." As regulatory means, they refused to allow outside, or foreign, contribution in the building of their temple and city walls, as well as forbidding mixed marriages with anyone outside of their community. Yet, in the midst of this dominantly exclusive milieu, there appears to be a subtle clue that the community was not altogether exclusive.

Inclusivism in Ezra 6:21?

Ezra 6.21 stands out with its anomalously inclusive nature amidst such an exclusive ideology. It discusses the observance of the Passover meal upon the completion of the temple construction and reads:

> It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by every one who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the LORD, the God of Israel.

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[259] Blenkinsopp, *Judaism: The First Phase*, 198.

Here Blenkinsopp makes an interesting note that there was a sense of inclusion with outsiders,[260] as the text refers to all those "who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples." Jacob Myers notes that this was consistent with Torah tradition, as Num. 9:14[261] permits foreigners to celebrate Passover with the Israelites.[262] Blenkinsopp insists that any "judgment on the attitude of the postexilic community to outsiders which leaves this matter [out]… will certainly be inadequate."[263] Derek Kidner adds that this passage "is a crucial verse for correcting the impression one might gain from 4:1-3 of a bitterly exclusive party… the convert found an open door, as Rahab and Ruth had done."[264]

As there was an obvious emphasis on Torah obedience, perhaps, as Myers indicates, the Jews acceptance of foreign participation in Passover celebration was merely an adherence to Torah law. Still, for Blenkinsopp, there is a clear parallel made with this passage and that of Isaiah 56, which reads: "And the foreigners who join themselves to the LORD, to minister to him, to love the name of the LORD…these I will bring to my holy mountain…for my house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Isaiah 56:6, 7 ESV).

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[260] Blenkinsopp identifies all those who "had joined them" as consisting of the non-repatriated community, "including no doubt some from the region of Samaria…" Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah,* 133.

[261] Num. 9:14 reads: "And if a stranger sojourns among you and would keep the Passover to the Lord, according to the statute of the Passover and according to its rule, so shall he do. You shall have on statute, both for the sojourner and for the native." Exod. 12:43-49 also lays out provisions for the institution of Passover. Here, a "sojourner" can partake in the Passover, so long as he is circumcised, at which point "he may come near and keep it; he shall be as a native of the land" (Exod. 12:48).

[262] Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra: Nehemiah: Introduction, Translation and Notes,* Anchor Bible??(Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), 54.

[263] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah,* 133.

[264] Derek Kidner, *Ezra and Nehemiah: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1979), 68.

For Isaiah, the theme of Gentile mission was generated from the promise that YHWH made to Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 and 22.18: "and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed." In Isaiah 2:2-4, it is evident that YHWH's plan is to establish a time and place at which "all nations" and "all people" can come and worship Him. As briefly discussed in my second chapter, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics," Lee advances the theme of inclusivity of Isaiah 56-66 as a biblical illustration for understanding a post-colonial Hong Kong hybridized identity. Lee states:

> I contend that the exilic community is not homogeneous and that it does not only define its identity over against the community left behind in the land. There are those among the returnees who emphasize openness to the world outside and to Jerusalem at home. Their intention to incorporate both the new experience and the old tradition in an integrative and creative way opens up a future for the faith of Israel…[265]

Lee ultimately promotes the Jewish attitude of inclusivism in Isaiah as representing a "positive appreciation of a social setting and cultural encounter that was made possible by the exile and the enduring diaspora."[266] This is consistent with the overall perspective on postcolonial identity formation, which understands the cultural identity of the colonized as inevitably incorporating elements of the colonizer. Thus, even though there is a dominant emphasis of exclusivism within the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah, it would be improbable to suggest, as Fensham does above, that the repatriate Jews did not allow any form of external influence to leak into their community.

Schaper offers a rather reasonable explanation as to why the notion of inclusivism is so limited in Ezra-Nehemiah. He considers the emergence of literacy and writing in the post-

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[265] Lee, "Returning to China," 172.

[266] Ibid., 168.

exilic period, coupled with the growing emphasis on Torah, or written law, as having a major impact on the development of post-exilic Jewish identity.[267] The fact that Ezra was a priest entailed that he would have been a passionate proponent of written law, and we see this in Ezra 7.10, which reads: "For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." Thus, Schaper adds:

> The guardians of the written word were the scribes and the priests, and it is not by chance that Ezra the scribe, who was of priestly descent, was such an ardent propagator of the written torah, whereas those who took a more lenient view were neither priests nor propagators of the written torah.[268]

For this reason, Schaper is not surprised by the overtly exclusive nature of Ezra-Nehemiah, which contrasts that of the more open and "liberal" approach to foreigners in other post-exilic texts, such as Isaiah 56-66,[269] Ruth[270] and Esther.[271]

Chapter Summary

It is widely accepted that the exiled Jewish people maintained, if not increased, a level of piety and religious virtuosity while enduring their time in exile. Nonetheless, for the Jews, the exile was a consequence of their historic religious deficiencies. Thus, upon their return to their homeland of Judah, the repatriated Jews made it their primary objective to re-

[267] Schaper, "Torah and Identity in the Persian Period," 27-38.

[268] Ibid., 37.

[269] I am not suggesting some notion of "Trito-Isaiah" here (a completely speculative proposition). But I am endorsing the idea that Is. 56-66 does refer to the postexilic period in Jerusalem.

[270] Cf. *Receptionsgeschichte* and Ruth as inclusive. [Not clear what this means or what you are referring to here.]

[271] Esther is another book which takes a Jewish exclusivist view during the exile.

establish religious and social boundaries to define their identity as a pure and holy community.

Ezra-Nehemiah narrates the process by which the postexilic Jewish community re-established this identity, and presents their exclusivist attitude as a counteraction to the very things that they believe had led to their exile in the first place. Still, it was inevitable that elements of the society around them would be influential during the process. In this way, the Jew's past and present colonial experience helped shape their identity.

A key feature of this narrative is that Jews were granted a level of control in determining their own destiny. Although they faced opposition from the foreigners on numerous occasions, the favor by the imperial rulers ensured that the repatriated Jews were empowered to choose who they allowed into their exclusive community, who could participate in the re-construction of their religious and social institutions, as well as who could participate in their daily religious lives. [272] This was undoubtedly essential to the long-term sustainability, and ultimately, survival of their community and cultural identity.

This powerful reading of Ezra-Nehemiah is informing me as an Indigenous reader. From a postcolonial perspective, the place and significance of power is crucial in the determination of a people's destiny. I see analogies between Ezra 1, 6 and Nehemiah 2 in the Persian Empire with Indigenous peoples and the Canadian government. Thus, the following chapter will frame the process of Indigenous identity formation in a similar structure, with a primary focus on the historical impact of Canada's "Indian" policies.

[272] See Ezra 1, 6 and Neh. 2.

CHAPTER FOUR
ASSERTING INDIGENOUS IDENTITY VIS-À-VIS THE *INDIAN ACT*

The previous chapter contextualized the development of a post-exilic Jewish identity as it is presented in Ezra-Nehemiah. The intent is to then utilize that contextualization as an informative interpretation for enhancing an understanding of current Indigenous identity in Canada. To reiterate a previous statement, postcolonialism pursues the restoration of cultural identity, and asserts the socio-political independence of the marginalized "others," i.e. those subjugated by colonialism and perpetual hegemony. In North America, it was the Indigenous people who became the "other." For hundreds of years, the Indigenous peoples were conceptualized as inferior, barbarous, and uncivilized by European colonials. This misconception reinforced the colonizer's assumption of superiority, and justified their subjugating actions as being a "moral and legal" duty.[273]

In Canada, since the early nineteenth century, historical documentation reveals that the governing structures considered the Indigenous people as "wards" of the state who were "incapable of managing their [own] affairs."[274] In this sense, the dominant society took a paternalistic approach to their relationship with the Indigenous peoples. They assumed that imposing their "Western" way of life would be for the benefit of the Indigenous peoples. To this, Noel Dyck writes:

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[273] Yazzie, "Indigenous Peoples," 46.

[274] Ken Coates, "The Indian Act and the Future of Aboriginal Governance in Canada," *NCFNG* (2008): 2, http://fngovernance.org/ncfng_research/coates.pdf.

> In their eagerness to play 'parent' to the aboriginal 'child' they had defined and created, tutelage agents have not asked whether the dependent has needed to be protected from their ostensibly well-meaning acts of tutelage.[275]

The early Euro-Canadian ideal was to create a "white man" out of the "Indian"—an individual who was distinguishable only by the color of their skin. In every other way—socially, culturally, religiously, etc.—the "Indian" would be the spitting image of the European, and thus be fully absorbed into mainstream society.

The colonial grip of dominance has eased due to the egalitarian provisions mandated in the 1982 *Charter of Rights and Freedoms,* and subsequent judicial interpretations of section 35 of the Charter, as will be discussed in greater detail below. Moreover, with the introduction of Bill C-31 to *The Indian Act*, Indigenous communities have been swiftly asserting their right to determine their own destiny. Thus, in much the same way that the repatriate Jewish community was empowered by their right to *self-determination*, in terms of group identity formation, Canadian Indigenous peoples have been empowered. In both cases, the concept of *self-determination* is absolutely essential to the preservation of their identity as a distinct group of peoples.

Before I continue, though, I must clarify a point that I see as being an appropriate synopsis for the chapter as a whole. My intent here is not to suggest that there exists some generalized "cultural identity problem" for Indigenous people, for which exists some enveloping solution. That would be rather presumptuous, and grossly ill informed. However, this is not to say that cultural identity is a non-issue for Indigenous people and their communities. It is, in fact, a very real issue among many communities. What I mean is

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[275] Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem': Tutelage and Resistance in Canadian Indian Administration* (St. John's: The Institute of Social and Economic Research Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991), 32.

that it is not as simple as merely offering some all-encompassing solution for addressing the matter of cultural identity. To do so would be lamentably akin to the colonial designation of every unique First Nation tribe as "Indians," despite their distinct dialects, customs, beliefs and practices. Jacob words it best, as she states: "It is clear that 'one size does not fit all' when it comes to the diversity of Indigenous communities throughout the north, across the country, and around the globe."[276]

Still, just as Miller established a common educational system among the majority of Indigenous communities prior to European contact, there also exist commonalities with the majority of current First Nations when it comes to cultural identity. For instance, the importance of cultural language to Indigenous peoples is fairly consistent among most, if not all, communities. For one community, though, language may be considered a pillar of their cultural identity, and thus extra effort (educational curriculum, financial resources, community participation) will be made to sustaining it.[277] Taylor understands language as being very important to all Indigenous communities, but not necessarily as being essential to the survival of their cultural identity.[278] Each community is different, and so each community will determine what is and is not a priority for them. Regarding this, Victoria Jacob adds:

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[276] Victoria Jane Jacob, "Indigenous Protocol" (M.A. thesis, Royal Roads University, 2010), 61. I want to take this opportunity to thank my Aunt Victoria "Vicky" Jacob for providing me with a copy of her thesis and giving me permission to utilize it in my own thesis. As per the abstract, her thesis "examines how the development of a process of protocol when entering an Indigenous community assists in establishing relationships between Indigenous peoples and professionals who offer their services."

[277] Regarding Indigenous language, Taylor writes: "Every time I ask members of an Aboriginal group to define their culture, the importance of their heritage language surfaces… Those few Aboriginal groups that have retained their heritage language guard it jealously, and those whose language is endangered are attempting restoration." Taylor, *The Quest for Identity,* 45-47.

[278] Ibid., 46.

> When David Suzuki Foundation (DSF) began reaching out to work with coastal communities… it quickly became apparent that the first thing they had to learn was how to stop trying to 'help' and how to start *listening*… *communities really are the experts*.[279]

The important point here is that the communities contain the traditional values and culture, and insight into this "knowledge" is accessed through the members themselves, and specifically, their elders.[280] By extension, any attempt at understanding a community's cultural identity demands that one realize that their identity is *defined internally*. The government's actions, historically, have not supported this concept, but have conversely hindered Indigenous communities' capacity to support their own cultural identity.

This chapter will begin by examining the ideologies that motivated the development of "Indian" policy from the late eighteenth century onward. I will then be looking at the term "Indian" as a legally constructed, but grossly debasing, identifier of Canada's Indigenous people. The purpose here is to expose the term "Indian" as a colonial construct that disregards the social, religious, and cultural diversity that exists among the various First Nation communities in Canada. I will then be discussing *The Indian Act's* provisions of controlling the status and membership lists of First Nation communities and their people. Next I will examine an amendment, Bill C-31, made to *The Indian Act* that has provided Indigenous people with more rights, and promotes "self-determination." Throughout each

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[279] Jacob, "Indigenous Protocol," 61. Emphasis added.

[280] Concerning the crucial role of Elders in Indigenous communities, Jacob writes: "Elders are intrinsic to the stability of the society in that they possess the nuances of the languages, customs, protocols and all of the teachings of the society. They transmit vital information, such as governance and laws and other knowledge via oral traditions including story telling. They are the 'libraries'. Consequently, when one elder dies vital information could be lost to the society unless this knowledge has been passed to the next generation." Ibid., 44-45.

section I will present the relevant responses by Indigenous peoples as it relates to their assertion of control over their own lives and destinies.

Ideologies That Shaped "Indian" Policy

> Euro-Canadians' imposition of coercive tutelage in their management of Indian affairs represents the most continuous and central element of the Indian 'problem.'[281]

Tobias notes that the fundamental ideologies extant in Canada's "Indian" policies were generated from within a British imperial context. Tobias frames the three principal ideologies that motivated the development of historical "Indian" policy in the document "Protection, Civilization, and Assimilation."[282]

Initially, in the eighteenth century, Indigenous peoples were considered military allies to the European imperials. This was reflected in early policies as they were designed to protect them from "European encroachment in the use of their lands," as well as to ensure that they were being treated fairly in their "economic dealings."[283] Then, following the War of 1812, the military alliance was no longer necessary for the Europeans. Attention was then shifted toward civilizing them into Euro-Canadian society. This, of course, was discussed in greater detail in chapter two, as civilization was considered synonymous to Christianization.

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[281] Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem'*, 3.

[282] John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in *Sweet Promises: A Reader on Indian-White Relations in Canada,* ed. J. R. Miller (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).

[283] Ibid., 128.

As such, many of the primary proponents of civilizing Indigenous peoples were the Christian Churches and missionary organizations.[284]

It was also during this "civilization" period that the "Indian" Reserve system was established. The reserves were intended to serve as "social laboratories" wherein the Indigenous peoples could develop agricultural skills and receive religious and secular education.[285] With many of these reserves being located near Euro-Canadian towns, Tobias describes the intent as such:

> With the change in location it was thought that the civilization policy would work, for the Euro-Canadian would serve as an example of what the Indian should become, and the existence of the town, it was thought, would attract the Indian from the reserve and into the non-Indian community where the Indian's newly learned values would supplant his old values and allow him to be fully assimilated.[286]

Regarding the establishment of these reserves, Dyck writes: "… in order to bring Indians into Euro-Canadian society their communities were turned into segregated and economically isolated reserves….[287] Thus, it is at this point that the colonial objective of assimilating the "Indians" really began. With the eventual consolidated *Indian Act* in 1876, provisions that were "designed to remove all legal distinctions between Indians and Euro-Canadians actually established them."[288]

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[284] Tobias adds: "Much of the [civilizing] propaganda in North America was made by Protestant sects which were in the throes of Evangelical and Revivalist movements stressing the need to Christianize all men. Many of these sects established missions among the Indians, similar to those the Jesuits and other Catholic orders had been carrying on for generations." Ibid., 128.

[285] Ibid., 129.

[286] Ibid., 130.

[287] Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem'*, 31.

[288] Ibid.

For well over half a century following its inception, numerous amendments were made to *The Indian Act* that essentially proved to be coercive efforts by the federal government to expedite the process of assimilation. That is until the government eventually realized that its assimilative efforts were not going to be successful. In the mid-twentieth century, a joint committee consisting of the Senate and House of Commons responded to a demand, by not only Indigenous peoples but the general public as well, to revise *The Indian Act* and abolish the discrimination against "Indians" as non-Canadian citizens.[289] Though the joint committee maintained support for the colonially inspired ideology of assimilation, their recommendations resulted in an amendment to *The Indian Act,* in 1951, that discarded many of its "aggressive assimilation and compulsory enfranchisement" provisions.[290]

The White Paper: "An Extreme Act of Colonialism"

> The Americans to the south of us used to have a saying: "The only good Indian is a dead Indian." The MacDonald-Chrétien doctrine would amend this but slightly to, "The only good Indian is a non-Indian."[291]

The joint committee also recommended that the respective Provinces assume a larger role in the administration of services to the "Indians."[292] This recommendation was furthered in a policy proposal in 1969 called the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*,

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[289] The public demand, as Tobias notes, resulted from "the strong Indian contribution" during World War 2, and the publicly exposed treatment of First Nations peoples as "second-class person[s]…." Tobias adds: "Veterans' organizations, churches, and citizen groups across the country… wanted a complete revision of the Indian Act and an end to discrimination against the Indian." Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation," 139.

[290] Ibid., 139-40.

[291] Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society* (repr., Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1999), 1.

[292] Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation," 141.

commonly referred to as *The White Paper*.[293] *The White Paper* proposed the abolition of "legislative and constitutional" discrimination against "Indians", that Indigenous culture be respected and recognized in Canada, that the provinces assume responsibility over administrative services, and that control over First Nation lands "be transferred to the Indian people."[294] In accomplishing these goals, the White Paper reads:

> *The Government would be prepared to take the following steps to create this framework:*
> 1. Propose to Parliament that *The Indian Act* be repealed and take such legislative steps as may be necessary to enable Indians to control Indian lands and to acquire title to them.
> 2. Propose to the governments of the provinces that they take over the same responsibility for Indians that they have for other citizens in their provinces. The take-over would be accompanied by the transfer to the provinces of federal funds normally provided for Indian programs, augmented as may be necessary.
> 3. Make substantial funds available for Indian economic development as an interim measure.
> 4. Wind up that part of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development which deals with Indian Affairs. The residual responsibilities of the Federal Government for programs in the field of Indian affairs would be transferred to other appropriate federal departments.[295]

In brief, the White Paper sought to abolish *The Indian Act* and absolve the federal Department of Indian Affairs, while transferring administration of services to each First Nation's respective province, all within a five-year time period. As such, this would ensure the expedient dissolution of "special legal and constitutional status of registered Indians and

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[293] Miller provides a comprehensive description of what a "White Paper" is, as he states: "A white paper was simply a statement of preliminary government policy, issued after a series of consultations and before cabinet adoption of a plan for legislation. It was a stage in an elaborate process of review, consultation, and policy formulation that Trudeau had introduced after his election in 1968. It might as easily have been termed a 'position paper' or 'preliminary policy proposal,' or, as was the case several years later with immigration policy, a green paper." Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens,* 331.

[294] "Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian policy (The White Paper, 1969)," Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, https://www.aadncaandc.gc.ca/eng/1100100010189/1100100010191.

[295] Ibid.

declaring them to be equal to other Canadians."[296] The federal government claimed that adequate consultation with Indigenous communities was performed leading to the development of the policy. In reality though, as Harold Cardinal argues, the federal government was developing the policy at the time of the consultations, lending to the belief that the government had already "decided upon the course of action it would take."[297] This deception, Cardinal argues, served the purposes

> to steamroller the unprepared Indians into accepting changes the department already had planned… and to lull public opinion by leading the public to believe that the consultation meetings were genuine, and that the Indians actually were being heard.[298]

Much to the federal department's dismay, the Indigenous leaders were not deceived. Instead, *The White Paper* was swiftly opposed by almost all Indigenous political leaders and agencies, which saw it as "an extreme act of colonialism"[299] and considered it an imminent threat to "their future as Indians."[300] Alan Cairns writes that the "defeat of the White Paper" had "destroyed or rendered irrelevant much of our inherited intellectual capital in this policy era." [301] What Cairns means by this is:

> We had prepared for a future – assimilation – that did not happen – and thus were politically and intellectually unprepared for a future in which Aboriginal peoples – as peoples – were to have a permanent, recognized presence in Canada.[302]

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[296] Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem'*, 108.

[297] Cardinal, *Unjust Society*, 110.

[298] Ibid.

[299] Coates, "The Indian Act and the Future of Aboriginal Governance," 7.

[300] Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem',* 110.

[301] Alan Cairns, *Citizens Plus: Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian State* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 67.

[302] Ibid.

As a response to *The White Paper*, the Indian Chiefs of Alberta responded with *Citizens Plus*,[303] also known as *The "Red Paper*," which they submitted to Prime Minister Trudeau in 1970.[304] *Citizens Plus* was a phrase initially proposed in the 1966 Hawthorn Report, suggesting that "Indians" are more than just Canadian citizens strictly on account of their "rights" as "Indians."[305] In addition, Cardinal contends:

> We do not want the Indian Act retained because it is a good piece of legislation. It isn't. It is discriminatory from start to finish. But it is a lever in our hands and an embarrassment to the government, as it should be. No just society and no society with even pretensions to being just can long tolerate such a piece of legislation, but we would rather continue to live in bondage under the inequitable Indian Act than surrender our sacred rights. Any time the government wants to honour its obligations to us we are more than ready to help devise new Indian legislation.[306]

The overall resistance to *The White Paper* led to its repeal by the federal government in 1971.[307] For Milloy, the collective rejection of *The White Paper,* and its subsequent repeal, marked the beginning of "a significant indication of the vibrancy of the First Nations decolonizing movement."[308]

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[303] "Citizens Plus," *Aboriginal Policy Studies* 1 (2011): 188-281. "Citizens Plus" can be read online at the University of Alberta, Aboriginal Policy Studies website: https://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/aps/article/view/11690/8926.

[304] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens,* 336-37.

[305] Regarding the phrase "citizens plus," the Hawthorn Report reads: "At the present time a postwar version of egalitarianism is responsible for a very desirable attempt to see that Indians are brought within the framework of all normal public programs which are not inherently incompatible with their unique status. **The position we strongly hold is that Indians are citizens plus**; that in addition to the normal rights and duties of citizenship they also possess certain rights simply by virtue of being Indians." Emphasis added. "A Survey of the Contemporary Indians of Canada: Economic, Political, Educational Needs and Policies," The Hawthorn Report, Part 1, 1966, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/webarchives/20071120104036/http:// www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/pub/srvy/sci_e.html.

[306] Harold Cardinal, *The Unjust Society: The Tragedy of Canada's Indians* (Edmonton: M.G. Hurtig, 1969), 140.

[307] Cairns, *'Citizens Plus',* 65.

[308] Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism," 17.

Self-Government for Indigenous Peoples: What Does It Mean?

The ideological principles of "Protection, Civilization, and Assimilation" that motivated historical "Indian" policy are reflective of the early Euro-Canadians' assumption of hegemony. This hegemony obviously had a profound impact on the Indigenous population that has been historically subjected to systematic marginalization and racism. Policies that were developed with the anticipation that the "Indians" fully assimilate into the dominant mainstream society really only serve to incite feelings of "dependency, cultural loss, dispiritedness, and a profound sense of disengagement from the national political system…."[309]

However, as noted above, there has been a collective response by Indigenous communities in taking a stance against hegemony and the disparagement of traditional cultural identity, practices and values.[310] One of the ways in which this movement is highlighted is by the Indigenous peoples' petitions for autonomy. Indigenous peoples' right to self-government, or 'sovereignty,' is a complicated issue, and may never be fully actualized.[311] As the topic of Indigenous self-government is a complex matter that is worthy

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[308] Coates, "The Indian Act and the Future of Aboriginal Governance," 4-5.

[310] In speaking about Indigenous peoples' overall negative response to *The White Paper,* Dyck notes: "The novelty of Indians speaking out, particularly to condemn what seemed [like] eminently egalitarian proposals, captured the attention of the media. Within a year, Canadians received a long overdue education about Indians and their place in society: they heard about Indians' land claims and aboriginal rights and the shortcomings of federal Indian administration; and they learned about Indians' desire to maintain their special status and yet to be treated as 'citizens plus.'" Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem'*, 110.

[311] Here, the discussion on the concept of neo-colonialism is relevant, as noted in the first chapter "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics." Neo-Colonialism is, essentially, the continued indirect economic, political, and cultural domination of the colonizer over the colonized, following the cessation of colonialism.

of its own independent study, I will not be discussing it in great detail. However, I do want to highlight a few relevant points.

Simply put, self-government entails the ability of a group of people, such as a First Nation, to govern the land and people within their jurisdiction without the need for external permission, i.e. the established governing structure and system "will not be able to be amended or altered without their consent."[312] What this actually looks like for Canada and Indigenous communities, as a whole, is really an ongoing discussion. Donald Purich notes that some conceive this as entailing a number of individual nations scattered throughout the Canada, "each issuing its own passports, having its own embassies, and so on."[313]

Though this is very improbable, the reality is that what the implications of self-government entail for each Indigenous community is uncertain, and may very well differ from one community to the next. Purich suggests that it does not necessarily entail complete independence from Canada, but is an assertion that Indigenous people have a right to co-determine the "terms and conditions under which they are incorporated" into Canada. Indigenous people claim this right on the basis that they had governed themselves prior to European contact, and had since never forfeited "their right to do so."[314] Miller calls it the right of "Aboriginal Title", which is based on the Indigenous peoples asserted rights/claim to specific tracts of land and, by extension, the right to govern such land as they see fit.[315]

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[312] Michael Asch, "Self-Government in the New Millenium," in *Nation to Nation: Aboriginal Sovereignty and the Future of Canada,* 66.

[313] Donald Purich, "The Future of Native Rights," in *Sweet Promises,* 425.

[314] Ibid., 423.

[315] Miller writes: "Aboriginal title is simply the right to lands that an indigenous people has by virtue of its occupation of an area 'from time immemorial.' It is a notion that Indians and other natives have always held to, though they did not always articulate it; but a notion that until recently Euro-Canadian society did not

"Aboriginal Title": An Indigenous Peoples' Right

"Aboriginal Title" is considered a synonymous right to that of the "Aboriginal rights" that have been constitutionally recognized and affirmed in section 35 of the 1982 *Constitution Act*, "Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada," which reads: "The existing aboriginal and treaty rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed."[316]

In the last twenty years or so, Indigenous communities have gained more leverage on Crown decisions that not only affect their reserve lands, but also lands to which they assert a traditional claim. This has been the result of substantive judicial decisions regarding the interpretation of section 35, which have ultimately redefined the relationship between Indigenous people and the Crown. In 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada's decision in the case *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*[317] laid the preliminary work for further discussion regarding the exact "nature and meaning of Aboriginal title."[318] Then, in 2004, the Supreme Court determined in *Haida Nation* v. *British Columbia* that the Crown has a "duty to consult and, where appropriate, accommodate" an Indigenous group in cases where a Crown actions have the potential to adversely impact "Aboriginal rights, including Aboriginal title."[319]

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recognize or respect. European nations usually maintained that discovery or intensive use in agriculture gave them a superior right over indigenous peoples to occupancy and use of the land." J.R. Miller, "Aboriginal Rights, Land Claims, and the Struggle to Survive," in *Sweet Promises,* 411. It should be noted, as I was informed by one of the individuals who had offered comments on my thesis, that the Royal Proclamation of 1763 did recognize the interests of Indians in lands that had not been ceded to or purchased by the Crown.

[316] "Rights of the Aboriginal Peoples of Canada," Constitution Acts, 1867 to 1982, Part 1 of 2, Justice Laws Website, http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/Const/page-16.html#h-52.

[317] See "Supreme Court of Canada: Delgamuukw V. British Columbia," *International Legal Materials* 37 (1998): 261-333.

[318] Thomas Isaac, *Aboriginal Title*, Contemporary Themes in Aboriginal Law Monograph Series 1 (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Native Law Centre, 2006), 1-2.

[319] Isaac, *Aboriginal Title,* 2.

Thus, for example, if a decision includes the development of natural resources on a tract of land—the use and rights of which being exclusively recognized and affirmed to a particular Indigenous community/communities—then the Crown has a duty to consult said community/communities, and, if necessary, compensate them accordingly.[320]

Toward "Internal Sovereignty"

Though the discussion was brief, the history and more recent developments in Indigenous peoples' assertion of "Aboriginal Title" can be understood as a reflection of their historical relationship with the federal government. As Purich also states, Indigenous self-government is contended for on the basis of the historical inadequacies of Canadian "Indian" policies.[321] That is, for over a century there have been paternalistic policies and programs developed and enforced upon the Indigenous population by non-Indigenous people who remained distant from, and unanswerable to, the Indigenous peoples at large. To this, Miller contends: "The record shows no reason to refuse Natives control over the development and administration of policies that affect them."[322]

Still, and although Dyck is observant of the political movement for Indigenous "sovereignty" or "self-government," he is cautious of its idealism,[323] and asserts the reality that:

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[320] Ibid., 3.

[321] Purich, "The Future of Native Rights," 423.

[322] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens,* 407.

[323] Taylor makes a very interesting observation regarding the issue of "sovereignty," and the federal government's recognition of First Nation community's right to self-government. He says: "The very fact that I have described mainstream society as giving power or control indicates how limited the devolution and power really is. After all, you can only give power if you have it to give. Moreover, even when powers are transferred,

> The recent history of international decolonization indicates, however, that the granting of political independence does not necessarily accomplish the complete dismantling of previous structures and processes of domination.[324]

As is noted earlier, there is an inextricable intertwining of histories between the colonized and colonizer. Thus, as Robert Yazzie has rightfully determined:

> While indigenous peoples may not succeed with 'macro' issues such as jurisdiction, land-use control, or dealing with outsiders and intruders, they can succeed with 'micro' issues… Communities must consider how they can effectively reassume control of their destinies.[325]

Perhaps, as Yazzie has argued, genuine sovereignty is highly improbable, if not altogether unattainable. As Purich suggests, it may be that "sovereignty" will have one meaning to one Indigenous community and a different meaning to another. Yazzie's suggestion, though, is that Indigenous peoples do not waste any time in exercising a type of "internal sovereignty," by reassuming control over their destinies.[326]

One way that this is being accomplished for Indigenous peoples as a whole is by asserting their own identity, and rejecting the sweeping identity—"Indians," as defined by *The Indian Act*—that has been thrust upon them for over a century. Indigenous peoples are also taking control over the future destinies of their respective communities, which has historically been regulated by the provisional framework laid out in *The Indian Act.* An amendment to *The Indian Act* in 1985 has offered First Nation communities the ability to assume control over their respective community membership lists. For Indigenous peoples,

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they resemble a token gesture. For example, Aboriginal people have been given more control over education, yet they depend on mainstream government for funding." Taylor, *The Quest for Identity,* 80.

[324] Noel Dyck, *What is the Indian 'Problem'*, 33.

[325] Yazzie, "Indigenous Peoples and Postcolonial Colonialism," 47.

[326] Ibid., 48.

these two forms of self-determination are considered to be crucial to the long-term survival of their identities as a distinct group of peoples. The following discussion is a brief history of these developments, with specific emphasis on *The Indian Act*, and the steps that have been made to address them.

The Indian Act: A Century of Being Defined

The term "Indian" was first legally defined from within a British colonial setting—the Province of Canada—in 1850, in *An Act for the Better Protection of the Lands and Property of the Indians in Lower Canada*. Specifically, the Act defined "Indians" as such:

> *Firstly*. All persons of Indian blood, reputed to belong to the particular tribe, band or body of Indians interested in such lands or immoveable property, and their descendants;
> *Secondly*. All persons residing among such Indians, whose parents were or are, or either of them was or is, descended on either side from Indians or an Indian reputed to belong to the particular tribe, band or body of Indians interested in such lands or immoveable property, and the descendants of all such persons; And,
> *Thirdly*. All women lawfully married to any of the persons included in the several classes hereinbefore designated; the children issue of such marriages, and their descendants.[327]

The Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 followed and, along with the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* of 1869, included provisions aimed at enfranchising "Indian" men into mainstream

[327] Jean-Paul Restoule, "Aboriginal Identity: The Need for Historical and Contextual Perspectives," *CJNE* 24 (2000): 106-07.

society.[328] This enfranchisement would thereby be a voluntary forfeiture of "Indian status" and allow them to gain recognition as a full-fledged British Canadian citizen.[329]

Then, ensuing the creation of the Dominion of Canada under the *The British North America Act* in 1867, when Canada became a sovereign country, the federal government consolidated all the previous Acts to create *The Indian Act* in 1876. Bryan Cummins and John Steckley provide a brief but comprehensive overview on the development of federal jurisdiction over the "Indians," and where it stands today. They write:

> … section 91, paragraph 24 of the *British North America Act…*granted the federal government exclusive legislative jurisdiction over "Indians, and Lands reserved for the Indians,"… In 1873… jurisdiction for Native people was transferred to the Department of the Interior. In 1880, a separate Indian Affairs Department was set up under the Minister of the Interior, John A. MacDonald, who was also Prime Minister.[330]

This "Indian Affairs Department" exists today, but is now called the Department of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (Canada). Today, *The Indian Act* remains as an active legislative statute, though, as aforementioned, it has undergone numerous amendments.

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[328] The 1869 *Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians…"* reads: "Every such Indian Shall… declare to the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, the name and surname by which he wishes to be enfranchised and thereafter known, and on his receiving such letters patent, in such name and surname, he shall be held to be also enfranchised, and he shall thereafter be known by such name and surname…who shall no longer be deemed Indians within the meaning of the laws relating to Indians, except in so far as their right to participate in the annuities and interest money and rents, of the tribe, band, or body of Indians to which they belonged is concerned." For more info, see: "An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian affairs, and to Extend the Provisions of the Act 31st Victoria, Chapter 42**,"** Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/11001000 10204/1100100010206.

[329] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens,* 140.

[330] Bryan D. Cummins and John L. Steckley, *Aboriginal Policing: A Canadian Perspective* (Toronto: Prentice Hall, 2003), 11.

Restoule accentuates that *The Indian Act*, with its broad definition of "Indian," has "a profound impact" on the way non-Indigenous people conceptualize Indigenous people, as well as how we conceptualize ourselves.[331] Jean-Paul Restoule writes:

> The action of defining 'Indians' creates a homogeneous identity for people who represented disparate and distinct cultures…. Distinctions among Aboriginal cultures mattered only to a handful of academics interested in cataloguing our cultures like various species of birds.[332]

For the federal government, having 'Indian Status' was a "legal/political classification" that served, and continues to serve, the sole purpose of identifying those who are eligible for the rights and benefits under *The Indian Act.*[333] Regarding "Indian Status," Milloy adds:

> With the creation of a certifiable Indian status, Parliament took another giant colonizing step forward, denying First Nations' people the power to determine, for themselves, who belonged to their communities. Again Indians were placed on a separate path. Alone amongst all other residents and future immigrants to Canada, "Indians" were a legal construct imposed by Ottawa, with almost no reference to Indian custom and experience or the ways in which First Nations people might want to arrange their relations with the "mixed-bloods" and other ethnic peoples who would enter their lives, families and communities.[334]

The obvious issue generated from the government's broad labeling of Indigenous people, be it for legal purposes or not, is that it is not the Indigenous peoples themselves who are providing that label or identity. In fact, "Indian" should not be understood as anything other than as a colonial term of identification for those who are Indigenous to this land. The equivalent of the "oriental" or "other,"[335] "Indian" is simply a Westernized conceptualization

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[331] Restoule, "Aboriginal Identity," 106.

[332] Ibid.

[333] Cummins and Steckley, *Aboriginal Policing,* 11.

[334] Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism," 9.

[335] "Oriental" or "Other," as discussed in chapter one, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics," is a reference to the dominant Western societal conceptualization of non-western minority

of groups of people with absolutely no regard for the contextual, cultural, societal and religious diversity that exists among them.

The term "Indian" represents the various First Nations peoples who were historically viewed as a perpetual burden to the advancement of the dominant Western European society.[336] The term "Indian" acts as a trigger representing the social and physical marginalization experienced by the Indigenous victims of Canada's aggressive attempt of assimilation. It is certainly not a term that encompasses the cultural traditions or current cultural values of Indigenous people. "Indian" is not an *identity* that Indigenous people embrace.[337]

Again, the problem lies with the fact that "Indian" is an identity that was imposed upon them by colonizing powers. In this regard, Restoule even raises concerns with being labeled as having "Aboriginal identity." He argues that using "'Aboriginal Identity' can be constrictive and colonizing" as it "places power in the observer who observes Aboriginal people from the outside and defines them, giving them identity."[338] Restoule's argument is based on a definition of cultural identity that "implies fixedness," that is, "shared norms,

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groups. In postcolonial studies, broadly speaking, the "oriental" or "other" represent societies marginalized and/or minority peoples who have been oppressed as a result of colonization.

[336] John Maclean, a Methodist missionary who lived among the Blood Tribe between 1880-89, reports: "The Indian is suffered to exist, but he is regarded as an encumbrance to the country and a strong barrier to its speedy development." McLean goes on to explain how the "white man" perceived the "Indians" as wasting valuable farming land by sitting there and not cultivating it. Conversely, the "Indians" shared similar sentiments regarding the "white man," as they have occupied the land and consequently driven away the herds of buffalo that once roamed it. MacLean, *The Indians: Their Manners and Customs,* 275.

[337] I must note that there are some elders and veterans who identify themselves as "Indians," and are content in doing so. I would argue, as does my father, that this is simply a result of being socially conditioned to accept this identity by mainstream Euro-Canadian society. Still, if "Indian" is how some people choose to be identified, then that is their choice.

[338] Restoule, "Aboriginal Identity," 103.

traits, and habits of members of a cultural group *at one historical moment*."[339] Instead, he attempts to shift the focus to that of *identifying* as "Aboriginal," since "the power is placed in the self, for the Aboriginal person who emphasizes his or her indigenous roots at a particular place and time."[340]

Indigenous Identity: A New Way of Thinking

I understand the argument that Restoule is making; though I myself do not recognize cultural identity as being some static set of properties that "transcend history and social situations."[341] Rather, I would refer to Stuart Hall's understanding of cultural identity, as he states it:

> Cultural identity… is a matter of 'becoming' as well as 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in a mere 'recovery' of the past… identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.[342]

Thus, as an Indigenous person, this means that I can live in the modern world—drive a vehicle, drink Starbucks coffee, and go to church—without compromising my identity as genuine Indigenous person. Perhaps there was a time when this was not the case, as Cairns

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[339] Emphasis added. He elaborates his definition and use of "identity" by saying, "the 'things' that make one Indian remain the same and should be the same as those things associated with "Indianness" by the Europeans at the time of historical 'first' contact." Ibid.

[340] Ibid.

[341] Ibid.

[342] Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 394.

states: "In the assimilation era Aboriginal practices that approximated white, majority behaviour… were called assimilation or acculturation."[343] Sally Weaver refers to this type of thinking as falling under the "old paradigm" of thinking, i.e. the type of thinking where traditional Indigenous cultural identity "diminishes under the forces of acculturation."[344]

New paradigm thinking, conversely, considers Indigenous cultural identity as being dynamic and constantly evolving and adapting to the immediate "social and political environment."[345] As such, Weaver writes:

> In sum, new paradigm thinking sees aboriginal culture change and *cultural self-determination* as legitimate processes, essential if the First Nations are to survive as distinct peoples.[346]

The key term in Weaver's statement, as italicized, is *cultural self-determination.* The emphasis is on the individual, or group, who defines Indigenous identity. This right to self-determination is absolutely necessary for the survival of Indigenous cultures. This is also the very point that Restoule was making when lobbying for the use of the term "identifying" instead of "identity." Restoule states: "[Identifying] allows for the salient components of an Aboriginal identity to be expressed as the actor feels is expedient, *allowing for cultural change and adaptation*."[347] Cairns adds:

> In a sense, it is not that the process of cultural transformation has changed, but that we now *think of it differently*… Again, part of the change is *who is doing the labelling* – when the process was described by non-Aboriginals in the past, it was assimilation

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[343] Cairns, *Citizens Plus*, 103-4.

[344] Sally M. Weaver, "A New Paradigm In Canadian Indian Policy For The 1990s," *CES* 22 (1990): 4-5.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Ibid., 5.

[347] Restoule, "Aboriginal Identity," 103.

> or acculturation; as described by Aboriginal persons today, it is simply a modernized version of Aboriginality…"[348]

For too long, the dominant Euro-Canadian governing powers have made decisions on behalf of the First Nations peoples, deciding where they can reside, how they must govern themselves, and who can/cannot be federally identified as an "Indian."

The "Status" Issue for First Nation Peoples

A common set of questions that many First Nation people are likely to be asked, at some point in their life, are: "Are you Native?" and "Do you have status?" In reality, these two questions can have different answers. An individual, today, can identify as an Indigenous person, can even belong to the official membership list of an Indigenous community, and yet not be recognized as an "Indian" by the federal government. In fact, up until 1985, this same individual may have identified as an Indigenous person, but since they did not have "Indian status," then they would not have been eligible to belong to the official membership list of a specific Indigenous community. *The Indian Act* would have defined them out of federal recognition of "Indian" identity, as well as community specific membership identity.

Gender discrimination in "Indian" policy was another contentious issue for well over a century. Early "Indian" policies had a clear emphasis on Euro-cultural androcentricism, i.e. as Milloy puts it, "property ownership was the foundation of civilized society and that both ownership and descent of property were attached, primarily, to males."[349] Thus, in the

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[348] Cairns, *Citizens Plus,* 104. Emphasis added.

[349] Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism," 9.

Gradual Civilization Act, enfranchisement [350] was offered as more of a voluntary "abandonment of Indian status," whereby a *male* (over the age of 21) could be enfranchised so long as the appointed Commissioner could determine that the "Indian,"

> … is able to speak, read and write either the english or the french language… is sufficiently advanced in the elementary branches of education and is of good moral character and free from debt.[351]

Women would involuntarily be enfranchised if they were married to an "Indian" man who was enfranchised. Then, a little over a decade later, the *Gradual Enfranchisement Act* included a provision that automatically eliminated the "Indian status" of women who married non-status men.[352] In either case, enfranchisement was completely involuntary on the part of women, and clearly reflected the European's androcentric assumptions in their development of "Indian" policy.[353]

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[350] *Enfranchisement* was described in the chapter three, "A Postcolonial Perspective on Canada's Indian Residential Schooling System: A Church and State Tool of Aggressive Assimilation." In summary, *enfranchisement* was the process by which an "Indian" man, and his family, was able to gain full recognition as a citizen of the state – originally as a British citizen, and later as a Canadian. As a result of being enfranchised, the "Indian" would forfeit their "Indian Status," and be allotted a specific amount of land from his respective reserve, as well as granted all the rights and privileges of an ordinary citizen.

[351] With *The Indian Act* in 1876, enfranchisement became compulsory for any males who received university degrees, and it was later made compulsory for those who served in the military or had been absent from their reserve for an extended period of time. For more, see: "An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in this Province, and to Amend the Laws Respecting Indians," 10th June, 1857, http://caid.ca/GraCivAct1857.pdf.

[352] Conversely, if a non-"Indian" woman married a "Status Indian," then that woman would gain status, as would any children that they shared. Regarding this situation, Milloy comments: "This would make a bewilderingly difficult situation for all, First Nations people, of course, but also for officials charged with policing reserve populations and administering federally funded programs directed to status Indians only." Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism," 10.

[353] Enfranchisement for all "Indians," man or woman, became involuntary with the introduction of Bill 14 into Parliament in 1920, under the direction of then Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott. In support of the implementation of Bill 14 and the ongoing structure of *The Indian Act*, Scott is quoted as saying: "I want to get rid of the Indian problem… our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian Department." Titley, *A Narrow Vision,* 50.

This gender inequality existed in "Indian" policy for well over a century, when in 1985, an amendment, commonly known as Bill C-31, was approved that brought *The Indian Act* into compliance with the provisional framework of the 1982 Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms.*[354] One of the primary purposes for this amendment was to expunge *The Indian Act's* enfranchisement provisions as well as its gender discrimination. It also offered Indigenous communities the opportunity to assume more control over their own respective membership.

Bill C-31: Regaining "Status" and Community Membership Control

An intended result of Bill C-31 was to eradicate marriage as being a factor in determining status. It offered the opportunity to women, and their children, to regain their status if they had previously lost it due to marriage. I say intended result, because, in reality, marriage is still very much a determining factor. The contentious "second generation cut-off rule" has made it so that two successive generations of intermarriage will result in a loss of status.[355] Regarding this provision, Megan Furi and Jill Wherrett write: "People registered under section 6(2) have fewer rights than those registered under section 6(1), because they cannot pass on status to their child unless the child's other parent is also a registered Indian."

April 17, 1985, is a significant date with regards to this provision. I want to provide an example of how this date has significant implications on the passing on of status. Any child born of a mixed marriage prior to this date, so long as the father is the one with status,

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[354] Megan Furi and Jill Wherrett, *Indian Status and Band Membership Issues,* Parliament of Canada, Political and Social Affairs Department,1996, http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/lop/researchpublications/bp410-e.htm#2.

[355] Ibid.

is registered under section 6(1): which reads: "Subject to section 7, a person is entitled to be registered if: (a) that person was registered or entitled to be registered immediately prior to April 17, 1985."[356] As such, this individual would be eligible to pass on status to their children even if they marry a non-status individual.

Now, if this same child has a sibling who was born after this date, then this sibling would be registered as status under section 6(2), which reads: "Subject to section 7, a person is entitled to be registered if that person is a person one of whose parents is or, if no longer living, was at the time of death entitled to be registered under subsection (1).[357] If this sibling, then, were to marry a non-status individual, then their children would not be eligible for status.[358] Similarly, any children from the older sibling who is registered under 6(1), provided the other parent was not status, would then be eligible for status under section 6(2). The older sibling would, by virtue of being born before this date, have more rights than that of the younger sibling.

Furi and Wherrett highlight another issue with this amendment, regarding women who had lost status prior to 1985 as a result of intermarriage, they state:

> These women are able to regain status under section 6(1); however, their children are entitled to registration only under section 6(2). In contrast, the children of Indian men who married non-Indian women, whose registration before 1985 was continued under section 6(1), are able to pass on status if they marry non-Indians.[359]

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[356] Section 6(1), "Indian Act," RSC 1985, c. I-5, http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/.

[357] Section 6 (2), Ibid.

[358] This example is my own personal situation, as my brother, born 1984, is registered as a section 6(1) status Indian, whereas I, born 1986, am registered as a section 6(2) status Indian. Both my brother and I have married non-status women, yet my brother's children are eligible to receive status, whereas my children are not.

[359] Furi and Wherrett, *Indian Status and Band Membership Issues.*

Clearly one can deduce that there is clearly still some work that needs to be done regarding these amendments.

Band Membership Control via Bill C-31

One of the more positive outcomes of Bill C-31 has to do with the fact that Indigenous communities now have more control over the status of Band[360] membership. Furi and Wherret observe:

> Indian communities see control over membership as an essential component of the right of self-government. Communities have *resisted externally imposed definitions of Indian status* and rules for band membership, and *emphasized the right of the group to define itself*…[361]

Thus, if a community wishes, they can now assume control over their membership so long as certain federal provision are met. Section 10 of *The Indian Act* outlines the provisions by which a Band can assume responsibility for their own membership, which reads:

> A band may assume control of its own membership if it establishes membership rules for itself in writing in accordance with this section and if, after the band has given appropriate notice of its intention to assume control of its own membership, a majority of the electors of the band gives its consent to the band's control of its membership.[362]

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[360] A "Band" is defined within *The Indian Act* as representing "a body of Indians (a) for whose use and benefit in common, lands, the legal title to which is vested in Her Majesty, have been set apart before, on or after September 4, 1951, (b) for whose use and benefit in common, moneys are held by Her Majesty, or (c) declared by the Governor in Council to be a band for the purposes of this Act." Section 2.1 of the "Indian Act," RSC 1985, c. I-5.

[361] Furi and Wherrett, *Indian Status and Band Membership Issues*.

[362] Section 10.1 of the "Indian Act," RSC 1985, c. I-5. The Government of Canada, Justice Law. http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/i-5/. It should also be noted here that this form of election and voting for band rules is more reflective of the imposed "democratic" form of government than of a traditional Indigenous form of government. There are a variety of forms of Indigenous government. Regarding traditional Indigenous forms of governing, Tache observes: "Although as a rule the Indians have no form of government, nor any code of law, in some tribes, particularly those who still carry on war, the chiefs exercise a certain authority, which is very limited, unless, at the risk of paying for their temerity, they inspire their brethren with fear. Natural superiority, greater dexterity and sometimes, too, excess of good-nature, draw a numerous family of friends around certain individuals, and here the patriarchal authority of the mature or old man is exercised with some degree of firmness." Taché, *Sketch of the Northwest of America,* 111.

Section 10.2 goes on to specify the provisions for establishing membership rules, noting that the band must then submit a system for reviewing membership decisions and rules to the federal department.[363]

Another reason that community control over band membership was important was, as Miller comments, due to the fact that many Indigenous organizations "were strenuously opposed" to some of the egalitarian amendments that significantly increased the overall number of people eligible for status. The reason for their opposition was not due to a support of the discriminatory patrilineal provisions, but due to the fact that "they feared the consequences of making it possible for tens of thousands of people to reclaim Indian status."[364] Some Bands, such as in Alberta, were reluctant to spread their natural resource wealth among a larger population, while other Bands feared not having the existing land or financial resource to properly sustain a population increase.[365]

Control of Membership and the Kahnawá:ke's Model of Self-Determination

The Kahnawá:ke in Quebec is one community that has assumed full control over determining their community's membership status. In agreement with Weaver's statement noted above, the Kahnawá:ke believe that their right to self-determination, regarding membership status, is "fundamental" to their survival as a Mohawk community. The Kahnawá:ke's membership code reads:

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[362] Section 10.2 (a) & (b) of the "Indian Act."

[364] Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens,* 358.

[365] Ibid.

> We recognize that we have been harmed by foreign governments' attempts to undermine our will and ability to survive by dividing our community. We reject the imposition of the Indian Act and of other foreign laws that have presumed to define the principles upon which the membership of our community will be determined. We reject all efforts to assimilate and extinguish our community under the guise of absolute individualism. [366]

One of the strict membership codes enforced by the Kahnawá:ke peoples is their banning of marriages to people outside of their community. This policy, of course, has generated a lot of debate. But Furi and Wherrett note that it is "intended to preserve Mohawk culture and language and to discourage Mohawks from marrying non-Indians."[367] There is even internal conflict, as there are those within the community that see it as "a means to prevent assimilation," and others "who view it as a form of discrimination." [368] However, the significance of this policy decision is that it was, by and large, a community developed and implemented decision. As noted above, the Kahnawá:ke community was no longer going to allow the future of their cultural identity, which is vital to the future of their community, be dictated by external influences.

The Kahnawá:ke First Nation may be understood as an activist community in this regard, and is certainly not representative of the attitude of the majority of Indigenous communities in Canada. It does, however, speak to their experience of historical subjugation and marginalization. This experience resulted in the community implementing policies that

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[366] The Kahnawá:ke's membership code can be viewed online at: "Kahnawá:ke Membership Law," Kahnawá:ke Community Decision Making Process, Mohawk Council of Kahnawá:ke, http://www.kahnawake makingdecisions.com/promo/Membership%20Law%20&%20 Regulations.pdf.

[367] Furi and Wherrett, *Indian Status and Band Membership Issues.*

[368] Furi and Wherrett add: "The code, which called for a moratorium on mixed marriages and a blood quantum requirement for membership… has led to several well-publicized disputes. In the spring of 1995, the band council moved to prevent children with less than 50% Mohawk blood from attending band schools." Ibid.

they felt would protect their unique cultural identity, and halt the dominant culture's attempt at assimilating them into mainstream society.[369]

Chapter Summary

> [T]hese are different times; empowerment has come to Aboriginal communities and with it a sense that Aboriginal people have some control over their own destiny.[370]

Taylor's quote above appropriately summarizes the current status of Indigenous peoples' cultural identity. For over a century, Indigenous people have been considered an impediment to Euro-Canadian expansionism, an irritation to the Euro-Canadian socio-political landscape… essentially, a problem that needed to be dealt with. The only solution to the "Indian problem," it was assumed, was full assimilation into mainstream society. Thus, colonial policies were developed to advance the assimilationist agenda, and these policies were eventually consolidated into *The Indian Act.*

The Indian Act was designed as a provisional framework that ultimately enabled the federal government to regulate and dictate all facets of "Indian" peoples' lives. It defined, from birth, their "status" within Canadian society, regulating minimal rights with the intent of persuading the "Indian" into enfranchisement, whereby they would be granted the rights of a full-fledged citizen. The "Indian" was alienated and forced to the margins of society, literally, and placed on a reserve that was economically "isolated" and socially inadequate. The goal, again, was to have them look with want, beyond their margins, onto an affluent society that was populated by citizens who represented the value of advanced civilization.

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[369] See, Holmgren, *Israel Alive Again,* 5. Holmgren made the same statement regarding the post-exilic repatriate Jews banning of foreign-marriages in Ezra 9 and Neh. 13.

[370] Taylor, *The Quest for Identity,* 72.

Ironically, it is this very policy framework that is now offering the Indigenous peoples a sense of empowerment. This, of course, parallels the post-exilic Jewish community's assertion of identity as a result of Cyrus' policy of self-determination. It is also the reason why my postcolonial interpretation of Ezra-Nehemiah has informed me as an Indigenous reader.

The Indigenous peoples have been granted the right of *self-determination,* i.e. to define themselves and determine their own destiny. Yazzie refers to this process as exercising a type of "internal sovereignty." This is, of course, a reference to the 'sovereignty' or autonomy that Indigenous peoples assert as an inherent right. Also known as "self-government," the Indigenous peoples claim that they had governed themselves, and their land, prior to European contact, and have not since conceded that right to the imperial Crown or subsequent federal government. More recent judicial developments have granted Indigenous communities more control over territories that have been recognized and affirmed as their traditional land, beyond their Reserves. As Indigenous self-government requires further study than what is offered here, suffice it to say that these recent developments that recognize "Aboriginal Title" have empowered the Indigenous peoples to determine the future of their peoples and the land to which they claim traditional use of.

Another important concept discussed in this chapter was the amendments to *Indian Act* that brought it into compliance with the egalitarian provisions of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms.* Specifically, Bill C-31 was approved and had expunged *The Indian Act's* enfranchisement provisions, gender discriminations, and gave Indigenous communities the opportunity to assume more control over their own respective membership. This amendment, though not perfect, has provided legal recognition to a significant amount of

Indigenous peoples who identify as First Nations individuals, and who are thus eligible to the rights and benefits of being identified as such. Moreover, by allowing control of community membership to be assumed by the communities themselves, the amendment has empowered Indigenous peoples to determine the identity and future of their respective communities.

CHAPTER FIVE
EZRA-NEHEMIAH AND CANADIAN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES: A NEW WAY OF THINKING

> I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world… As for the population of Babylon… All the kings who sit on thrones, from every quarter, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea… I sent back to their places… whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated, the gods who lived therein, and made permanent sanctuaries for them. I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements… at the command of Marduk, the great lord, I returned them unharmed to their cells, in the sanctuaries that make them happy. May all the gods that I returned to their sanctuaries, ask for a long life for me, and mention my good deeds… The population of Babylon call blessings on my kingship, and I have enabled all the lands to live in peace.[371]

Building a Cultural Identity: A Basic Human Right

Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, at a United Nations Conference on Human Rights, labelled Cyrus' Cylinder as being "'the precursor to the modern Universal Declaration of Human Rights.'"[372] Cyrus' decree advocated for racial and religious equality in a Persian Empire that consisted of numerous cultural and religious nations of peoples. It is because of this decree that the Jews living in exile during the sixth-fifth century B.C.E. were granted the opportunity

[371] Partial text from Cyrus' Cylinder as translated and read online at The British Museum: http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=327188&partId=1. Finkel writes that King Cyrus II released the decree in 539 B.C.E., the same year the Persian King conquered the Babylonian capital city. He says that "By taking the capital Babylon Cyrus inherited not only the city, with all its treasures and traditions, but at the same time a great empire that still retained much of the territory and power that had been so effectively acquired and held by the great kings of the outgoing Neo-Babylonian dynasty…" Irving L. Finkel, *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 1.

[372] Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, as quoted in *The Cyrus Cylinder: The King of Persia's Proclamation from Ancient Babylon*, 87.

to return to their homeland to rebuild their community, as well as their religious and cultural identity, on their own terms.

In fact, Ezra-Nehemiah cites more than one occasion in which the Jewish community's aspirations were reinforced at the highest level. For instance, in addition to Cyrus' proclamation in Ezra 1:2-4, King Darius' decree in Ezra 6:6-12 granted autonomy to the Jews in their continued rebuilding of the temple; and King Ataxerxes' offered a favourable response to Nehemiah's request to return to Judah in order to rebuild the city of Jerusalem based on Cyrus' decree. As I have mentioned earlier, these are absolutely key events that offered the repatriated Jewish community the right to determine their own identity and, ultimately, destiny.

It goes without saying that the Indigenous peoples in Canada face a completely different cultural, social, and political context from that of the post-exilic Jewish community. Thus, to say that their experiences are similar would have to be argued for on a broader ideological level. One clear parallel, however, is that the governing structures were not only responsible for the subjugation and colonization of the Indigenous peoples, but also in the recognition and affirmation of their rights as independent peoples capable of determining their own destiny. Thus, a sword and a shield to rights and identity.

The Royal Proclamation of 1763 was issued by imperial Britain as a claim to ownership of North American territory, but also speaks to the British Empire's relationship to Indigenous peoples, as it reads:

> And whereas it is just and reasonable, and essential to Our Interest and the Security of Our Colonies, that the several Nations or Tribes of Indians, with whom We are connected, and who live under Our Protection, should not be molested or disturbed in the Possession of such Parts of Our Dominions and Territories as, not having been

> ceded to, or purchased by Us, are reserved to them, or any of them, as their Hunting Grounds…[373]

The proclamation is considered one of the first documents that recognized the inherent rights of Indigenous peoples and their claims to traditional use of the lands. The historical relationship that followed, however, did not reflect these sentiments; though the proclamation did remain as a foundation upon which the more recent developments in Indigenous claims to "Aboriginal title" and self-determination have followed. As discussed previously, the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, which forms the first part of the *Constitution Act of 1982,* has demanded amendments to *The Indian Act* that has abolished discriminatory provisions, reflected an egalitarian approach to ongoing government-to-government relations with Indigenous communities, and promotes self-determination in matters concerning Indigenous communities and their peoples.

The UN and Indigenous Rights

Another, and more recent, contribution to the cause of Indigenous rights, is the 2008 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). The declaration, briefly, recognizes the cultural and religious rights and freedoms of Indigenous peoples, promotes Indigenous peoples right to autonomy, and considers these rights as "the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world."[374]

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[373] "Royal Proclamation of 1763,"250th Anniversary of the Royal Proclamation of 1763, Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada, https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/eng/1370355181092/1370355203645#a3.

[374] "United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," United Nations (2008): 14, http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.

Thus, for both the post-exilic Jewish community as well as the Canadian Indigenous peoples, governing structures and the promotion of basic human rights and equality have had significant impact on each group's assertion of their respective religious and cultural identities. Thus, although they remained in a colonized state, both groups of peoples were empowered by their right to self-determination in rebuilding their community identity, and these rights were affirmed on more than one occasion. With that said, the process of asserting their respective identities required incessant attention, as it was not only a response to their colonial context, but also to the reality of their more immediate socio-cultural context.

The Effects of Colonialism on the Formation of Group Identity

> Aboriginal identity is furthermore the outcome of a process of self-definition by those linked to one another through the experience of colonization. Having been marginalized in the past, the political project of Aboriginal peoples is often presented as their desire to survive as distinct communities, a process said to involve their right to control the building of their communities identities.[375]

The UNDRIP makes a statement that can be applied to both the Canadian Indigenous peoples' context, as well as the post-exilic Jew's context, as it reads:

> [I]ndigenous peoples have suffered from historic injustices as a result of, inter alia, their colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, thus preventing them from exercising, in particular, their right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests…[376]

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[375] Timothy A. Schouls, *Shifting Boundaries: Aboriginal Identity, Pluralistic Theory, and the Politics of Self-Government* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 53.

[376] Ibid., 2.

As discussed earlier, the repatriated Jewish community seemingly returned to Judah and Jerusalem with a sense of religious vibrancy.[377] Still, their exilic condition was understood as a direct result of their broken relationship with YHWH,[378] and their relationship with YHWH was the foundation of their identity. This is clearly reflected in Ezra 9:7, when Ezra recognizes their condition of "captivity" and "utter shame" as being a direct result of their "iniquities."

Thus, when they returned to the social, political, religious, and cultural milieu that characterized Judah and Jerusalem, they centered their focus upon creating an identity that they felt would survive. The result, as depicted in the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah, was the creation of an exclusive community. By defining the members as belonging being those who were "exiled," the repatriated Jews created social and religious boundaries that protected them from the "uncleanliness" of the "peoples of the land," and prohibited outsider participation in the re-construction of their religious and social institutions. As stated above, this was considered essential to the sustainability of their religious and cultural identity, as well as to the long-term survival of their community Jewish.

One of the more contentious laws presented in the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah is the banning of foreign marriages in Ezra 9 and Nehemiah 13. From a Canadian Indigenous perspective, the Kahnawá:ke's strict code against mixed-marriages is a clear parallel to the purity laws in Leviticus 11-15—which have the intent to distinguish the Israelites as a people group—and exclusive ideology as presented in Ezra-Nehemiah. An obvious difference is that the banning of foreign marriages in Ezra-Nehemiah had a greater impact on the foreign

[377] Cf. Haggai and Malachi though.

[378] 2 Kings 17:7-23.

women and children who were dispelled from the Jewish community. For the Kahnawá:ke, it makes no difference whether the community member, marrying a non-Indigenous person, is a man or woman. Still both examples are reflective of an exclusive attitude. Regarding the exclusivity, and with specific relation to Ezra-Nehemiah, Rom-Shiloni writes:

> [E]xclusivity operates by processes that continually set in opposition *social designations* and *counterdesignations*, as well as *arguments* and *counterarguments* advanced to legitimize the status of one group and delegitimize the status of the other(s). Finally, the opponents employ *social strategies* and *counterstrategies* to enact the changes advanced in their identities."[379]

For both the Kahnawá:ke and the repatriated Jewish community, extreme measures and boundaries were enforced to ensure the preservation of what they felt was essential to their community identity. Moreover, for both communities, the strict laws were a clear reflection of the affliction and oppression they experienced as a result of their colonization, and their subsequent desire for self-determination.[380] Thus, any deviance from these strict codes of conduct entailed excommunication from the respective communities.

A Postcolonial Identity: Post-Exilic Jews and Canadian Indigenous Peoples

> [Cultural Identity] has its histories – and histories have their real, material and symbolic effects. The past continues to speak to us.[381]

I discussed the idea that there seems to be a sense of inclusivism in Ezra 6:21, and that this parallels the more inclusive theme of "Gentile mission," as it is depicted in Isaiah 56-66. If indeed, as Blenkinsopp suggests, there is a sense of foreign inclusion that is reminiscent of

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[379] Rom-Shiloni, "From Ezekiel to Ezra-Nehemiah," 130.

[380] Reflected in Ezra's prayer in 9:7 as well as in the Kahnawá:ke's membership code, see n. 366.

[381] Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 395.

the socio-cultural context represented in the post-exilic Jewish community in Isaiah 56-66, then I think it requires further consideration. After all, it would be consistent with Sugirtharajah's understanding of identity as it relates to colonized people. Sugirtharajah promotes Bhabha's notion of *Hybridity* when discussing identity formation for those formally subjected to hegemony, noting it as a process of "mutual interdependence and transformation" with that of the colonizers.[382] Regarding cultural identity, Hall states that it:

> … is not a fixed essence at all, lying unchanged outside history and culture. It is not some universal and transcendental spirit inside us on which history has made no fundamental mark. It is not once-and-for-all. It is not a fixed origin to which we can make some final and absolute Return."[383]

If cultural identity is considered in this light, then Lee's reading of Isaiah 56-66 needs to be taken seriously when considering the condition of the post-exilic Jews identity. To recall, Lee reads the biblical text from a postcolonial Hong Kong lens. He ultimately promotes the inclusive nature of Isaiah 56-66 with its openness to "foreign elements" in the construct of Jewish identity, and argues that a hybridized identity is an inevitability that should not necessary be considered as a negative condition.

For Canadian Indigenous peoples, this entails a shift in thinking about what it means to be "Indigenous." Cairns calls it "Aboriginality," and emphasizes the importance of "Aboriginal" identity being defined internally. In this way, Indigenous identity can be considered dynamic and ever-evolving. This new way of understanding Indigenous identity sees the incorporation of socio-cultural elements of Euro-Canadian society as not coming at

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[382] Sugirtharajah, *Bible in the Third World,* 248.

[383] Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," 395.

the expense of a genuine Indigenous identity**.** Thus, what may have been considered as a condition of assimilation in the past is understood today as being a condition of hybridization, which, as Lee states, is not a negative thing.

This concept of hybridization, however, seems to be the very reason why strict purity laws and exclusive boundaries were being enforced in the narrative of Ezra-Nehemiah. But, as Schaper argues, this may have been more reflective of the text's overall emphasis on Torah, and adherence to the purity laws represented in the Leviticus. As Fensham concludes, it would have been impossible for the repatriated Jews to avoid foreign influence in the reconstruction of their community.[384]

[384] Fensham, *The Books of Ezra and Nehemiah,* 18.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction, I noted that the overall purpose of this thesis is to encourage thinking about Indigenous issues in a new way. This concept was reinforced on multiple occasions throughout this study. My approach was to consider these issues from a postcolonial Indigenous lens. This was laid out in the first chapter, "Postcolonialism in the Matrix of Postmodern Hermeneutics," which presented postcolonialism as a discourse that ultimately exposes and subverts the colonial and hegemonic structures, systems, and ideologies that impact colonized peoples. I also discussed the way in which postcolonialism has contributed to the realm of Biblical Studies. As such, I was able to provide a workable framework from within which I could analyze the historical affects that perpetual hegemony has had on Canada's Indigenous peoples. I did this, essentially, in two parts.

The first part involved examining the Euro-Canadian assumption that civilization was synonymous to that of Christianization. I looked at the role that the Oblate missionaries played as vital instruments that helped advance a colonial agenda. In what might be considered as good intentions gone awry, the Oblates were instrumental in the administration of the "Indian" Residential Schooling system that proved to be the government's aggressive attempt to assimilate the Indigenous peoples in Canada. The dramatic impact that the schooling system had on the over 150,000 Indigenous children who attended them is felt as strongly today as in the past. However, the recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, and the work that the commission has done in general, has definitely had a bearing on the consciousness of Indigenous peoples

and the general public.[385] The journey toward National reconciliation is ongoing, but the increased level of awareness of the issues is a significant step in the right direction.

The second part of my study involved a postcolonial reading of Ezra-Nehemiah. I noted earlier that my postcolonial reading of Ezra-Nehemiah had enhanced my own understanding of Canadian Indigenous cultural identity. What this means is that I now understand the development of a marginalized/colonized peoples cultural identity in a new way. What was surprising for me was the utility of such a reading of Ezra-Nehemiah in formulating and asserting Indigenous identity later in the thesis based on the exclusivism of the text in the pluralistic context of the Persian Empire.

On a broader scale, I understand cultural identity as being dynamic and constantly evolving along-side the socio-cultural landscape within which it resides. For colonized peoples, though, the evolution of cultural identity is in inextricably linked to the culture and history shared with the colonizers. In this sense, a hybridized identity is created that amalgamates elements of a traditional culture with elements of the dominant colonizer's culture. I see a direct analogy between the Jews in Ezra-Nehemiah in the Persian Empire with the Indigenous peoples in Canada. The result, then, is a group of people that distinguish themselves from the dominant culture, emphasizing their uniqueness, while incorporating elements of that dominant culture to allow for a healthy socio-political and cultural landscape. In my opinion, this is an appropriate synthesis of the current understanding for many Indigenous peoples, since, as I stated earlier, as an Indigenous person I can live in a

[385] "Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action," TRC 2015, http://www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf.

home, drive a car, and drink Starbucks coffee without forfeiting my cultural Identity as a genuine Indigenous person.

However, throughout the course of this study I really learned that it is not as simple as applying some broad understanding of cultural identity to Indigenous peoples as a whole. Rather, each Indigenous community is unique, and each has a unique cultural identity that is defined internally. Moreover, the way in which each community responds to their respective experiences from being subjugated to colonization and perpetual hegemony is going to differ. It is for this reason that I chose to focus on the exclusive nature of Ezra-Nehemiah, as it truly reflects the Jewish community's response to their experienced crisis. They created social and religious boundaries and enforced strict community rules that they felt would be their best chance of ensuring the survival of their community.

By placing colonialism at the heart of my biblical interpretation, I was able to understand the context within which the texts of Ezra-Nehemiah were written, and how that influenced the activities narrated in the texts. In turn, my interpretation of Ezra-Nehemiah enhanced my understanding of Indigenous cultural identity, by placing colonialism at the heart of the matter.

In the past I may have considered the Kahnawá:ke's strict membership codes as a step backwards—as a means of widening the gap in any attempt of creating a healthy socio-political and cultural landscape. Now, however, I understand it as a response by a community that was no longer willing to stand by idly as others dictated their future. Now I understand the Kahnawá:ke peoples in a new way—they are a peoples who have been empowered by their right to self-determination. Thus, this research has taught me internal lessons in relation to my broader Indigenous people groups. Thus, this thesis takes the

exclusivity of Ezra-Nehemiah as a positive: a mechanism by which Indigenous Canadians can assert their identity in a pluralistic context.

I must emphasize, however, that my postcolonial reading of Ezra-Nehemiah is strictly a reading that has enhanced my own understanding of Indigenous peoples' cultural identity. I do not propose it as an appropriate interpretation that all Indigenous peoples should adopt. Perhaps Weaver words it best, as he states:

> No professional exegete or theologian can say what a text means, let alone *should* mean, for Native communities. Only the communities themselves, gathered in dialogue… can perform this task… In traditional cultures, the thought that an idea or a story could belong to an individual—belong to such an extent that he or she would have enforceable proprietary rights in it—would seem as irrational and bizarre as a single person owning the land."[386]

It is for this reason that I advocate for *a new way of thinking* about Indigenous identity and issues. The Indigenous communities themselves contain the necessary knowledge, internally, to understanding the history and the trauma experienced through their colonization. Moreover, the Indigenous peoples are resilient and will continue to assert their inherent right to determine their own future and identity in the best way that they see fit. The Canadian government should respect and facilitate this new way forward.

[386] Weaver, "From I-Hermeneutics," 172.

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