

**Can I Be a Good Social Worker? Racialized Workers
Narrate Their Experiences with Racism in Every Day
Practice**

by

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Humanities, Social Science and Social Justice Education at the Ontario Institute of Studies in
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Abstract

Social work imagines itself as a site of goodness and justice. My thesis illustrates the ways in which commitments to the profession's social justice-oriented ideals are ruptured when racialized social workers name the operation of racism within everyday sites of professional practice. I show how colonial and imperial constructions of helping (moral superiority and goodness) continue to shape the hegemonic scripts about the role and practices of social work, reinscribing white dominance in social work knowledge production. Historically, racialized bodies have been constituted as Others, subjects to be regulated, controlled and 'saved' within the colonial project. I examine the dilemmas that emerge when racialized Others become the helpers and attempt to perform a normative identity that is constructed through white dominance.

In this study, I provide a detailed analysis of twenty-three semi-structured interviews with racialized social workers. I trace the production of the profession's values and notions of good practice within their narratives. I specifically explore the moments in which 'good' practice and commitments to the values of the profession break down in everyday work with clients and co-workers. Racist encounters with clients appear as overwhelming occurrences within workers' narratives, and a complex paradox is revealed: the discursive arrangements within social work that constitute good, social justice-oriented practice, are the very same discourses that disavow the operation of racism. Within these moments workers are left questioning whether or not they can be 'good social workers' because the act of naming racism appears to be incompatible with

their commitments to the values that shape what is recognized as good social work practice. The narratives presented in this thesis point to the trespasses, erasures and individualizing discourses that secure whiteness at the exact moments in which race is made invisible. I contend that, when workers name racism, their very presence is destabilizing to a social work profession that needs to construct an image of itself as a site of goodness. Social work must examine the colonial continuities that construct contemporary practices, and to make visible the ways in which hegemonic scripts shaping justice and goodness reinstall whiteness and collude with racism.

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Chapter One

Introduction

This historical bias within our profession and in the larger context of this country reinforces our collective denial and unconsciousness around racial legacies of pain. There is no precedent for the dominant group taking responsibility for their oppressive actions. A side effect of this silent collusion is that we and our clients meet at racial fault lines where cultural templates collide and people of colour are made to hold onto their anger and helplessness, without a clue as to how to describe what is happening (Lee, 2005, p. 96).

1.1 Introduction

This thesis is concerned with the ways in which racialized social workers negotiate the values and practices of a social work profession that is constituted through scripts of whiteness. In particular, I examine the ways in which social work imagines itself as a site of ‘goodness,’ and the processes through which goodness collides with the racist encounters experienced by social workers of colour in sites of everyday practice. I build upon scholarship that critiques the centralization of whiteness in social work and makes visible the liberal foundations of the profession. These scholars emphasize the profession’s implication in colonial and imperial practices constituting moral superiority and goodness (Heron, 1999; Jeffery, 2002, Rossiter, 2001). The present thesis examines the discursive and material constructions of goodness in contemporary social work, and traces the ways in which whiteness persists in shaping knowledge production about good social work practice.

Social work scholar Donna Jeffery (2005) shows that being a good social worker and doing good social work are formed through scripts of white dominance. Jeffery (2002) argues that negotiating the being/doing divide is challenging for all workers, but she speculates that racialized social workers experience a different set of risks and costs in their attempts to perform a normative, white professional identity. My research picks up where Jeffery’s leaves off to

examine how racialized social workers negotiate a professional identity that is constructed through whiteness. Building on the argument that social work is a site of white dominance, my research explores the following question:

What are the ways in which racialized workers negotiate their professional identities and the practices of a social work profession that is regulated by whiteness and in contexts where they encounter racism?

I am concerned with the dilemmas that emerge for racialized workers who are both marked by difference and expected to perform a white-normed professional identity. More centrally, my research focuses on racism that occurs in everyday sites of practice, during encounters with clients and institutions (co-workers, teams, managers). I argue that professional values and practices committed to the goals of social justice are the same values and practices that reinstall whiteness and underpin incidents of racial violence. Historically, racialized bodies have been constituted as Other - subjects to be regulated, controlled and 'saved' within the colonial project by white, bourgeois subjects (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Valverde, 1991). This study examines the dilemmas that emerge when racialized Others become the helpers and perform an identity that historically was never meant for them.

1.2 Setting the Context

I have been a practicing social worker for over eighteen years. I have worked within a number of different practice settings, such as ethno-specific agencies and community health centres, and for over ten years I was a counsellor in the areas of intimate partner violence and sexual assault at a hospital-based program in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. My previous work in the field also focused on anti-racist organizational change, diversity initiatives, mental health, youth issues, community organizing and activism. During my years as a practicing social worker, I also taught social work courses at a university in Toronto. In May of 2011, I joined a Toronto university as a full-time faculty member in the school of social work. My social work education and practice have been intimately shaped by concerns for and commitments to social justice. However, over my years of practice in the field, I have learned that knowledge about justice is often produced through a number of different, and oftentimes competing, discourses.

Over the course of my career as a social worker, I have encountered many moments in which racist ideas circulated throughout practice encounters with clients and institutions. Anti-oppressive and social justice-oriented discourses (which are widely used in social work) did not provide me with the clinical direction or the support needed to address the dilemmas of the moment. The tensions surrounding how I might engage in critical practices towards social justice were never more evident than during an incident about twelve years ago, in which a white client behaved in a racist manner during one of our appointments together.

The incident involved the client expressing numerous racist ideas about new immigrants during our counselling session together. When I attempted to address the racist ideas, she became increasingly angry, reminding me that Canada was ‘her’ country and that she had every right to speak up against immigrants whose needs were being served over her own. My attempts to ‘de-escalate’ the situation resulted in her uttering further racist comments. At the end of the appointment, as she was leaving my office, she stated that it was hard to be a woman in Canada, then quickly changed her response to say that it was *hard to be a white woman in this country*, and she turned her back on me and left slamming the door. I remember feeling alarmed and shocked, but more importantly, I remember the worry that I felt about not knowing how to *respond* to her comments when she returned the following week. More specifically, I questioned whether or not I did the ‘right’ thing by questioning the racism, however gently.

Members of my work team with whom I shared the story of this encounter agreed that the client’s comments were problematic (as overt expressions of racism are viewed as inappropriate); however, they did not know how I might respond to the client if and when she returned the following week. I was most troubled by the suggestion that the client be transferred to a white worker to cease any further abuse towards me. Other colleagues advised me to analyze the client’s anger, her childhood trauma or experiences of powerlessness in the world as possible explanations for her use of racist comments. In the classroom, when I used this incident as a teaching example, students have been quick to remind me that the experience of the social worker is not important - our commitment is to remain focused on the client’s needs, not ours.

I was troubled by those responses, but could not find a vocabulary to explain the discomfort that I was experiencing. What I did know was that the racism experienced in my work with the client was a great concern, but it was not the only concern. I was not satisfied with the suggestion to

move the client to a white worker, as this response would have done little to dislodge the client's racist ideas. On the other hand, I questioned whether interrupting racist or any other discriminatory notions expressed by clients was even the point of our practice. I wondered whether my decision to name the encounter as racist betrayed my commitment to focus on the needs of the client. I also wondered if the team thought that I lacked kindness or compassion because I was affected by the client's comments. In an effort to reflect upon the incident, I sought the support of colleagues of colour in the community and discovered that similar experiences of racism were taking place in their work places. Speaking to them offered some support and validation as it became evident that these encounters were taking place more often than I had imagined. I began to see a paradox circulating within social work knowledge production about the role and function of the worker - the social worker is constructed as a 'good, compassionate, and a powerful subject,' whereas clients are constituted as subjects 'in need, vulnerable and powerless.' The situation described above activated questions about critical perspectives in social work, and how power and privilege are theorized to construct an identity of the social worker as one that is always in a *power over* position in relation to their client.

Healy (2000) notes that, "Even though workers may experience specific forms of oppression, such as those associated with gender, race, (dis)ability or sexuality, this does not erase the oppressor status conferred by their professional identity" (p. 72-3). Dominant ideas about the social worker identity serve to deny a multiplicity of subject positions that may fall inside and outside of the worker and client relationship. The theoretical construction of the worker/client relationship locks both subjects into fixed identities that reinscribe colonial and imperial notions of 'helping.' The worker is the helper (has power) and the client is a person in need (without power) (Heron, 1999; Rossiter, 2002).

Hardy (1993), an African-American scholar and psychotherapist in the United States, presents a powerful example of the tensions that emerge when racialized helping professionals experience racism within moments of direct practice:

"I DON'T WANT TO BE HERE. I WANT A WHITE DOCTOR!" The words rang in my ears as I sat, temporarily stunned, staring into the eyes of the angry nine-year old boy before me. As a 25-year old graduate student, nothing in my training had prepared me for that moment. Uncertain about what the therapeutically correct response would be, I

proceeded with caution. “Why do you want a white doctor, Joey?” I asked. His lips curled in a slight smirk as he explained the self-evident truth to me: “White doctors are smarter than black doctors.” I could feel my jaw tightening as I attempted to assure Joey of my intellectual credentials. “Okay, Mister black doctor,” he challenged me, “if you’re so smart, how much is one plus one?” Inside I was spinning. There was a faint voice whispering in my ear, telling me that I needed to be able to see in Joey the frightened little boy who needed empathy and guidance. But in spite of my best attempts to maintain a cool, professional stance, this little white boy had succeeded in knocking me off my professional pedestal. He had tapped into a deep reservoir of emotion that made it difficult for me to regard him as simply another client. When I consulted my team, all of whom were white, they talked about my responsibility to rise above the ‘loaded content’ and to deal strictly with the underlying process and therapeutic dynamics. (p. 52)

Hardy’s example of this emotionally charged moment spoke to my experience with my client from many years ago. Hardy (1993) points to the professional expectations to maintain an objective, professional stance, and a compassionate practice towards his client. His admission that he could not maintain his professional stance and the lack of support from his team reflect the ways in which racialized workers have their competency questioned in social work.

My research explores the ways in which various ‘colonial continuities’ (Heron, 1999) are reproduced through professional values that are intended to support social justice-oriented practices. These include examining the power that operates between workers and clients and inquiring how social work notions such as client-centred practices, empathic practice and critical reflexivity are operationalized in the multiracial social work environment. The study reveals a complex reality that demonstrates the challenges for racialized workers who struggle to maintain their commitment to social justice ideals, while at the same time negotiating the effects of racial discrimination in the field. The research illustrates how naming racism betrays the very foundations upon which the profession has come to define the integrity of its practices and its workers. My analyses of the ways in which racialized workers negotiate whiteness in social work are accompanied by additional inquiries:

1. What values and practices inform good social work practice for racialized workers?

2. How might the institutional contexts, in which workers are employed, shape the ways in which racialized workers negotiate issues of race and racism?
3. How do racialized workers negotiate their identities as good, critical workers when they encounter racism in practice moments?

My suspicions about social work knowledge production and its role in shaping these encounters have led me towards this particular trajectory of analysis. I seek to understand how racist encounters, as experienced by racialized social workers, often go unchallenged despite social work's commitments to social justice.

1.3 Organization of the Thesis

Following this introduction, Chapter Two outlines the theoretical framework that informs the exploration of the research questions and the analysis. Critical race scholarship, post-structural feminism and Foucauldian analysis of discourse, power and governmentality anchor the thesis and provide the analytical lens through which I seek to explore the research question. In addition, this chapter outlines my use of Foucauldian discourse analysis as a methodology to support my engagement with and interpretation of participant narratives. Finally, the chapter presents the limited literature available on how social workers of colour experience their roles and practices within the profession. In Chapter Three, I begin to present narratives from participants' interviews. This chapter traces the values and practices within worker narratives that describe the role of the social worker and notions of good practice. The focus of this chapter is to illuminate the ways in which whiteness continues to persist within social work knowledge production about goodness. The discussion examines alternative notions of helping described by racialized, and in particular Aboriginal workers, as determined by their own histories of injustice and commitments to social change. This chapter outlines what the participants identify as the hegemonic practice scripts of the profession. Chapters Four and Five begin to tell the stories of racist encounters by racialized workers in their field of practice. The narratives are complex and point to the ways in which principal understandings of good, critical practice contribute to racial discrimination. Chapter Four closely looks at institutional scripts of whiteness and racist practices. I utilize scholarship that draws on spatial theory (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004; Razack,

2002) to explore the ways in which racism is kept intact institutionally, through discourses of 'diversity.' Racialized workers' narratives describe situations in which they come to represent literally the embodiment of diversity practices. Finally, Chapter Five presents worker narratives that describe racist encounters within their practices with clients. This chapter examines the ways in which social work values and racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009) conspire to intensify racism. The discussion explores how race and racism are ignored, silenced and minimized in modern organizations. White dominance is maintained through social work's investments in social justice, and through neoliberal restructuring that focuses on intensified individualism and skills development. These two arenas of analysis converge within the narratives to demonstrate how racism remains unchallenged in modern organizations. The convergence between social work values and neoliberalism reinscribes white dominance, while at the same time, work together to conceal whiteness. Finally, in the Conclusion I summarize the implications of this study and discuss the possibilities for future research arising out of the particular concerns outlined in this thesis. A central aspect of this discussion encourages an ongoing critique of white dominance and the ways in which hegemonic practice scripts within social work contribute to racialized violence.

My thesis is not a discussion about whether or not critical practices in social work are effective at creating social justice for marginalized communities. Nor is my analysis focused on the usefulness of cultural sensitivity and/or anti-racist perspectives in our practices with clients and communities. I am primarily interested in what critical perspectives in social work 'do' with regard to the production of the identity and practices of the social worker. More centrally, I explore what is erased, promoted or reinscribed when social workers attempt to perform a social worker identity that has been constructed through imperial notions of helping. I contend that social work must deal with its colonial past and critically examine the ongoing ways in which racialized violence is exercised and maintained through the profession's desires to be good.

Chapter Two

Research Openings: Theory, Methods and Literature

Only when we come to be very clear about how race is lived, in its multiple manifestations, only when we come to appreciate its often hidden epistemic effects and its power over collective imaginations of public space, can we entertain even the remote possibility of its eventual transformations (Alcoff, 2002, p. 267).

2.1 Theorizing Race

My research is informed by race theory (critical race scholarship, whiteness studies, post-colonial studies), post-structural feminism, and critical race scholars who utilize Foucauldian concepts of discourse, power, subject-formation and governmentality. These theoretical entry points enable me to examine the racial foundations upon which social work as a profession is produced (Jeffery, 2002), in addition to exploring the experiences of social workers of colour as they negotiate both a racist profession and racist environments. My central aim is to trace the ongoing mechanisms of whiteness in social work in order to reveal the ways in which racialized bodies are regulated through discourses that both ignite and reinscribe colonial continuities (Heron, 2007) within the profession. Critical race scholarship supports my research to examine how dominant and normative scripts about whiteness construct the idealized identity of the social worker (Jeffery, 2002; Todd, 2005; Valverde, 1991). I utilize scholarship that critically examines how liberalism informs the foundations of social work, and through the use of race scholarship I examine how racism is integral to modernity, the liberal project and white dominance in social work (Goldberg, 1993, 2004; Hesse, 2004; Jeffery, 2002).

2.1.1 Defining Race

A shared definition of racism does not exist amongst race scholars (Stoler, 1995, p. 89). Race can be understood ideologically, as a social construction, or as individual and structural practices of discrimination (Goldberg, 1993; Hesse, 2004; Stoler, 1995). Jeffery (2002), drawing on Goldberg (1993), notes that racism is still perceived as individual acts of discrimination and that the personal prejudice model “remains influential” (p. 19). Similarly, Hesse (2004) argues that a

conceptual “double bind” is present when analyzing racism, “between the critique of ‘race’ thinking’ as ideological exceptionality and the interrogation of ‘race relations’ as colonial conventions” (p. 10). Hesse (2004) contends that in the western world, racism is viewed as unacceptable social behaviour whereby acts of racism are divorced from processes of racialization, and what “remains is a pathology, a moral deviation from the western liberal and democratic ethos” (p. 10). Consequently, acts of racism are viewed as extremist and a problem of the past (Goldberg, 2009; Hesse, 2004). However, Hesse argues against treating race as an ideological exceptionality, and states that race concepts are constitutive of racial differences and everyday practices of racial governance (p. 9). Therefore, my theoretical lens is informed by scholarship that examines the discursive production of race and racism (and subsequent subject-formation), in addition to revealing the material effects that are institutionalized and experienced by racialized subjects. This approach allows me to trace the ways in which race ideologies and acts of racism are not mutually exclusive within social work knowledge production and practice, but are constitutive of the profession’s values, identities and practices.

Goldberg (1993) draws important distinctions between race and racism and suggests that these processes fall under the larger umbrella of racialized discourses, in which racism is one of many racialized discourses operating in the world (p. 42). Racialized discourses function across a number of conceptual and material terrains to include “the racialized expressions that arise in analyzing and explaining the historical formations and logics of racial thinking and reference, as well as racisms” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 41). Goldberg (1993) argues that racialized discourses emerge throughout the interdependent relationship between colonialism and modernity, and the production of white, liberal normativity. He explains how racialized discourses constitute racial differences in the world, and racist expressions create the material effects of power to exclude and subjugate racialized populations. According to Goldberg (1993), racist expressions entail: “Classification, order, value, and hierarchy; differentiation and identity, discrimination and identification, exclusion, domination, subjection and subjugation” (p. 49).

Racist expressions take place within multiple arenas (science, legal, religious, philosophical) to shape racial membership, and like other scholars (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Hesse, 2004; Stoler, 1995), Goldberg (1993) contends that these expressions are shaped by beliefs, whether they are expressed through “practices or within texts” (p. 42). In social work, racialized discourses emerged through colonialism, nation-building and state formation to construct dominant scripts

about the identity and practices of social workers (Jeffery, 2002). Consequently, the colonial underpinnings of the profession are masked through particular notions about good practice (for example, helping, empowerment, reflexivity, anti-oppression). Goldberg's (1993) conceptualization of racialized discourses allows me to examine the racialized constitution of the profession, and expose those ideas/practices that mask the operations of race and racism. Of particular significance are the ways in which historicized notions of whiteness (helping, goodness) are reproduced to situate workers as innocent subjects. I show how the re-inscription of innocence and whiteness complicates how social workers of colour understand their role and effectiveness as social workers.

2.1.2 Racial Governance

Critical race scholarship that draws upon Foucault's conceptualization of governmentality is also very important to understanding racism within social work. Within social work knowledge production, Foucauldian analyses have had a significant impact (Healy, 2000). Post-structural theorists in social work who draw on Foucault's insights argue that social work itself is a discourse, built upon dominant and subjugated knowledge about the identities of the client and the worker, in addition to "the rules for how they are to interact" (Pease & Fook, 1999 p. 14). Discourse analysis informed by Foucault points to the importance of context in the constitution of subjects, in addition to examining the competing tensions and the effects of various discourses within "language, texts and practices" (Jeffery, 2002, p. 15). However, post-colonial interventions have been minimal within social work education (Healy, 2005). Notably, social work's emergence as a helping profession has been divorced from colonial and imperial practices shaping the nation state (Jeffery, 2002). Although social work imagines and constructs itself as a profession committed to social justice-oriented practices and empowerment of marginalized communities, attention to the racial constitution of the profession remains remote. I draw upon critical race scholars who utilize Foucauldian studies of governmentality to direct the lens towards relations of dominance that are secured through ideas and practices that efface the production of race and racism within the profession.

Foucault's investigation into the formation of the state and the constitution of the subject are linked through studies of governmentality, in which he "endeavors to show how the modern sovereign state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other's emergence"

(Lemke, 2002, p. 51). Studies in governmentality are marked by Foucault's discussions about the emergence of a modern power in the seventeenth century, in which sovereign rule was transformed into technologies, through various institutions (legal, medical, education) that rule and govern how populations may live their lives (Foucault, 1984). Power did not solely reside in a sovereign who determined who could live or die, but was transformed as a "power over life" as a whole (Foucault, 1984, p. 261). Foucault referred to these processes as bio-power, through which "normalising biological, psychological and social technologies" (Ojakangas, 2005, p. 6) serve to know and govern populations through their capacities and modes of conduct. Various techniques are deployed and exercised as very specific and localized forms of power to direct human behavior (Rose, O'Malley & Valverde, 2006).

A central facet of studies in governmentality focuses on both the productive and disciplinary aspects of power which can be traced through everyday micro-practices at local levels of engagement. The productive and disciplinary aspects of power link technologies of the self with technologies of domination and reveal how subjects are formed in and through them (Foucault, 1991a). Technologies (practices of power) need not be repressive, or innately possessed by particular subjects (Healy, 2005; Lemke, 2002). Instead, studies in governmentality examine how power is exercised. In a movement away from essentializing discourses, practices of domination are not viewed as 'foundational' and fixed expressions of power but rather as the "effects of technologies of government" (Lemke, 2002, p. 53). Foucault's distinction between power and domination is noteworthy. Because power is exercised, domination can also be formed through asymmetrical relationships of power in which liberty is constrained for subjects who are marginalized through various techniques of government, and which "account for the systematization, stabilization and regulation of power relationships that may lead to a state of domination" (Ibid).

Governing technologies rely upon discourses of morality to shape the norms that dominate individuals and groups, and are used to define "what constitutes good, virtuous, appropriate, responsible conduct of individuals and collectives (Dean, 1999, p. 12). How people perform their social roles relies upon particular 'regimes of practice' (Foucault, 1991b) that govern the conduct of populations. Therefore, the management of subjectivity persists as a central concern for modern organizations (Rose, 1999), of which social work is no exception. Foucauldian analysis ruptures and challenges liberal notions of individuality, agency and control (Mills, 1997), and

instead examines the discursive production of the subject that is critical of a humanist, unitary view of the subject (Davies, 2000). Foucault (as cited in Burchell et al., 1991c, p. 70) argued for a form of analysis that:

- recognizes the historic conditions and specific rules of a practice
- sets out to define a practice's possibilities of transformation and the play of dependencies between transformations
- does not make the subject of consciousness or the subject in general into the universal operator of all transformations
- they (discourses) form a practice which are articulated upon other practices

My research is interested in exploring the work of various scholars who have built upon Foucault's studies in governmentality to examine the specific ways in which race and gendered relations within complex colonial and imperial projects have constituted the modern nation-state (Goldberg, 1993; Stoler, 1995; Thobani, 2007). Stoler (1995), in her reading and analysis of Foucault's lectures at the College de France, maintains that bourgeois subject-formation was accomplished through various racial and gendered taxonomies in which "gendered assessments of perversion and subversion are part of the scaffolding on which the intimate technologies of racist policies rest" (p. 93). Nineteenth century social taxonomies were constitutive of bourgeois ordering (Stoler, 1995) in which moralizing and civilizing missions (such as sites of social work practice) set apart bourgeois subjects from those who were believed to be members of degenerate classes: Aboriginal populations, new immigrants, Jews, criminals, people from the working class, women, prostitutes, and gays and lesbians (Fellows & Razack, 1998; McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1995).

Stoler (1995) and McClintock (1995) argue that bourgeois subjectivity was dependent upon discourses of race, class, gender and sexuality "to defend the social body against degeneration and abnormality" (Stoler, p. 134). The interlocking relationships between bourgeois purity and racial sexuality were constitutive of the imperial project (Stoler, 1995). Racialized Others were viewed as populations whose sexuality was impure and out of control (Valverde, 1991). Furthermore, McClintock (1995) contends that gender dynamics were fundamental to the

security of the imperial enterprise, with white women performing a critical role in the imperial project as mothers, wives and community workers to shape the moral conduct of the nation and its citizens (McClintock, 1995). These specific roles (for example, as charity workers, teachers and social workers) naturalized white femininity as “moral, clean, respectable” (Roger, 1998, p. 60). Because white women fell outside of masculine ideals attached to perfect personhood (Jeffery, 2002), they were situated as subordinates and active agents of imperial culture (Stoler, 1995). Nation building and state formation required the containment of difference to pursue a homogenous national identity as white (Thobani, 2007; Valverde, 1991). Taxonomies of difference and discourses of civility constituted the image of the national subject and dictated who could be a rightful citizen of the nation (Razack, 2002; Thobani, 2007). However, within the history of social work in Canada, the violence done to racialized populations (Aboriginal and immigrant communities) remained concealed through discourses of helping, through which white subjects could situate themselves as not only good subjects, but also as morally superior ones (Heron, 1999).

Barnor Hesse (1997) extends discussions about governmentality to describe what he terms ‘white governmentality:’ specific techniques of surveillance through which racialized Others are objectified and controlled. Hesse examines how processes of white nation building and racist harassment intertwine to produce racialized Others as “a threat, a resource, a fantasy or an epigone to be regulated by that culture” (p. 98). He explains that white governmentality operates through two specific sites of regulation: the first is described as “nationalist political rationalities” that entail moral directives to characterize objects and subjects of governance, and the second as “the deployment of representational strategies which assume the right to oversee, interrogate, celebrate or include/exclude the ‘racial other’ in any social field” (Hesse, 1997, p. 98). Hesse’s conceptualization of ‘nationalist political rationalities’ can be likened to Thobani’s (2007) discussion of ‘exaltation,’ where she describes the historical process through which white subjects come to be constituted as the rightful citizens of a nation. Thobani (2007) argues that the state structures the rights of national subjects through processes that naturalize and elevate white subjects as representative of national identity. Exaltation relies upon techniques of power to naturalize humanity through characteristics that define civility. Thobani (2007) asserts that processes in which national subjects are ‘exalted’ are not available to subjects who are understood to be ‘non-western,’ ‘non-modern’ and not in possession of “exalted qualities of

‘western’ nationalities” (p. 11). Consequently, legally sanctioned violence against Aboriginal and immigrant communities is instituted as the law of civilization. This point mirrors Hesse’s (1997) contention that racism is legally sanctioned and justified through practices that situate racialized Others as ‘threats’ to the moral fabric of the nation. Therefore, white governance secures dominance through processes of normalization in which its expressions operate through everyday social life.

The second strategy of white governmentality works more pragmatically through ‘racist programmes of government’ that rely on technologies of the body to control and regulate the conduct of racialized Others through “racist ascriptions and moral panics which inform the limitations placed on the ‘racial others’ spatial mobility, economic status, political participation and social visibility” (Hesse, 1997, p. 99). This thread of white governance oversees how the racial other will be included/excluded within various fields, which is exemplified in social work by the deployment of diversity initiatives. Diversity programs function as another technology of governance that serves to categorize difference and reinscribe institutional white dominance (Ahmed, 2012). Through neoliberalism’s push for market driven outcomes, diversity is treated as a commodity, and racialized bodies are assessed for what they bring to the nation (M. Smith, 2011). Neoliberal governmentality produces various techniques of power through which individuals learn how to modify their conduct within organizations. Therefore, racial subjects come to understand that they are to perform diversity within the particular rules of conduct set by organizations. The governing technologies of whiteness and diversity produce tensions in which racialized subjects have to perform as the ‘ideal-type’ of academic self, or social work self, and at the same time be expected to embody difference. Racist ascriptions are prevalent within the narratives of the social workers that I interviewed for this study. In particular, the incidents illustrate the multitude of racist ideas that circulate about ‘who’ can be perceived to be a skilled and effective professional. I will focus upon these incidents in more detail in Chapters Four and Five.

Similar to Hesse (1997) and Thobani (2007), Goldberg (2002) asserts that practices of the modern state reinscribe racial expression and set the rules of conduct that will enforce racial exclusion within a variety of social fields. When racist expressions assume state authority, Goldberg argues that they are “normalized in the common business of everyday institutions” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 53). The modern subject is constituted as “abstract and atomistic, general

and universal, divorced from the contingencies of historicity” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 4), and racial bodies are morally evicted from these notions of humanity (p. 152). Consequently, Goldberg (1993) powerfully argues that a liberal paradox circulates throughout modern institutions:

In naming or refusing to name things in the order of thought, existence is recognized or refused, significance assigned or ignored, beings elevated or rendered invisible. Once defined, order has to be maintained, serviced, extended, operationalized. Naming the racial other, for all intents and purposes, is the Other. (p. 149)

The liberal paradox rising out of the process of naming and evaluating is that “Race is irrelevant, but all is race” (Goldberg, 1993, p. 6). The white, liberal subject is continuously reinscribed as a raceless, unmarked, universal who is representative of all humanity (Dyer, 1997), in relationship to a racialized subject who is marked by difference (Fellows & Razack, 1998; McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1995). The white subject is “taught to believe that all that she or he does, good or ill, all that they achieve, is to be accounted for in terms of our individuality” (Macintosh as cited in Dyer, 1997, p. 9). The power of the liberal paradox is that while racism and racial difference are fundamental to the endurance and functioning of modern organizations, racism remains concealed, individualized or actively denied (Goldberg, 1993). Consequently, racist expressions are both intensified and made invisible through a strengthened individualism that has come to mark the neoliberal contexts of the present moment.

Discussions about the operation of neoliberalism often favor class and market-based analysis, leaving race to the margins of these discussions (Roberts & Mahtani, 2010). However, in the *Threat of Race*, Goldberg (2009) provides an urgent reformulation of neoliberalism, in which he argues that neoliberal apparatuses are formed through discursive practices to erase race and privatize the operation of racism. Goldberg (2010) contends that “race has figured among the most prevailing, pernicious, persistent and destructively productive” (p. 100) factors in the formation of the modern nation-state. Neoliberalism is exercised through civilizing discourses that constitute a raceless racism, which Goldberg (2009) refers to as “born again racism” (p. 23). Nation building and state formation continue to require racial conception and taxonomies of difference to constitute a normalizing, moral subject (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Goldberg, 1993; Hesse, 2007; Stoler, 1995). However, liberal operations of the nation-state, such as diversity projects, multiculturalism and values towards equality, treat racism as a phenomenon of the past

(Giroux, 2010; Goldberg, 2009). Consequently, the privatization of race and racial violence is anchored in a belief that racism has been dealt with and is no longer a wide-spread concern of today's society.

Goldberg's (2009) attention to the racial organization of neoliberalism demands that race and racism be seen as constitutive forces shaping the operation of neoliberalism. His conceptualization of racial neoliberalism is important and useful to my analysis of the ways in which racist encounters go unchallenged within social work sites of practice. Racial neoliberalism allows me to understand how racism is individualized, in addition to how it is made invisible within social work institutions. In these settings racism is accomplished without reference to race but instead with reference to the values of social work (social justice, helping, empathy, critical practices). However, Goldberg (2009) argues that the racial foundations of liberalism persist, and I will demonstrate how dominant social work values (that are based in whiteness), collude with the practices of a 'born again racism' to privatize the experience of racism and obscure the racial injury that is taking place during everyday moments of professional practice in social work institutions.

2.1.3 Whiteness

White governmentality is about enforcing civility *and* creating civil societies (Goldberg, 2009; Hesse, 2005). The study of racial governance requires a discussion about the social construction of liberal, white normativity (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Heron, 2007; Schick, 2000). Therefore, I also draw upon scholarship from whiteness studies to discuss the ways in which white dominance persists throughout social work education and practice. There are key patterns through which whiteness attains social power, which include its construction and its concealment as a universal and unmarked subject (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Goldberg, 1993); as a subject that is formed in and through discourses of goodness, virtue and morality (Heron, 1999; Schick, 2000); and as a standpoint in which particular 'norms' shape how white subjects measure themselves and Others (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993). Most critically, whiteness cannot operate outside of the white subject's dependence on non-whites for their transcending superiority (Dyer, 1997).

Dyer (1997) states that there is no more powerful position than to be seen as "just human" (p. 2). Whiteness operates through social practices that allow white subjects to remain unmarked and

unnamed or, as Frankenberg (1993) argues, racially neutral. Racial neutrality, or being seen as speaking for all of humanity, allows white subjects to be represented everywhere while their whiteness remains concealed and apparently irrelevant, even to themselves (Dyer, 1997). Critical whiteness studies aim to make visible the processes and imagery of whiteness, whereby the neutrality and norms shaping whiteness can be dislodged to reveal its authority and structural privilege (Frankenberg, 1993). Frankenberg (1993) argues that the material and discursive dimensions of whiteness are always connected and that a social constructionist analysis of whiteness will challenge its authority as normative, neutral and all encompassing. The most critical dimension of whiteness is that the white subject cannot know her own goodness, virtue or moral superiority outside of constructions of 'deviance,' 'difference' and Otherness (Dyer, 1997; Fellows & Razack, 1998). Its neutrality and representational dominance situate whiteness as a set of practices and a particular identity that white subjects, and those wishing to belong to the nation, aspire to as an ideal (Hage, 1998; Schick, 2000).

Heron's (1999) critique of whiteness, gender and the helping imperative in international development work anchors my concerns about the operation of whiteness in social work. Heron's research examines the constitution of desire and innocence in the formation of white identity. She posits that the bourgeois subject required a sense of self that was morally superior and that moral superiority was (and continues to be) a key component of white identity. Within the context of helping professions, the feminine bourgeois subject needed to know herself as a good subject through acts of 'helping' others who were established as underdeveloped (Heron, 1999). Heron traces the discursive production of bourgeois subjectivity and argues that today racial constructs "remain integral to the discursive production of bourgeois identity" (Heron, 2007, p. 7) in which goodness and one's desire to be good are intimately woven into an identity that wishes to help Others. Hence, within the context of international development work, she studies the pervasiveness of 'colonial continuities' which "have been modified over time in respect to their particular expression and yet are recognizable for their similarity to their original colonial manifestations and effects" (Heron, 2007, p. 7). This last point is very important to my analysis as I am tracing the ways in which colonial continuities in contemporary social work practices are recognizable for their connections to how goodness, desire and innocence were shaped through practices of "charity, justice and empathy" (CASW website, 2012) during Canada's nation building projects. In Chapter Three, I examine the ways in which notions of

goodness (helping and empathy) are normalized as ‘human’ qualities and therefore as ‘natural’ skills in social work practice. I rely upon Heron’s (1999; 2007) use of the concept of colonial continuities to illuminate how social workers’ desires to be good are intertwined with present day understandings of critical social work practice.

Helping professions are built upon the professionalization of white femininity. Social work and the field of teaching and education have gained social power, through which various technologies are exercised to shape the moral character of citizens. Historically, as Heron (1999) has illustrated, whiteness was constituted through imperatives to ‘help,’ specifically through the production of desire to aid populations in ‘need.’ In modern helping professions, whiteness works through practices of empathy, love and nurturance, which are essentialized as universal human qualities of the helping professional (Heron, 2007; Roger, 1998). I am not suggesting here that white identity is in and of itself essentialized or fixed. Instead, I am interested in the discursive practices of whiteness that govern how subjects understand their professional work. Throughout this thesis, I argue that the practices constituting how one comes to know oneself as ‘good’ and ‘moral’ are squarely contingent upon colonial continuities designed to govern who can and cannot belong to liberal notions of humanity (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Goldberg, 1993). Furthermore, being seen as ‘human’ is directly connected to European notions of morality, purity and civility (Dyer, 1997; Hesse, 2004). Therefore, being a good helping professional is a deeply raced and gendered construct, in which whiteness is situated as the normative image of the good social worker.

In “Keeping the Ivory Tower White: Discourses of Racial Domination,” Schick (2002) examines the ways in which white, liberal normativity constructs academia as a white space. She argues that whiteness manifests in privileging what is worth knowing and identifying what is worth performing. Within university settings, white identification is instituted through privileging “abstraction, objectivity, and rationality” (Schick, 2002, p. 101), in addition to claiming liberal values of equality and tolerance. However, the maintenance of white identities is dependent upon white subjects knowing who they are, against knowing whom the Other is not. For example, Schick (2002) suggests that, within teacher training programs, teachers are required to complete courses about multiculturalism and cross-cultural studies. These courses serve to make a distinction between white people and racialized populations; however, whiteness remains concealed through commitments to discourses of equality in which whites simply welcome the

Other (Schick, 2002, p. 107). Within this context, students come to understand liberal values as normative and privileged by the university space, and worth performing. Mandatory courses on multiculturalism are intended to produce teachers who are competent and capable of working across a diversity of communities. However, as Goldberg's (1993) analysis reveals, racial governance manifests through practices to 'know' the Other and thus to manage the Other. Teachers come to know themselves as good subjects through the maintenance of order in relationship to racialized difference (Schick, 2000, as cited in Jeffery, 2002, p. 196). Schick (2002) states that teachers are invested in claiming "these identities because logic and reasoning are not only prized in the teaching profession, they are also markers of civility and the right to govern" (as cited in Jeffery, 2002, p. 196). Put more directly, they are discourses in racial domination (Schick, 2002). Practices of inclusion and exclusion operate as forms of racial domination; however, their violence is concealed through the desire to know and assist the Other through commitments to equality and tolerance (Hesse, 1997; Schick, 2002).

In *School Girl Fictions*, Walkerdine (1990) articulates similar arguments and states that dreams about freedom and liberty are connected to the bourgeois project, and women's particular role in shaping the moral character of citizens. Drawing on Foucault's conceptualization of power and knowledge, Walkerdine asserts that discourses about freedom are intimately connected to practices of discipline and power. The modern state requires a "self-regulating individual" (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 19) and the classroom becomes the ideal representation of the world, in which children are "set along the right path" (p. 21). Similar to Schick (2002), Walkerdine suggests power is exercised through rationality and reason. Significantly, the classroom is a space in which discourses about femininity operate to shape the moral character of small children so that their identities may reflect the larger civil and virtuous character of the nation. In particular, discourses of love are feminized and utilized as professional practice:

the position of women as teachers (particularly in primary schools) is vital to the notion of freeing and liberation implied in such a pedagogy. It is love that will save the day, and it is the benevolent gaze of the teacher which will secure freedom from a cruel authority (in the family as well as the school). Through the figure of the maternal teacher the harsh power of the authoritarian father will be converted into the soft benevolence of the bourgeois mother. (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 19).

The classroom becomes a site in which freedom and autonomy are “fostered through the presence of the quasi-mother” (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 23). Walkerdine (1990) suggests that discourses of love and nurturance are naturalized to position women as “responsible for the freeing of each little individual” (p. 19). Teachers and students are regulated into performing the ‘norms’ constituting a free and liberal society. Women are naturalized as maternal nurturers of children, and children must be transformed into reasonable and rationale subjects. In the classroom, middle-class respectability (Fellows & Razack, 1998) is regulated through acts of love, “to help, to enable, to facilitate” (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 23) the construction of a ‘happy’ society in which pain, power or any form of oppression are denied. When poor and black children cannot be transformed into ‘ideal children’ or when they experience the teacher’s generosity as power, Walkerdine argues that children are pathologized and viewed as lacking the capacity to change, and they are marked by this deficit as a ‘lack’ that is essentialized to their being. It is the role of the teacher to shift these pathologies “into reason, where it can do no harm” (Walkerdine, 1990, pp. 21-24).

Similarly, Dehli’s (1994) work on the ‘pedagogy of love’ offers parallel insights into how the gendered and raced role of teachers within kindergartens serves as a site of moral regulation and management of difference. In “They Rule by Sympathy: The Feminization of Pedagogy,” Dehli (1994) examines the ways in which discourses of love shape the emergence of kindergartens, which are designed to “naturalize relations between teachers and children as a form of mothering” (p. 196). Dehli (1994) provides a historical analysis to trace the ways in which qualities such as mothering, empathy, love and sympathy were naturalized as key traits of the teacher. As reflected in policies such as the Common School Act of Upper Canada in 1846, it was believed that practices of kindness were required to govern children and that ‘motherly women’ were best suited to fulfill the responsibilities of teachers (Johnston, 1908 as cited in Dehli, 1994, p. 199). Similar to Walkerdine (1990), Dehli also identifies that some children were understood to be ‘unlovable’ or possess unlovable traits, but that particular teachers were also viewed as possessing ‘unlovable’ traits. Dehli is referring here to working class and immigrant women who were not permitted to occupy the profession in a teaching capacity because it was believed that they “were less able than others to fulfill their ‘natural’ potential” (p. 202). Instead, working-class and immigrant women were expected to participate in ‘specialized training’ in preparation for roles as domestics and assistants (p. 201). Dehli (1994) adds:

It was, at one and the same, “only natural” that women were the obvious rearers and teachers of children *and* an apparent fact that some women were less able than others to fulfill their “natural” potential. At the same time, it was evident, that, even if they were imbued with “natural” potential for maternal virtue, all women, regardless of class or ethnicity, had to be trained in a method largely devised by men in order to rear and teach children correctly. (p. 202)

Dehli’s analysis supports Goldberg’s (2002) description of the assumption that an “abstract, neutered, universal agency” (p. 89) existed ‘within’ subordinate classes and that through proper education, a universal subject within the colonized one might be revealed. However, the degree to which populations of difference could be ‘reformed’ or permitted into ‘humanity’ was (and continues to be) regulated and governed through discourses securing racial dominance. The extent to which racialized subjects can perform as ‘universal’ or ‘white’ subjects is largely dictated by the norms designating the characteristics of humanity. I am reminded of Bhabha’s (1987) conceptualization of ‘colonial mimicry’ in which he argued that mimicry is the “desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of difference that is almost the same, but not quite” (p. 318). The desire for sameness is an ambivalent site for subjects, as racialized bodies, although required to perform as ‘reformed’ and civilized subjects, they can never fully occupy the centre: this is a tactic of white dominance. Dehli (1994) states that it was no coincidence that the first kindergartens in Toronto were established in working class, immigrant neighborhoods. These neighborhoods were treated as sites of danger, in which technologies of regulation could be used to reform populations of difference.

In “Fairy Fictions: White Women as Helping Professionals,” Roger (1998) asserts that the helping professions are sites in which the white woman’s core sense of identity depends on knowing herself as “helpful and kind” (p. 126). Within the context of psychotherapy, Roger (1998) suggests that whiteness is reproduced through the professionalization of empathy and kindness. Empathetic practice is intended to facilitate change within client populations, similar to sites of the classroom in teaching. Empathy functions to create a more aware worker, who through her responsiveness can understand another’s experience. With the use of empathy clients are invited to examine the difficulties within their lives; successful practice depends upon clients feeling heard and, as a result, becoming open to exploring different behaviors or possibilities for their lives. Roger (1998) suggests that empathy as a tool of governance shapes the worker’s

respectability within the profession. In this respect, empathy is not only constituted as a professional skill, but also as a desire for workers to be seen as kind individuals. She links the use of empathy with whiteness, as the white woman achieves professional respectability through her practices of helping. However, what happens to empathy and caring when the professionals who offer them are not white? I will turn to this question in Chapter Five.

Governmentality is dependent upon particular forms of knowledge, intertwined with power to shape the conduct of populations (Dean, 1999; Goldberg, 1993; Rose, 1999). Foucault (1994c) argued that technologies of power aim to shape and transform “souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being” (p. 225). However, following critical race scholars (Goldberg, 1993; Hesse, 2004; Razack, 2002; Thobani, 2007), my thesis traces the ways in which white governance shapes and regulates racialized workers’ involvement in the field of social work. In this sense, racial governance works throughout all forms of formal knowledge in social work, and whiteness is situated as an identity worth performing to attain belonging and success (Schick, 2002). As I will illustrate in Chapter Three, racialized social workers are not positioned outside of these constructions of whiteness, but always in a relationship with it in which their own investments in ‘goodness’ are complicated by their racial positioning.

2.1.4 Bodies and Space

Building upon Foucault’s studies in governmentality, I utilize the work of critical race scholars who are concerned with the ways in which bodies are produced and marked as respectable or degenerate within specific sites. My study of racial governance in social work draws from and contributes to the work of race scholars who examine the relationship between space and bodies. In particular, space is rejected as neutral and innocent, and instead, it is critically examined for the ways in which it is historically, socially and materially produced (Puwar, 2004; Razack, 2002). Furthermore, this analysis requires a close reading of the sites/moments through which whiteness and racial Otherness are produced to reify racial dominance, both institutionally and within everyday social interactions.

The work of Frantz Fanon (1967) has been critical to race studies. In particular, his scholarship is most credited for its analysis of the ways in which the white body and the black body are shaped through practices of objectification (Alcoff, 2002; Puwar, 2004). In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon (1967) offers critical accounts of the ways in which the white gaze shapes the

racial Other through practices of objectification, or as Fanon stated, as forms of “crushing objecthood” (p. 109). He asserts that black subjects can never know their blackness outside of whiteness, as the white gaze is inescapable for racial subjects whose blackness is always situated against a dominating whiteness to emphasize the mutually constitutive processes of racial difference (p.110).

Alcoff (2002), drawing on Fanon’s (1967) work, states that racialized bodies experience a “double layer of awareness” (p. 280) as they interpret the meanings attached to every moment, action or interaction with whiteness. She explains that the colour line remains a dominant schema through which subjects are identified. Alcoff (2002) contends that the “epidermal schema,” Fanon’s notion of the corporeal body, or what she refers to as “the habit-body” (p. 280), constructs protective and defensive responses for racialized subjects in relationship to whiteness. As a result, in the liberal world, when non-white subjectivity emerges and white subjects feel threatened, racialized people have two choices: to resist or to “return to the category of non-threatening other” (Alcoff, 2002, p. 280). Alcoff (2002) argues that these two options are already set up by the white world for racialized subjects, in which “no original move can be recognized” (p. 281).

Alcoff’s analysis offers further insights into how racialized individuals are positioned, and perceived by the dominant group. Her conceptualization of racial embodiment refers to the ways in which racialized people negotiate their positioning, through the habit-body, to examine how meanings are located on the social body. Alcoff (2002) contends that racialized people cannot fully occupy whiteness *or* a non-white subjectivity. Following this analysis, she urges a subjectivist understanding of racialized experiences, where every day lived experiences about race and the effects of racism are exposed. However, she also expresses concern that such an analysis may create dilemmas in which racial experiences are at risk of being naturalized. To minimize the possibility for essentialist theorizations about race, she advocates for non-foundationalist accounts of experiences, “where the microprocesses of subjective existence” (Alcoff, 2002, p. 273) are explored to trace the constitution of racialized discourses and their effects in everyday moments of social engagement. Both Fanon (1967) and Alcoff (2002) offer a vocabulary through which I can analyze the day to day operations of racialization. Alcoff’s (2002) use of racial embodiment and the habit-body support an exploration of how the colour-

line is inescapable within the white world, but its expression is complex, varied and context dependant.

Spatial theorist Lefebvre states that our analysis of space as innocent must be interrogated by examining “the dialectical relationship between spaces and bodies” (as cited in Razack, 2002, p. 8) and how space and identity constitute each other. Such an investigation into institutional white dominance opens up an examination of how whiteness shapes the experiences of workers of colour. Goldberg (1993) comments that “Racisms become institutionally normalized in and through spatial configuration, just as social space is made to seem natural, a given, by being conceived and defined in racial terms” (p. 185). Razack (2002) contends that spatial dominance must be investigated by examining the ways in which space is materially and symbolically organized. She asks the following powerful questions:

What is being imagined or projected on to specific spaces and bodies, and what is being enacted there? Who do white citizens know themselves to be and how much does an identity of dominance rely upon keeping racial Others firmly *in place*? How are people kept in their place? And, finally, how does place become race? (2002, p. 5)

Similarly, in *Space Invaders*, Puwar (2004) analyzes the effects of institutional white dominance on racial minorities. Puwar argues that very little attention has been given to how racial minorities are affected by racism in professional organizations and asserts that organizations are constituted as white through what she terms the “somatic norm” (2004, p. 8), the privileging of characteristics associated with the unmarked, universal subject. Although people of colour have the ‘legal right’ through citizenship to occupy particular professional positions, workers of colour are made invisible through their struggle to be seen as competent (measured against the somatic norm), in addition to being made highly visible through increased surveillance of their performance (Puwar, 2004). I will return to Puwar’s (2004) discussion of the somatic norm in more detail in Chapter Four, to assist in the analysis of the ways in which racialized social workers negotiate institutional belonging in social work sites of practice.

2.2 Literature Review: Social Workers of Colour

The scholarly literature related to social workers of colour is very limited. Key themes in the literature identify white dominance in social work, racial discrimination and streamlined positions for workers of colour as cultural experts and diversity consultants (Davis & Gelsomino, 1994; Jeffery, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Razack, 2000; Wilson, 1996). Racism is presented as an institutional practice, but very little scholarship has addressed the micro-relational production of race and racism.

From a historical perspective, Andrews's (1994) thesis on *The Professionalization of Black Social Workers* offers some insights into the challenges faced by black workers during the profession's historical emergence. Andrews (1994) examines the historical period between 1916 and 1940 in Detroit, during which racial discrimination and exclusionary professional barriers prevented black social workers' full participation in the profession. Black workers faced great challenges in their attempts to enter the American Association of Social Workers (AASW), which created tremendous barriers for black workers seeking employment in the social services sector. Professional credentials were tightened by the Association to keep black workers out of the professional body, making it increasingly difficult to find work, as most agencies required membership with the AASW as a condition for employment. Black women who wanted to become social workers ran into dominant ideas about Black women's moral and sexual laxity.

African-American churches were the first sites of practice for black workers (Andrews, 1994). Church-based efforts worked to "uplift the entire African-American race" (Andrews, 1994, p. 14) and provide services to less fortunate populations in society. Black workers were constituted as experts who were better equipped to work with black communities, which eventually did lead to their entry into the profession. In some situations, being more equipped to work with their own communities moved some black workers into supervisory positions. Andrews (1994) makes an important contribution to the historical analysis of the profession, as she captures the challenges faced by black social workers entering into the profession during its early formations. However, her research does not situate the barriers faced by black workers as being produced through practices of colonialism and imperialism. Her research suggests that discourses about morality, race and sexuality operated to exclude black workers from the profession, but she analyzes the history through discourses of racism and classism. She fails to examine the ways in which morality and whiteness merged to construct white subjects as morally superior subjects (Fellows & Razack, 1998). Nevertheless, through her research we see an example of a particular type of

expertise afforded to people of colour, as experts on their own communities, which carved a space within the profession for a particular type of 'expertise' that was afforded to black workers on the basis of their difference.

Social work scholar Narda Razack (2001) conducted a study in which she interviewed racial minority students about their experiences in field education. Her study identifies the operation of blatant forms of prejudice and racism experienced by students of colour. However, in spite of these violations, students were expected to perform their commitment to social work values through practices of empathy and kindness. Social work values based in practices of caring and empathy were emphasized as a key component of student learning and were reinforced by students' field supervisors. Consequently, discourses of caring and empathy created barriers for students to name and discuss issues of difference. Students in Razack's study were afraid of being seen as angry if they named the racism they were experiencing, as naming difference would have represented a departure from the expectations to be caring and empathetic. Razack (2001) argues that caring and empathy can reproduce dominance "when caring is craftily linked to control" (p. 225) to regulate and govern social work identity and practices. Students of colour could not name their daily experiences with racism, and discourses on caring and empathy operated to control students and constitute a professional identity based in whiteness. Consequently, Razack (2001) concludes that the silence created around naming difference greatly compromised the professional development and learning of minority students.

In a similar study, Daniel (2007) interviewed fifteen African-American and Latino students in social work programs and identified many inequities that inhibited the professional development of minority students. Students in her study entered their programs with an idealized understanding of their professional identity and were quickly disillusioned by the low numbers of faculty of colour and therefore limited role models for their educational experience. Much of the curriculum did not reflect their experiences or the experiences of the populations they worked with. The white, male culture of academia resulted in cultural and racial isolation, and invisibility within their programs of study. Consequently, students of colour experienced great difficulty forming relations with white faculty and lacked mentorship that addressed issues of race, complicating their adjustment within their programs.

British scholar Gail Lewis (1996) conducted a significant study analyzing the structural and discursive positions of black women social workers. The study examined the ways in which black social workers created a space for themselves within a profession that did not value their contributions. As a response to institutional racism, black social workers called on 'foundational' black experiences as an expertise in the areas of struggle, oppression and survival to legitimate their professional role as social workers. Foundational experiences as black women were re-constituted as a particular skill set to fit into social work's values for empowerment and social justice. Participants in Lewis' study linked their experiences of survival and struggle (as an oppressed group) with the struggles of the populations they worked with, adding that they would be in a better position to connect with disadvantaged client populations due to their identity as part of a group that is oppressed. Using post-structural techniques to critique black women's use of foundational experience, Lewis closely examined the racialized and gendered discourses constituting such experiences. More significantly, Lewis theorized the ways in which multiple discourses were always operating within participants' stories to negotiate racism within Britain's social services. Lewis's (1996) study illustrates the ways in which black women give meaning to their working lives to negotiate, protect and authorize their role in a profession which marginalizes them.

Within an Australian context, Wilson (1996) provides a powerful example of the ways in which feminist values reproduce colonial dominance through the naturalization of whiteness at a woman's shelter. Wilson (1996) explains that increased multiculturalism sparked concerns that social services should meet the needs of diverse populations in Australia. 'Special workers' were hired to meet the needs of 'special clients' and to address diversity (Wilson, 1996, p. 14). Within the specific site that Wilson (1996) analyzes, the shelter was shaped by feminist values and commitments to empowerment, and all of the workers at the shelter were expected to model their commitments to feminism within their work. Wilson argues that key feminist values within the refuge reproduced institutional racism and naturalized whiteness. Following the termination of two Aboriginal workers, Aboriginal and non-white staff began to question the training given to new staff when joining the shelter. White women at the centre insisted that Aboriginal workers receive the same training as everyone else, and stated that any woman (regardless of race) would be dismissed for the kind of performance displayed by the Aboriginal workers who were terminated. Wilson contends that liberal discourses based in equality and sameness maintained

innocence amongst the white workers. Furthermore, her critiques of the shelter practices suggest that Aboriginal workers were permitted to act like Aboriginal women within the context of their work with Aboriginal clients; however, in all other situations they were expected to “act like ‘normal’ workers, or more specifically, white feminist workers” (Wilson, 1996, p. 14). Within these specific practices and values, Wilson (1996) argues that it was impossible to bring to white women’s awareness how they too were implicated in the racial oppression of indigenous communities in Australia. The workers at the shelter organized their practices around an assumption of shared commitments to feminism, in which they shared the same enemy, patriarchy. Discourses of empowerment circulated to script the organization as a white space, and these practices were secured by evaluating Aboriginal workers commitments to empowerment practices and white feminism. Wilson’s (1996) article demonstrates the ways in which white, liberal normativity comes to represent what it means to be simply human, through which the values of equality and sameness can then be used to suggest that all workers are measured against the same expectations. However, what remains invisible are the ways in which ‘humanness,’ ‘equality and sameness’ are produced through scripts of whiteness (Dyer, 1997).

In another study titled “An Assessment of Practitioner Cross-Racial Treatment Experiences” that examines racism between workers and their clients, Davis and Gelsomino (1994) identified cross-racial experiences of both white and non-white counsellors in the United States. The study is concerned with the differences between white and non-white counsellors when working cross-culturally. The authors argue that most research on counselling explores the experiences of white counsellors, creating a significant gap in the literature about the experiences of minority counsellors. Their interests lie in examining the ways in which racial dynamics affect both white and non-white workers. They suggest that very little is known about the expectations of white counsellors and minority counsellors when working with clients of a different race. In addition, their research explores how the counsellors’ racial and/or gender status influenced clients’ perceptions of their competence as therapists. For example, racialized counsellors were often questioned about their skills or education backgrounds. Furthermore, the authors identify racist aggression as a common occurrence from white clients towards minority counsellors.

Davis and Gelsomino’s (1994) study reveals that counsellors of colour experience a higher frequency of racism from white clients and also that white counsellors believe that racial minority clients question their knowledge and expertise about minority communities. The

researchers situate their discussion within an analysis of the kinds of perceptions that client populations have about who may occupy the position of counsellor. The writers suggest that training programs must address strategies for minority counsellors to respond to racism, and white counsellors need extensive training in the area of their minority clients' racial and cultural backgrounds. Although this study offers some key insights into the prevalence of race-based aggression within counselling practice, it lacks a meaningful analysis of the systemic and discursive operations of whiteness. The suggestions for counselling programs reinscribe scripts about racial differences and locate the concerns within 'cross-cultural' practices, suggesting that the tensions experienced in counselling practice could be alleviated by gaining more knowledge about another's cultural group, thus reinscribing homogenous understandings of difference.

Studying the institutional operations of racism in an ethnographic study about the everyday work practices of progressive social workers in Toronto, Baines (2001) addressed issues of race, class and gender in social services. The study revealed that race was the most contested issue in social service settings, largely due to the backlash from white communities to multicultural organizational change projects in the 1990s, such as Employment Equity projects and anti-oppressive approaches adopted by social agencies in Toronto. Many members of dominant groups experienced policy-wide and mandated changes in institutional structures as an "assault on white people" (Baines, 2001, p. 192), and in comparison to gender and class, many white social workers felt race was 'harder' to address. The study exemplifies the ways in which challenges to white hegemony disturb an identity that is built upon discourses of helping and goodness. A mandated focus on anti-racism provoked white practitioners, who experienced such changes as an attack by racialized communities on the social service system. Progressive white workers, committed to social justice-oriented values, avoided discussions about power and privilege to maintain their identities as good and helpful workers.

In an additional institutional analysis conducted in 2006 for Access Alliance Multicultural Community Health Centre, Wong, Janczur and Yee examined barriers faced in employment by both internationally trained and Canadian trained social workers. Their study, titled "Examining Systemic and Individual Barriers Experienced by Visible Minority Social Workers in Mainstream Social Service Agencies," found that in spite of employment equity initiatives and anti-oppressive policies, systemic racism continued to dictate the hiring practices of social service agencies. Workers of colour discussed their challenges with cultural stereotypes, dealing

with expectations to be ‘cultural experts,’ and accusations that workers of colour perform poorly. In addition, the white participants perceived diversity initiatives to be tokenistic, and white workers continued to dominate managerial positions within organizations (Wong, Janczur, & Yee, 2006). The study offers an extensive report on the systemic barriers experienced by social workers of colour and provides the following recommendations: 1) critical reflection on individual practices, values and norms, and one’s social location; 2) reassessment of employment equity frameworks; 3) anti-racism organizational change processes with plans of action and accountability; 4) examination of all relationships across systemic structures (Wong, Janczur, & Yee, 2006). Although the researchers speak to white dominance, their analysis does not historicize the colonial influences present in contemporary social work, nor does it critique neo-liberal practices that shape discourses about equity, equality or fairness, and particularly whiteness. However, the study is one of the first in Ontario to examine the barriers to access experienced by social workers of colour in the workplace and makes a significant contribution to anti-racist literature.

Gosine and Pon (2011) studied the effects of working in white-normed child welfare institutions. Fourteen black and non-black racialized child welfare workers were interviewed to trace the ways in which racism operated within their workplaces. The research participants described incidents of racial micro-aggression (subtle and covert acts of racism, verbal/non-verbal assaults) from white colleagues, a lack of respect and value for their skills, ethno-racial matching to clients (social workers of colour assumed to be cultural experts) and a lack of upward mobility (movement to management positions). Other examples of racist micro-aggressions included hyper surveillance of their work practice, inappropriate comments, and racial profiling of non-white clients. Based on their findings, Gosine and Pon (2011) recommend that more racialized minority workers be promoted to management positions; that organizations find ways to value the experience and expertise of racialized workers; that organizations conduct anti-racism training; and a mentorship program be created for racialized workers in which they could find support and validation of their expertise and knowledge. Gosine and Pon (2011) make an important contribution to social work literature by naming and illustrating the ways in which social workers of colour experience racism in the field of practice. Their study is instructive and supportive of the claims that I am making within this research; however, my study differs from

theirs as I am tracing the practices of racism within worker/client relationships and the institutional responses that secure the operation of racism.

Voices of Color: First Person Accounts of Ethnic Minority Therapists is an anthology of collected papers edited by Rastogi and Wieling (2005). Rastogi and Weiling conducted a pilot study which traced the absence of literature related to therapists of colour in their field of study marriage and family counselling. The editors conclude that ethnicity, racism and oppression are key dimensions that help therapists of colour to understand their practice. They argue that therapists of colour have a great deal to contribute to the literature about cultural differences, diversity and ethnicity. The anthology includes papers by a diversity of therapists that reflect the ways in which these practitioners are negotiating race, culture and ethnicity in their daily work lives. Two chapters within the anthology are related to my study, Lee's (2005) "Taking off the Mask," and Ali and colleagues (2005), "When Racism is Reversed." Both chapters take an intimate look at the transgressions and injuries that occur when therapists of colour experience racism from white clients, co-workers and managers. Each chapter offers vignettes describing incidents of racism and meaningful reflections from the authors. A significant contribution of both chapters is their urgency to understand that these moments produce critical practice dilemmas for therapists of colour. At the centre of their critiques is an insistence that graduate programs include these stories in therapist training and acknowledge how racism may affect the practices of therapists of colours.

In 2007, an anthology was released in the United States, titled *Women of Colour as Social Work Educators: Strengths and Survival*, edited by Vakalahi, Starks and Hendricks. The anthology is based on a qualitative study examining the experiences of women of colour academics in the United States. Twenty-eight participants from a diversity of backgrounds (African-American, Asian-American, Latina or Hispanic American, Native American, Pacific Islander) were interviewed about race/gender struggles in academia. The study utilizes feminist theory to explore the double jeopardy of race and gender in the academic experiences of the participants. The researchers' intentions were to capture the "pedagogies of transformation and liberation" (Vakalahi, Starks & Hendricks, 2007, p. 38), in addition to studying stories of oppression. The researchers contend that racism and marginalization permeate the academy for women of colour. According to the findings, the culture of racism dehumanizes women of colour. Through practices of exclusion, tokenism, harassment from students, poor student evaluations, barriers to

tenure and promotion and horizontal violence, women of colour find themselves increasingly marginalized. I was concerned in my reading of the study that its analysis reinscribed essentializing notions of culture and difference. While the 'culture' of women of colour is complex and diverse across many axes of differentiation, the narratives offered in this collection draw out an essential coherence, presented throughout the text around the areas of culture, spirituality, womanhood and strength and survival. Although the study utilizes feminist theory, the absence of race theory or discussions about histories of colonialism and imperialism left gaps in the discussion of how racism is sustained within the academy.

Agathangelou and Ling (2002) provide an important discussion about the marginalization of women of colour faculty in the United States academia. Their analysis differs from Vakalahi, Starks and Hendricks (2007) in that their inquiry is grounded in discussions of colonialism, whiteness and liberal normativity. Agathangelou and Ling (2002) question why such high numbers of women of colour faculty 'fail' to achieve tenure in the US academy. The authors critically examine the private rules and power relations that, they argue, hide behind the public rhetoric of tolerance and diversity. White, liberal normativity shapes the conditions in which all faculty are measured; however, the authors argue that women of colour faculty must negotiate additional scripts through which their success or failure is measured. They contend that liberal normativity is expressed through ideas and values that suggest the academy is a site of rationality and openness in which all members are treated equally through affirmative action, equal opportunity initiatives ensuring diversity and, lastly, as a marketplace of ideas in which hard work and good teaching records can ensure success. The liberal paradox (Goldberg, 1993) circulating through these values "rationalizes racism, sexism, and classism in order to screen out persons who do not fit the academy's designation of who and what the faculty of colour should be" (p. 370). Agathangelou and Ling (2002) also point to the ways in which women faculty of colour are regulated through liberal constructions of success within the academy. Often times, faculty of colour must conform to the rules, perform as the acceptable stereotype and suppress their racial critiques. The authors recommend that research and strategies of response ought to move away from discussions about injury and instead focus on coalition building amongst a diversity of groups within the academy. Their discussion, along with Wilson's (1996), is important for my project as it offers an analysis that discusses racism and whiteness while also exploring how these relations of difference were constituted in the first place. The particular

focus on colonialism, liberal subject-formation and the effects on racialized subjects is instructive and assists me in my own work to continually examine the ways in which colonial continuities shape contemporary social work practices.

Although the research methodologies and theoretical entry points are varied, each of the above mentioned studies points to the diverse and complex ways in which racism operates in the so-called helping professions. My study explores similar incidents; however, the focus lies squarely on the colonial and imperial foundations of the social work profession. My analysis builds upon scholarship that examines the constitution of whiteness, and very specifically exemplifies the ways in which whiteness (as imperial helping and goodness) persists in shaping the subject-formation of social workers and their practices. Most importantly, my study sets out to illustrate the ways in which dominant scripts of whiteness are made simultaneously visible and invisible, in and through racist encounters with clients and co-workers. It is during these moments that it becomes evident that racialized workers cannot be seen as good subjects and that naming the operation of racism casts them outside of sites of belonging, which I argue are constituted through moralizing and civilizing discourses of whiteness.

2.3 Methodology

The research for this study is based on one to one, semi-structured interviews with racialized social workers in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). My research focuses on the ways in which racialized workers negotiate their practices within a racially organized profession. Specifically, the study explores racialized workers' understandings about 'good' practice, and how 'good' practice breaks down in the face of racism. This process entailed asking questions to explore the values of the social work profession, social work knowledge about practice, and the workers' institutional settings and encounters with racism. I asked direct questions about encounters with racism (both within practice with clients and within institutions) to trace the ways in which complex expressions of whiteness operate within the profession.

2.3.1 Invitation to Participate

In the winter/spring of 2009, I circulated a recruitment letter inviting potential participants to the study (Appendix A) through extensive networks, using snowballing methods. These networks

consisted of social workers who were former colleagues, peers and friends. These contacts distributed the invitation letter throughout their networks and potential participants were invited to reach me by email or telephone. Over a period of three weeks, participants voluntarily contacted me, and a date, time and location were established for the interview. I provided participants with the consent form (Appendix B) to read, ask questions about and, once interested, sign. Each participant was given a copy of the mutually signed document.

The names of the participants and the organizations for which they work and/or previously worked are not identified in the study. Each participant is given a pseudonym. Due to the sensitive content of their narratives, I chose to mention only briefly the type of social service setting (i.e. shelter, hospital, school board), without mentioning any potentially identifying details about the settings, i.e. location, name of setting. My intention in keeping information minimal is to protect participants as much as possible, as the numbers of racialized social workers remains low in the field and it was important to avoid the use of any information that could potentially lead back to identifying the workers. Because of the reflective quality of the interviews, participants were invited to let me know if there were particular accounts that they wished to remove from the study. Overall, twenty-seven social workers contacted me about participating in the research. In the end, twenty-three individuals participated. The remaining four workers could not meet due to scheduling issues or simply did not resume connection following the first contact. Twenty-one out of the twenty-three participants were practicing social workers, while two had recently left the field of social work at the time of the interviews. The following breakdown reflects the demographics of the participants:

- Workers were either new graduates, or had been working in the field anywhere between 5 to 30 years.
- 21 women
- 2 men
- 12 South Asian
- 5 Black
- 2 Aboriginal
- 3 Asian
- 1 Middle Eastern

2.3.2 Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

My research is informed by a Foucauldian discourse analysis to trace the constitution of knowledge, power and subject-formation throughout the interviews. Although Foucault does not provide a specific methodology through which a fixed account of reality can be achieved, I drew upon the work of scholars who utilize Foucault's conceptualization of discourses to engage with and interpret social worker narratives (Carter, 2000; Davies, 2000; Goldberg, 1993; Hook, 2001). Foucault (1991c) questioned and rejected the formation of the unitary, human subject of modernity. Instead, he was interested in the ways in which discourses shaped various regimes of truth to constitute the relationships between knowledge and power and the production of subjects. The study of discourses articulates the language practices, texts and actions constituting the "objects of which they speak" (Foucault, 1974). Essentialist notions of identity and experience are deconstructed to examine the ways in which "social beings come to be made into certain types of subjects [...] through various modes of seeing, knowing, and talking about the world" (Carter, 2000, p. 28). Foucault's analysis specifically shapes my interest in the multiple and contradictory ways in which racialized workers' narratives disrupt the complex and context-specific operations of whiteness in social work. A critical discourse analysis allows me to examine both the construction of domination, knowledge and power, and the sites through which contestation and possibilities for change are produced (Carter, 2000).

Social work education and practice have long struggled with defining the role and function of the social worker. Related to this, there is also no consensus about what power is and how it operates in practice (Pease & Fook, 1999; Tew, 2006). However, Foucault's conceptualization of power has been far reaching in its influence within critical social sciences and, to some extent, in social work. Healy (2005) highlights the significance of Foucault's ideas in social work, particularly his conceptions of power:

Foucault invites us to shift our analysis from a focus on who possesses power to the consideration of how power is exercised from specific social locations and by specific people. Recognizing that power is exercised rather than possessed also allows us to acknowledge and expand possibilities for relatively powerless groups to exercise power. (p. 203)

Power resides everywhere, and works in and through relationally produced encounters, positioning individuals and groups as the vehicles that exercise power in multiple and contradictory ways (Foucault as cited in Heron, 2007). In this sense, power is not fixed, and the study of discursive power allows for an analysis of how “discourse is something formed, according to clearly definable rules that this something exists, *subsists*, changes, disappears, according to equally definable rules” (Foucault, 1991c, p. 59). Carter (2000) states that the production of power and subject-positions functions through various regimes of truth which shape “powerful, even dominant, ways of seeing and knowing, and, at the same time, the sources of their social and historical production are obscured: they become common sense, taken-for-granted, axiomatic, traditional, normal” (p. 28).

Drawing on the work of Hajer (1995), Sharp and Richardson (2001) offer a very useful definition of Foucauldian discourse analysis. The authors define discourse as “multiple and competing sets of ideas and metaphors embracing both *text* and *practice*” (p.196). They build upon this understanding by drawing on the work of Hajer who states that discourses are “a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categorizations that are produced, reproduced, and transformed in a particular set of practices through which meaning is given to physical and social realities.” (Hajer as cited in Sharp & Richardson, 1995, p. 196). Social reality is constituted through the interplay of competing discourses and social practices to inform various “questions of truth and authority” (Mills, 1997, p. 17). Consequently, power struggles must be investigated within competing discourses for the ways in which they shape various realities of the world and the individual. Critical discourse analysis can illuminate the contradictions and the persistence of totalizing (and essentializing) discourses despite operation of contradictions (Jager & Maier, 2009). Discourses will shape which forms of knowledge and practice are possible to speak of within particular domains and which are not. Critical discourse analysis is relevant for my research to trace how certain ideas and practices are situated as sites of dominance, governing the ways in which social workers come to understand their roles and practices. Notably, my investments are informed by an analysis committed to the deconstruction of particular regimes of truth that shape the essentializing and taken for granted formations of whiteness, masking themselves within discourses of humanity, goodness and critical practices in social work (Heron, 2007; Jeffery, 2002). At particular sites, subject-positions are not only formed, but they are representations of how subjects are positioned through discursive expressions of power. This

process always takes place through mutually constitutive practices through which subjects are actively involved (however differentially, and certainly not equally) to construct various subject-formations through ideas, practices and language (Alcoff, 1991).

2.3.3 Narratives

My discourse analysis in this thesis is also informed by the work of critical race and post-structural feminist scholars who examine the ways in which language practices produce varied subject-positions, in which texts and speech are constitutive of experience. Davies (2000) states that the discursive production of subject-positions is formed through jointly produced storylines that are “organized conversations and around various poles such as events, characters, and moral dilemmas” (p. 93). In other words, she stresses the significance of examining the “discourses through which we are spoken and speak ourselves into existence” (Davies, 2005, p. 1). Storylines allow us to examine how language constitutes experience into particular networks, histories and conditions for existence (Carter, 2000). Davies’s (2000) use of the notion of storylines assists me to examine the interviews as sites in which narratives are produced through a multiplicity of voices, not a singular, unitary voice. Attentiveness to the multiplicity of voices is further reinforced by Britzman’s (2003) cautionary notes that we do not have one voice, but many. She explains that “Our voice is always contingent upon shifting relationships among the words we speak, the practices we construct, and the communities within which we interact” (p. 34). Language practices constituting voice and experience as multi-storied do not occur outside of established meanings (Scott, 1992).

Butler (2005) argues that narratives are sites in which subjects attempt to make themselves recognizable and understandable; however, the authority of the ‘I’ never belongs to the individual subject, but instead “must give way to the perspective and temporality of a set of norms that contest the singularity” (p. 37) of a given story. Meanings are established through the ways in which the world constructs norms of recognition “by which I recognize another or, indeed, myself [and which] are not mine alone” (Butler, 2005, p. 24). She argues that norms of recognition are neither structural totalities nor transcendental, but instead they situate where critical openings are possible, through various ruptures that destabilize given norms. I also follow Razack (2004), who reminds us that narratives are different from personal stories. Drawing upon the work of Tal (1996), Razack (2004) argues that narratives are ‘codified’

stories. Tracing particular signifiers within narratives requires the work of dismantling the productive function of the story (Rosaldo as cited in Razack, 2004). Razack (2004) argues that deconstructing narratives requires “separating the experiences of individuals from the way their stories are assembled for our consumption” (p. 18). For example, this thesis is concerned with narratives about social justice which may signify other things (such as whiteness and goodness) that are otherwise concealed when practices such as empathy and helping are naturalized and treated as personal skills or experiences. Razack’s distinction between narratives as codified scripts and narratives as personal stories is instructive. Stories about racism are discursively codified to allow certain stories about racism to be told and not others. These stories are also productive in the Foucauldian sense since they produce the interviewees of this study as particular kinds of subjects.

The concept of storylines and narratives assist in my research design to examine how stories are jointly produced in and through language practices; however, Carter (2000), Hook (2001) and Goldberg (1993) also extend the narrative analysis to emphasize the ways in which discourses produce particular material conditions that socially mark certain bodies:

How we present ourselves physically, and how our physical, corporeal self is interpreted by others, is, to a greater or lesser extent, a product of the ways in which our subjectivities are determined by various moral technologies. (Carter, 2000, p. 29)

In this sense, subject-positions are personified through a set of power relations which are predicated upon notions of civility and degeneracy (Goldberg, 1993), in which the body is made by power (Butler, 2004). The analysis of racism and the operation of whiteness cannot be divorced from the ways in which discourses are produced through various material conditions, in which visual markers or difference (Alcoff, 2002) continue to shape complex relations of power in our world.

Carter (2000) and Hook (2001) offer important interventions that accompany my use of storylines and narratives to emphasize the material effects of discourse. Carter (2000) argues that we need to move beyond an analysis that examines the construction of differences, to include the ways in which very specific discourses are “contested, reproduced or resignified” (p. 49) by certain subjects. He contends that post-structural applications may erase ‘who’ is actually doing the contesting or resignifying. Similarly, Hook (2001) reminds us that the operation of

discourses cannot solely examine the role of language in the production of social reality, but that the analysis must also examine how discourses inform the material conditions that shape social reality. Hook (2001) examines how power-knowledge connections interlock in the production of particular truths. He argues that although multiple truths operate within narratives, truth is not relative, nor are the conditions in which truths are produced equal and dependent “merely on context or interpretative perspective” (Hook, 2001, p. 7). To this end, he utilizes Foucault’s notion of a ‘will to power,’ instead of a ‘will to truth,’ to examine how what counts as knowledge is validated, in addition to the material conditions that both hinder and create possibilities for subjects within various social encounters. Hook (2001) states that:

what counts as knowledge, and the various systems through which knowledge is qualified/disqualified (in particular the systems of exclusion operating upon discourse) are not traced back far enough to *the material conditions of possibility*, to the multiple institutional supports and various social structures and practices underlying the production of truth. As a result, discourse is not sufficiently grasped in its relation to power; the power of discourse is insufficiently engaged, and discourse analysis becomes more a project of reading the text than of engaging the discourse (emphasis in original, p. 8).

Exploring the ‘will to power’ within texts and speech can identify which subject-positions are made possible, in addition to shaping what can or cannot be said, who gains access to particular subject-positions and who is denied (Foucault, 1991). This point brings me to a central component of Foucault’s analysis of discourse, the sites of discontinuities (Foucault, 1991, p. 57).

The stories shared by racialized social workers mark discontinuities in which the ideals of social work practice are ruptured. Discontinuities within discourses illustrate the ways in which seemingly natural or fixed understandings about various forms of knowledge are unstable and insecure (Foucault, 1991; Hook, 2001). In this sense, I argue that the narratives in this thesis are sites of contestation (Carter, 2000) that illuminate not only how colonial continuities persist, but also the ways in which colonial continuities (helping, goodness) presumed stability falls apart during encounters with racism with clients. The moments of crisis or breakdown in ‘good’ practice tell us different stories about how one must perform goodness, and crisis comes to

illustrate a “conflict of continuity and difference” (Arendt, as cited in Britzman, 2003, p. 8). Participants’ narratives reveal the continuities that shape how social workers are to perform good practice and how they are expected to relate to their clients. Within these scripts we can begin to trace what Butler (2005) refers to as the “givenness of the normative horizon” (p. 24). However, as I will show, the normative horizon comes into view *through* discontinuities in practice encounters, specifically the events in which crisis, conflict and difference emerge when the worker and client cannot recognize each other (as helper and helped). In these moments, hegemonic norms that construct the professional scripts about who the worker and the client are supposed to be are ruptured by the operation of racism. The specific site of tension is with regard to the ways in which the helping relationship has been formed and who may count as the helper and who is constructed outside of the professional identity. Race and practices of racism are at the centre of these discontinuities.

I engage the interviews as sites of multiple storylines (Britzman, 2003; Davies, 2000). Furthermore, I heed the cautionary notes raised by Carter (2000) and Hook (2001) to ensure that the analysis of voice and experience underscores the ways in which power and knowledge interlock to produce certain material conditions of discourse. And third, my interpretation is informed by examining the discontinuities as sites of resistance and contestation, which are never located outside of relations of power (Foucault, 1978), but are in fact always speaking to dominance (Hook, 2001). Therefore, sites of discontinuity also make it possible to examine the operation of dominant discourses. Goldberg (1993) defines dominant discourses as:

those that in the social relations of power at any given moment come to assume authority and confer status – reflect the material relations that render them dominant. They articulate these relations, conceptualize them, give them form, express their otherwise unarticulated and inarticulate values. (p. 194)

Goldberg’s (1993) definition of dominant discourses informs the ways in which I read through the interview data to locate particular themes, or re-occurring statements about ‘good practice,’ or the values shaping the identity of the profession. Because this research builds upon scholarship that argues social work is a site of white dominance, in which scripts of whiteness inform the identity and practices of workers (Heron, 2007; Jeffery, 2002; Todd, 2005; Valverde, 1991), I also utilized Goldberg’s (1993) conceptualization of racialized discourses to trace the

“racialized expressions that arise in analyzing and explaining the historical formations and logics of racial thinking and reference, as well as racisms” (p. 41). According to Goldberg (1993), racialized discourses serve as a larger umbrella term that allows for multiple sites of both race logic and racisms to be explored. He states that both race and racism are objects of discourse, which dually create the conceptual terrain of race thinking (beliefs, ideologies) and racist expressions. In these ways, utilizing Goldberg’s (1993) conceptualization of racialized discourses anchors the research analysis within a methodology that examines how “socio-economic materiality and ideological conception are mutually interactive and co-determining” (p. 46).

Following this, Goldberg asks two key questions that anchor my analysis of the ways in which colonial continuities, although varied in their expression over periods of time, continue to persist. Goldberg (1993) asks, “how have the forms of racialized expression changed over time? And how have these changes affected the forms of racist expression?” (p. 42). Furthermore, he proposes three sites of analysis that are very useful to the organization of my research interview data. The first explores the sociohistorical conjunctures that work to produce various racialized discourses. This first site shapes my analysis of the colonial and imperial productions of ‘goodness’ and the essentializing qualities shaping the identity and practices of workers. Next, I am able to examine the ways in which racialized discourses are instituted to shape formalized knowledge in social work, by examining what Goldberg (1993) refers to as “formal components and relations constitutive of the discourse” (p. 43). And last, the specific relationships that social workers of colour have to social work knowledge about practice are informed by a number of competing discourses. Therefore, Goldberg’s third site of analysis entails an exploration of the subjective expression or internalization of discourse by social subjects. This is the site in which the discursive production of meanings is explored alongside the effects of racialized discourses and practices in social work. A study of racialized discourses opens up a theoretical space to study how discourses may emerge and be shaped through certain racist expressions, revealing how moral discourses, social sciences and the law utilize racialized language by claiming to be anti-racist. Goldberg’s framework assists me to analyze the social justice-oriented ideals in social work from a different perspective, to allow an examination into the racial and moral discourses that shape the ideals of the profession.

My use of Goldberg's methodology to study racialized discourses is also shaped by an interlocking analysis of power, committed to examining how different forms of oppression "help to secure one another" (Razack, 1998, p. 13). An interlocking analysis explores how subject-formation and practices of domination are never outside of one another, but rather inform each other. Within this research, race, gender and class are in an intimate relationship throughout the analysis. What is inescapable about the emergence of social work as a profession is its complicity within Canada's colonial and imperial projects (Jeffery, 2002; Razack, 1999; Valverde, 1991). The ongoing development of the nation-state takes place through the differentiation of subjects across race, gender and class. In particular, the naturalization of femininity (through race and class differentiation) is key in establishing social work as a site of 'goodness', as a 'helping profession.' Studying the operations of racialized discourses is central to my thesis; however, their expression cannot be divorced from issues of gender and class. Therefore, I always include class and gender within my analysis of race and racism (Razack, Smith & Thobani, 2010). Goldberg's (1993) methodology, together with post-structural feminists' notions of narratives and storylines and an interlocking analysis of power (Razack, 1998), work in concert to shape my engagement and interpretation of the interview data.

2.3.4 My Role

Due to the research focus on issues of race and racism, I anticipated that some or all of the participants may experience a complex range of effects as a result of narrating encounters with racism. I offered each participant the opportunity to have a follow up meeting with me to debrief and process the interviews for the research. None of the participants requested this meeting. However, I realized very quickly that there was another layer of experience that was operating throughout the interview process: some workers identified both urgency and relief to talk about the racism they had experienced. For some, the interview was the first time they were disclosing stories about the racist encounters experienced on the job. I felt particularly drawn in during these moments, and wondered about the multiple ways in which my lens was informing my engagement with their stories, as another racialized subject who had had similar experiences, as a social worker, and as a researcher. These varied 'hats' that I wore during the interview were operating simultaneously. I recall my own tensions as both insider and outsider (Fine & Vanderslice, 1992) to manage the varied responses that were shaping the interview encounter. At times, there was an assumption of shared experience, or in other moments, disconnection. It

was not until I began reading the transcripts that I became aware of the specific moments in which my own reactions may have shaped the unfolding of the storylines within the interviews, specifically my impulses to validate various feelings and experiences of racism.

I recognize that my own position as a social worker (at the time of the study) and as a woman of colour needs attention within the research. The analysis of the data entails questions about the ways in which my multiple subject-positions (race, gender, class, sexuality, age, education and language) operate in terms of their historical making and are being reproduced through the interview encounter with the participants to shape conversations with informants and interpretation of the data (Fine, 1994; Foster, 1994; Frankenberg, 2004). Equally significant are the multiple subjectivities of the participants of the study, as I could not assume sameness or ease of communication within the research project because the researcher and participants share one or more subject positions along the axes of differentiation. Participants' differences along the axes of race, gender, class and immigration circulated in a number of ways throughout the data.

Frankenberg's (2004) analysis is helpful, as she argues that all research is situated and researchers require a reflexive engagement about how they are positioned within the study. Frankenberg argues that the position of the researcher must be accounted for as there is no objectivity "or an all-seeing glance" (p. 106). Riessman argues that researchers are to engage in a process whereby one's assumptions and biases are reflected upon during the research process (as cited in Trinder, 2000). The interview is not a "straightforward window on the world" (Trinder, 2000, p. 51-2). Therefore, during the process of facilitating the interviews, I kept a journal of the particular reactions and assumptions that I was experiencing following each interview. The reflective journal highlighted to me the production of various reactions I was experiencing, especially to the stories of racialized violence, or assumptions about identity-making. In addition, I paid close attention to those narratives that I was drawn to and those that shaped varying degrees of disconnection from participants. Holloway and Jefferson (2000) argue that narratives are a site of "intersubjectivity" (p. 44) in which the production of various storylines is a mutually constitutive process. It was expected that certain biases and shared experiences of racism will shape the exchanges between me and the participants and the interpretations of the research, regardless of "our knowledge or ignorance, insider-ship or outsider-ship, centrality or marginality, passion or disregard" (Fine & Vanderslice 1992, p. 202). Young (2004), drawing on Reinhartz (1991), suggests that our multiple selves (i.e. race, gender, class, sexuality, age) as

researchers can influence the dynamics of research at any given time, whereby “respondents and informants may react to any of these in ways that foster, hinder, or dramatically affect the research” (p. 191).

Following Heron’s (1999) choice to include her narrative within the body of her research, I too was interviewed for the thesis and my narrative is included amongst the stories presented. Although accounts from my narrative are minimally dispersed throughout the thesis, the decision to include my storyline was motivated by a commitment to remain critically reflexive during the research process and carefully engage the various ways in which my insider/outsider status informed the theoretical entry points and the interpretation of the interviews. Davies (2000) states that the role of the researcher can reinscribe relations of dominance and there is no innocent knowledge on the part of the researcher. Therefore, including my narrative and analyzing it amongst the interviews of all the participants, allowed me to engage in an ongoing practice of critical reflexivity, to watch carefully for traps in which I might speak for others (Alcoff, 1991). Following Spivak’s cautionary notes about speaking for others (as cited in Alcoff, 1991), my analysis was informed by speaking to and with the participants’ stories, in which I emphasize my discursive roles and seek to avoid reinscribing an authentic voice for all people of colour. In this sense, not only was I speaking with and to the narratives provided by the participants, I was speaking with my own narrative as well. However, I was not speaking as an objective outsider looking in, but instead, as a multifaceted subject whose stories and analysis are not unitary, but informed through a number of complex discourses that are historically and socially produced.

Although there are common themes present amongst the interviews about racism, adding my own narrative challenged me to purposely look for sites of differentiation about how racism is experienced and its particular operations, and therefore to avoid marking my encounters with racism as the definitive signs of how race is experienced. However, there will be inevitable gaps and blind spots as the “narratives of lived experience – the story, or what is told, and the discourse, or what it is that structures how a story is told, are always selective, partial, and in tension” (Britzman, 2003, p. 38). Although my narrative served as a reflexive tool in the interpretation process, it did not fully resolve power imbalances (Heron, 1999). The power afforded to me as a researcher is maintained insofar as I determine the selection of the accounts, as my interpretation (however complex) shapes how participant narratives are shared, and as the

overall presentation of the thesis is determined by my role as a researcher in which I “have the power to reinterpret and hence authorize the experiences and voices of others in ways that may clash or not resonate with the lived experiences they seek to explore” (Britzman, 2003, p. 38). This is a privilege that was unavailable to the participants of this study and, therefore, there is no site of innocence that can rescue me from the ways in which my varied subject-positions as a researcher, social worker and racialized woman operate throughout the formation of this thesis. Although gaps will exist, and while I cannot produce stable and fixed understandings of racism, I follow Heron (1999) when she states that her decision to include her own narrative was still important to the process and to her reflexive relationship to the difficult content of her research.

Recognizing a multiplicity of voices, truths and subject-positions meant that I could not examine the operation of racialized discourses and racism as fixed and authentic. The movement away from fixed truths about oppression invited worries about how to make particular truth claims. In some respects, my worry about how to speak to dominance was alleviated by Valverde’s (2004) reassurance that we do not have to abandon truth telling in our efforts to examine the production of discursive subject-formation, but we “can consider the possibility that there are many different practices of truth telling and, therefore, many different kinds of selves, and that these can easily coexist, even in the same person” (p. 73). However, continuing to bear in mind Hook’s (2001) focus on Foucault’s use of the will to power, I also consider Dixson and Rousseau (2005) when they state that there is no one voice for people of colour, but that “there is a common experience of racism that structures the stories of people of colour” (p. 11). The common sites of experience can be multi-voiced, produced through various social and contextual influences, but naming their varied operation does not discount the truths about the operations of whiteness and experiences of racism. Very importantly, Hall (1990) asserts that representations of who we are, while always politically situated, are also personally negotiated (as cited in Fine, 1994). However, Hall (1990) also stresses the importance of avoiding our temptation to see identity as a fixed fact, but instead argues that we are positioned in particular places and time and encourages an analysis of identity that examines its production as “never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside representation” (p. 222).

In the next chapter, I build upon the work of scholars who challenge the formation of social work and locate it within discursive practices of colonialism and imperialism (Jeffery, 2002; Todd, 2005; Valverde 1991). The arguments made by these scholars situate social work as a site of

white dominance. My purpose in presenting this literature is to situate social work's history within complicated practices of colonialism, with the aim to illustrate through the interview data the ways in which whiteness persists in contemporary social work practice. I will show how racialized social workers are never outside of these colonial continuities (Heron, 2007), but instead they are both invested in and critical of these discourses. Their investments and critiques are explored within the construction of their racialized subjectivities.

Chapter Three

Colonial Continuities: Our Investments in Being Good

To give people respect. To make sure they have dignity. To empower them. Kindness. To help motivate them. I guess those are some of the values that I see that we need to maintain and hold on to and not let go of. There are certain standards that we need to continue to meet to be ethical in our practice. I guess they are not only key values of social work, but they are key values as human beings that we should incorporate into our lives. (Charlise, social worker)

The social work discourse defines what a client is and what a social worker is. It also lays down the rules for how they are to interact. The idea of ‘social work’ knowledge excludes other knowledge as being irrelevant and it constrains social workers to a particular knowledge base. (Pease & Fook, 1999, p. 14)

White people have power and believe that they think, feel and act like and for all people; unable to see their particularity, cannot take account of other peoples; white people create the dominant images of the world and don’t quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image; white people set standards of humanity by which they are bound to succeed and others bound to fail. (Dyer, 1997, p. 9)

3.1 Introduction

The Canadian Association of Social Work (2012) has a “National Scope of Practice Statement” available on their website. The statement offers readers key insights into the guiding values and practices of social workers and celebrates the profession’s history of helping and justice during the profession’s emergence (see below). Today, the statement has expanded into a twelve page document to outline the values and practices of social work in Canada today, including:

Social work developed as a 20th century profession out of its voluntary philanthropy and social reform roots. These roots are deeply linked to ancient values and concepts of

charity, equality and compassion toward others in times of need. The profession's contemporary roots are particularly connected to social welfare developments in the 19th century. These developments included reform movements to change negative societal attitudes toward people in need; charity organization societies to help individuals and families; settlement houses to improve living conditions at the neighborhood level; and rising feminist advocacy for human rights, social justice and gender equality. The profession of social work is uniquely founded on altruistic values respecting the inherent dignity of every individual and the obligation of societal systems to provide equitable structural resources for all their members. Social work's primary concern is the social well-being of all people equally valued with the importance of their physical, mental and spiritual well-being. Social work pioneers were among the first to address the significance of deeply connected relationships that constitute the social context of people's lives. Out of this rich heritage, social work is recognized for its familiar "person-in-environment" perspective, which characterizes the unique relationship-centred focus of the profession. (CASW website, 2012)

The National Statement on the Scope of Practice (CASW, 2012) produces an official story about the origins of the profession in Canada. It celebrates the historical role and functions of both Charity Organization Societies (concerned with individual reform) and Settlement House Movements (concerned with societal reform) for their contribution towards improving the living conditions of the poor and marginalized. These two movements are historically marked to represent the origins of the profession, in addition to providing a context about the practice goals and tensions that exist in social work today, between individual change versus societal reform (Healy, 2000; James, 2001; Lynn, 1999). The overarching vision of the profession is described through values and practices of *charity*, *equality*, and *compassion*. The discursive effects of the document produce a social worker who is compassionate, helpful, and who believes in equality and human rights for all. She is a feminist, an advocate, and a champion for social justice (CASW, 2012).

I open the chapter with this statement to ask how this particular story about social work's history becomes 'the national narrative' about the profession and about good practice. I assert that the CASW statement produces a fantasy about social work in which the profession imagines itself as a site of justice and virtue (Margolin, 1997). This fantasy circulates in the individual and

collective imagination of the profession to direct the ways in which professionals come to know themselves as good social workers. Missing from this story is the profession's implication in domination, regulation and control during Canada's colonial projects (see Jeffery, 2002; O'Connell, 2005; Iacovetta, 2004; Valverde, 1991). Razack (2000) states that stories about a nation's history are contested stories and the storylines that are absent from the CASW narrative are the interventions in which the early beginnings of the profession are implicated in Canada's colonial and imperial histories. The violent treatment of Aboriginal communities and immigrants is missing from social work's history. (O'Connell, 2005; Park, 2008; Sakamoto, 2003). However, the CASW statement would have us believe that the social worker within this national narrative is a good and caring person whose acts of saving, reforming, and advocating for disadvantaged populations at the turn of the century contributed to the overarching social justice-oriented platform of the profession. Consequently, the history of violence is erased from this story, and instead, innocence takes centre stage to produce a story about goodness.

In this chapter, I present narratives from participant interviews to trace the ways in which contemporary social work practices remain lodged within imperial notions of whiteness, goodness and innocence. My central argument emphasizes that social justice commitments in social work are inseparable from imperial notions of helping. In other words, desires to be good and innocent (read whiteness) run throughout contemporary ideas about how to 'speak' and 'do' social justice work. To begin, I will highlight key sites in which social work's early practices are implicated in colonial and imperial histories of violence. Next I trace the ways in which critical thinking in social work is shaped through modernist understandings of power, identity and justice (Healy, 2005). Participants in this study foreground social justice as the central and organizing commitment of the profession. Critical perspectives generate principles of self-reflexivity and client-centered practices that anchor essentialist and fixed notions of power between the worker and the client. Third, I examine how the critical turn in social work neglects racial hierarchies to produce and sustain whiteness. Drawing from whiteness studies, I assert that social work values for social justice and helping function as regulatory scripts of whiteness to shape hegemonic understandings of critical practice in social work (Bailey, 1998; Heron, 2007; Jeffery, 2002, 2005). In the final two sections of the chapter, I present detailed accounts from the interviews to illustrate workers' relationships to the values and practices of the profession. Social workers of colour, who often imagine themselves as deeply committed to

social justice, find themselves repeating these scripts of whiteness. However, their accounts reveal the tensions and contradictions that arise for them when they attempt to practice critical social work. Furthermore, the workers attempt to generate alternative meanings of helping and social change based on their own histories of marginalization and experiences as racialized people.

3.2 Social Work's Beginning: A Different Story

Christiansen (1999) argues that colonialism had the most powerful impact on the Canadian social welfare system. However, social work literature has largely neglected to recognize the profession's involvement with colonialism (Healy, 2005; Park & Kemp, 2006). Social work's early participation in practices of charity and moral reform demand an analysis of the ways in which the colonial project was a violent one and in which social workers played a critical role. In Canada's history, we can point to the treatment of Aboriginal communities (and particularly the treatment of Aboriginal children) and the regulation of immigrant families as two sites where social workers were enlisted in the building of a racially structured settler society (Iacovetta & Korinek, 2004; Jeffery, 2002; Valverde, 1992). Jeffery (2002) states that early reformers and professional social workers participated in imperial practices towards "Canadianizing immigrants and regulating the behaviour of First Nations and the poor" (p. 35). Individual and social reform movements were motivated by knowing what was desirable in a citizen and how divergences from the norm were to be regulated for the good of the nation (Jeffery, 2002). Goldberg (1993) argues that virtues are central to the making of social identity, and being a virtuous subject meant "nothing less than being a good citizen" (p. 15). The good citizen practices "temperance or self-restraint, generosity, courage, justice (lawfulness or fairness) and mildness" (Goldberg, 1993, p. 15), which are all examples of European culture and modes of governance and self-governance (Goldberg, 2002). He asserts that being virtuous can only be achieved by "following the example of virtuous citizens" (Goldberg, 1993, p. 15).

Settlement House Movements (SHM) and Charity Organization Societies (COS) were engaged in practices that enforced the social control of populations deemed to be outside of moral bourgeois respectability (Jeffery, 2002; Sakamoto, 2003). The constitution of the bourgeois classes enabled the development of social and purity reform movements in which networks of

church goers, educators, doctors, and social workers engaged in a “vigorous campaign to “raise the moral tone”” of Canadian society (Valverde, 1991, p. 17). Reform work allowed white women to enter the public space, to shape the moral character of the nation, while at the same time constituting “spaces of public subjectivity for women” (Roger, 1998, p. 103). Aboriginal populations and the increasing presence of immigrants, who did not reflect the morals and values of the British, posed a threat to the nation, while simultaneously being the ground on which the nation was built (Roger, 1998). The arrival of communities from China, India and Japan posed many worries for white settlers. On the one hand, their presence allowed colonial officials to exploit new immigrants for the development of new industries (Dua, 2004; Park, 2008); on the other hand, it was believed that migrants and specifically women from these countries posed a threat to the nation’s purity as a white nation (Dua, 2004; Valverde, 1992). Increased migration heightened concerns over the development of ethnic communities and interracial sexual activity that would threaten the purity of the white nation (Dua, 2004; Valverde, 1991). It was believed that populations outside of bourgeois identity required direction from civilized subjects to manage and control their desires (Goldberg, 1993; Stoler, 1995). Park (2008) reveals the specific role played by social workers during the internment of Japanese Americans in the United States. Social workers were involved in registering and tagging families to be incarcerated. The Alien Enemy Evacuation Program (a federal run program) facilitated the removal of populations that were legally sanctioned to be outside of citizenship. This program was administered through state social welfare departments who oversaw the day to day administration of the removal of Japanese populations. The most troubling aspects of social workers’ involvement in the internment camps was their uncritical acceptance of these events.

Thobani (2007) states that racial superiority was instituted through practices defining rightful citizenship, through The Indian Act and other immigration and citizenship laws. She argues that the inscription of whiteness as the embodiment of rightful citizenship was instituted as follows:

the Aboriginal marked for physical and cultural extinction, deserving of citizenship only upon abdication of indigeneity; the ‘preferred race’ settler and future national, exalted as worthy of citizenship *and* membership in the nation; and the ‘non-preferred’ race immigrant, marked as stranger and sojourner, an unwelcome intruder whose lack of Christian faith, inherent deviant tendencies, and unchecked fecundity all threatened the nation’s survival. (2007, p. 75)

Institutionalization of difference through the modern state gained strength through various technologies of power, which were “not solely premised on the use of threat or force to the body” but included how people could live their lives and in particular “the role of the family economy” (Lewis, 2000, p. 23). The relationship between philanthropy and social science paved the way to legitimize social work as a formal profession (Berlin, 2005; Edwards, 2006; Lynn, 1999). It was believed that “social engineering could be accomplished by persons of good will, applying knowledge, often described as ‘scientific’ to a wide range of human ills” (Edwards et al., 2006, p. 30). Lynn (1999) describes this process as a “science of caring,” in which:

The ideology of individualism resulted in requests for help being judged on responsible citizenship. The overarching belief was that individuals of good character and resolve could be helped to surmount their plight and pull themselves out of the poverty trap. Thus the division of the poor into ‘deserving and undeserving’ became a key concept within personal caring, forming the basis of assessment schemes for the first volunteer workers of the movement, the first social workers. (p. 943)

In the American context, social work scholar Sakamoto (2003) argues that early social work efforts were designed to manage ‘foreigners,’ and in order to facilitate their “acceptance in America, these foreigners at least needed to be ‘cleaned’ – and Americanized” (p. 251). Sakamoto (2003) states that COS workers educated foreigners about how to live, what to wear, eat, how to raise their children and so on. Like Jeffery (2002) and Valverde (1991), she asserts that these distinctions were made along racial lines to divide and classify different populations. Similarly, in Canada, social workers within the settlement house movements did not question the fundamental superiority of middle-class Anglo-Canadian values, lifestyles, and ideals (James, 2001). Post-war social services assumed an interventionist role to ensure the proper integration of immigrants into Canadian society (Iacovetta, 1991). For example, the Department of Individual Services of the International Institute functioned as a bridge between the ‘old world’ and the ‘new world,’ providing ‘reception programs’ aiming to Canadianize new immigrants for whom citizenship was the ultimate goal (Iacovetta, 1991, p. 267). Organizations such as the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) or the Imperial Order Daughters of Empire (IODE) ran programs to educate new immigrants about how to become good and productive citizens. The YWCA in Toronto, for example, offered ‘New Canadian’ classes with the hopes to teach newcomers skills to integrate into Canadian society (Iacovetta & Korinek, 2004, p. 195).

Post-war settlement services were designed to integrate and assimilate newcomers to Canadian ways. New immigrants were taught meal planning, how to cook Canadian food, and how to become ideal homemakers (Iacovetta & Korinek).

Ultimately, these sites of regulation were central to the goals of nation building and elevating Western ideals about good families and productive citizenship. Park & Kemp (2006) argue that the practices to assimilate new immigrants were shaped around two core beliefs: protection and adjustment. Racist beliefs underscored the assumptions held by social workers about the need to adjust and assimilate populations of difference to the practices of the nation. Furthermore, Aboriginal communities and immigrants had to be protected from themselves, and society at large needed to be shielded from the risks that they posed to the nation. Social work's implication within these histories is far-reaching and, as I will illustrate in this chapter, the designated story of goodness is so deeply entrenched within the identity and practices of the profession, that social workers today (including racialized workers) continue to understand their professional identity through this construction.

3.3 Present Day Social Work

Hick and Pozzuto (2005) comment that there are two overarching beliefs within social work, “that a better social world is possible and that the achievement of a better social world requires a qualitative change in current social relations” (p. ix). Social work knowledge production, both in terms of theory and practice concerns, focuses largely on a wide range of viewpoints about whether or not these goals are attainable. Contemporary critical social work imagines itself as a radical departure from historical, orthodox social work (Healy, 2000; Margolin, 1997). Critical approaches are intended to alleviate the negative effects of an inequitable social system and minimize the professional and social power of the social worker in relationship to the communities being served (Fook, 1993; Healy, 2005; Hick, 2005). This literature also promotes a client-centred and critically reflexive practice in which workers turn the lens towards their own subject-positions to challenge the ways in which ‘their’ power may negatively affect service users (Dominelli, 2002; Fook, 1993). Hick and Puzoto (2005) suggest that critical social work “does not lend itself to a singular understanding” about social change (p. x), but instead can offer multiple perspectives about how to improve the social conditions of our societies.

The two belief systems outlined by Hick and Puzzoto (2005) highlight the concerns of this chapter. How might the value systems about the profession reinscribe social work as a site of whiteness? In contemporary social work education, students and workers are taught to be ‘critical’ of social work’s history of helping (Rossiter, 2001). Scepticism about the profession’s heroic past (Todd, 2005) invites students to interrogate their notions about ‘helping’ and their investments within the worker/client relationship (Rossiter, 2001). Critical social work education aims to meld the personal, political and professional arenas of practice, in an effort to challenge oppressive systems and to create equitable social relations with clients (Dominelli, 2002; Healy, 2005; Ife, 2001; Mullally, 1997). In attempts to minimize worker power and increase client agency, discussions about professional relationships range from exploring client strengths (as opposed to deficiencies), connecting troubles to socio-political structures (not individual pathology), and increasing “people’s capacity to change these realities” (Gil, 1998, p. 112). Most importantly, social problems are theorized through an examination of macro-social structures (Dominelli, 2002; Healy, 2005; Hick, 2005; Mullally, 1993; Lundy, 2004). Modernist critical social work is being used here as an umbrella term which encompasses influences from Marx, feminism, radical humanism, anti-racist social work, and anti-oppressive perspectives (Dominelli, 2002; Healy, 2005; Lundy, 2004; Mullally, 1993). The social worker’s central role within this perspective is to engage in practices that support changes in the social system, and to minimize the negative effects that a defective social system has on the clients and communities that social workers are engaged with (Mullally, 1993).

Healy (2000) uses the term ‘critical social work’ to refer to practices that focus on “emancipatory social change orientation” (p. 3). She suggests that critical social work is viewed as a radical departure from orthodox social work. Healy (2000) describes four key tenets of critical social work: standing alongside the oppressed; a dialogical relationship between the worker and the client; examining the role of socio-political and economic conditions shaping individual lives; and engaging in practices that are oriented towards change and transformation. These guiding principles work to move away from pathologizing narratives and, instead, to focus on systems of oppression and practices supporting social change. In present day social work practice, the new social worker is critical of relations of power; she is an anti-oppressive worker who can relate to members of diverse communities; and the road maps to achieving these goals develop through client-centred practices and critical reflection about her own social positioning. Critical

perspectives, however, remain anchored in modernist notions of power and identity formation (Healy, 2005; Pease, 2002). For example, although these perspectives link client troubles to the socio-economic conditions of society, the intervention is individualistic and focuses on consciousness-raising practices and empowerment of oppressed communities (Healy, 2005; Lundy, 2003). Furthermore, the client and worker are positioned in fixed relations of power in which the worker is always powerful and the client is always powerless (Healy, 2000). Modernist conceptions treat power as a commodity, in which the powerful-powerless dualism “does not always do justice to diverse experiences” (Healy, 2000, p. 135). Although a consensus is lacking in social work about how to define power (Tew, 2006), critical modernist social work deploys a top/down model through which macro systems of power trickle down and affect populations negatively (Healy, 2005; Tew, 2006). Because the worker is constructed in a power-over relationship to the client, the role of the worker is to practice collaboratively with the client to minimize the negative effects of a defective social system (Mullally, 1993). Therefore, the goals of structural social work are to create “new, non-oppressive social relations” (Dominelli, 2002, p. 39). A key exercise for the worker is to engage in self-reflection about his or her own social location (Dominelli; 2002; Healy, 2005). Healy (2005) summarizes anti-oppressive, modernist understandings of the client/worker relationship as follows:

1. Workers are to engage in critical reflection about their own biographies and membership in social divisions. The goal is to examine how one’s social location may shape practice relationships.
2. Service users’ lived experiences are understood as truth. Therefore, workers engage in empowerment strategies to support change in clients’ lives.
3. Workers and clients work in partnership to minimize the effects of unequal power relations between the worker and the client. (pp. 183-187)

Modernist critical social work was greatly influenced by Marxist theory, which is built upon a conflict perspective of society that perceives the social world as split into the powerful classes and the oppressed (Healy, 2000; Ife, 2004; Lundy, 2004; Mullally, 1993). According to Moreau, a key idea shaping the worker/client relationship is the assumption that the relationship will “replicate and reinforce broader processes of oppression” (as cited in Healy, 2000, p. 22). The social worker’s professional status automatically places her in a privileged position in

relationship to the client, “even when the social worker shares certain experiences of oppression with the client (such as gender oppression)” (Healy, 2000, p. 22). The one-sided dimension of this construction is employed as a movement away from historical understandings about the role of the worker. Therefore, critical social work aims to redefine the working relationship so that “the helping relationship is demystified, the social worker’s power is *diminished*, and the clients’ power is *increased* [emphasis added]” (Lundy, 2004, p. 114). Today, a heightened awareness is placed on identifying and critiquing the social worker’s social location based on race, gender, class, sexuality, etc. and little emphasis is placed upon examining the historical and social production of identities (Heron, 2005). I suggest that a focus on relations of power to mark the subject-position of the social worker is an attempt to move forward from the social worker’s historical identity as an unmarked, free and universal subject. Today’s social workers redeem themselves through their commitments to a critically reflexive practice and through identifying any transgressions that they may cause as a result of their professional power and status (Healy, 2000; Tew, 2006). I am interested in the complex and contradictory relationship that racialized workers have to these constructions of critical practices and the worker and client relationship.

3.4 Scripts of Whiteness

As discussed in Chapter Two, whiteness operates as social practices that allow white subjects to remain unmarked, unnamed or, as Frankenberg (1993) argues, racially neutral. In social work whiteness operates through various regimes of practice (Foucault, 1991b) that shape what a social work subject is to know and how social workers are to perform their duties. Foucault (1991b) states that practices are to be “understood here as places where what is said and what is done, rules imposed and reasons given, the planned and the taken for granted meet and interconnect” (p. 75). It is through various discourses that research participants both constitute, and are constituted by scripts informing good practice. In this sense, the research interview itself is a site of practice through which the participants are involved in a mutually constitutive process of shaping knowledge production. Furthermore, I will suggest that the emergent themes (client-centred practices, empathy and critical reflexivity) work as *modes of conduct* that produce “prescriptive effects regarding what is to be done (effects of ‘jurisdiction’), and codifying effects regarding what is to be known (effects of ‘veridiction’)” (Foucault, 1991b, p. 75). The regulatory

effects of these practices situate them as authoritative in their direction about practice and they come to represent the right way of performing one's role.

I suggest that these practices are indeed regimes of practice that attain social power through appearing to be normal, guiding what is to be expected, or in other words shaping the characteristics and actions of good and moral subjects (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993). In social work knowledge production, whiteness is concealed through discourses of humanity, so that practices such as empathy and helping are treated as givens, as essential characteristics shaping what it means to simply be a human subject (Frankenberg, 1993). Within various professional arenas, these practices are institutionalized and used as barometers through which "all are measured and into which all are expected to fit" (Frankenberg as cited in Jeffery, 2002, p. 204).

Heron's (2007) use of the term *colonial continuities* is instructive and useful here. Heron's critique of the helping imperative in international development work anchors my exploration of these concerns. Heron traces the discursive production of bourgeois subjectivity and argues that not a whole lot has changed in the contemporary period, as racial constructs "remain integral to the discursive production of bourgeois identity" (Heron, 2007, p. 7). In social work, one's desire *to be* good is intimately woven into an identity that wishes to help Others. Within the context of social work's history, practices by "friendly visitors," members of charity organization societies who assessed the living conditions of the poor (Berlin, 2005; Sakamoto, 2003), paralleled these processes in which managing populations of difference was disguised through claims to help and provide charity (Jeffery, 2002; Valverde, 1991). As I discussed in Chapter Two, Heron (2007) states that colonial continuities "have been modified over time in respect to their particular expression and yet are recognizable for their similarity to their original colonial manifestations and effects" (p. 33). This last point is very important as I am tracing the ways in which various social work practices in the contemporary period reinscribe notions of goodness and innocence through commitments to social justice that are facilitated through critical practices, which include discourses of empathy, client-centred practice and critical reflexivity.

Social workers are trained to be self-regulating subjects who critically reflect upon their participation in systems and practices of domination (Lundy, 2008; Rossiter, 2001). I discuss how these practices create new versions of innocence in which the moral subjects (who are designed to be good and benevolent) secure their innocence through practices that identify their

participation in domination. These practices involve the art of ‘confession,’ which serves to restore the subject back to an identity that once again can know itself as a good subject. Engaging in critical practices serves as the road map toward more empathetic and client-centred practices, in which the social worker can maintain a de-centred stance that focuses exclusively on the client’s needs.

In addition to Heron’s (1999) work on colonial continuities, I make use of Jeffery’s (2002) scholarship on race and knowledge production in social work. Jeffery (2002) contends that whiteness as a series of practices resembles social work practices, and suggests that if one is to “function successfully in a profession such as social work as it has been and is organized and conceptualized, [one] requires a facility for reproducing whiteness” (p. 231). Whiteness operates through imperatives of helpfulness, diversity management and critical reflections about the self (Jeffery, 2002). She contends that these particular discourses in social work shape not only the fabric of the profession, but the identity of the social worker as well. Being a good social worker and doing good social work will require that the worker participate in scripts of whiteness by performing liberal normativity (Jeffery, 2002).

Bailey (1998) refers to the institutionalization of whiteness as ‘whitely’ scripts, and suggests that the ideas and practices of particular groups “follow historically pre-established scripts” (p. 33). By examining whiteness as ‘scripts to be performed,’ we may be able to examine the “regulatory function of racial scripts” (p. 33). Bailey argues that the governing effects of whitely scripts do not require a person to be visibly white to be invested in performing whiteness (Bailey, 1998). This analysis allows me to gain insights into how racialized bodies are regulated to perform such scripts, not in fixed or complete ways, but, as the participants’ narratives will reveal, through governing scripts that present what is to be known as good and ethical practice. However, within dominant storylines about what it means to ‘do’ goodness, there will be alternatives to these discourses, as performing scripts of whiteness are never straightforward. Walkerdine (1990) reminds us that as subjects we are “‘read’ within a variety of discourses. We cannot say that the limit of the variety is determined in any direct or simple sense” (p. 5). Bailey (1998) would agree with this point and suggest that whitely scripts are negotiated by subjects across a number of axes of difference such as class, ethnicity sexuality, gender religion and geographical location (p. 34). Although both Bailey (1998) and Jeffery (2002) contend that performing scripts of whiteness will look different for differently positioned social subjects, Bailey maintains that the

connective thread within racial scripts is that “in a white-centred culture, everyone is more or less expected to *follow* [emphasis added] scripts that sustain white privilege” (p. 36) and status can be gained by performing whiteness (Bailey, 1998; Schick, 2000). Although participants’ accounts vary across social histories, workplace settings and years of practice experience in the field, engaging in white performativity does not exclude various axes of difference, but rather, as Bailey argues, whiteness would be mediated within and through these sites of difference.

Racialized workers are not positioned outside of these performances, as they are both governed by and invested in these practices and, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, they are cast out of belonging when they name the operation of racism in their daily work life (Goldberg, 1993, 2009). Performing whiteness not only functions to define good practice, but it is the very foundation upon which civility (humanity) is defined in the nation-state (Goldberg, 2004). Therefore, not all of the participants locate these practices within understandings about how whiteness operates in the world, as many of the participants, with the exception of a few racialized workers and Aboriginal workers, spoke about social work practices as though they were naturalized states of being. Social work is governed by practices and ideals that shape whiteness and the moral conduct of its workers and clients (Jeffery, 2002). As extensions of the state, social work and other helping professions govern citizens (Hesse, 2007; Goldberg, 1993) and the state serves as the “regulator of gendered and racialized systems of morality and social control” (Srivastava, 2005, p. 30). Practices of whiteness shape professional scripts, and dominance is produced by discourses about moral conduct, benevolence and innocence (Heron, 1999; Jeffery, 2002; Schick, 2000).

White dominance, however, is not a secure project (McClintock, 1995; Stoler, 1995), nor does its performance secure the professional standing of social workers of colour. Its *fragility* is revealed in Chapters Four and Five when racialized social workers run into great difficulty in their efforts to perform their roles as social workers. In Chapter Five specifically, the narratives illustrate how workers cannot occupy an identity of goodness when racism takes place in everyday practices. The very act of naming racialized violence disturbs the field of social work, and racialized workers’ pay a heavy cost for unsettling the foundations of goodness upon which the profession social work defines itself.

3.5 Choosing Social Work

All of the participants in the research named social justice as the defining value of social work. They recalled many different motivations for why they chose social work as their career, with histories of marginalization and struggle being particularly dominant themes that informed why participants became social workers. In addition, practices of helping others also showed up as a key commitment of workers. The relationship between helping and social justice was an interesting formation within the data. I will show that the intersections between helping and social justice yield valuable information about the ways in which social work imagines itself as a site of social justice *and*, as Margolin (1997) argues, as a site of *virtue*. I make the argument that practices towards virtue (being good) and social justice are intertwined in a relationship that has been established throughout the profession's regulatory history (Jeffery, 2002; Valverde, 1991).

Goldberg's (1993) discussion about the production of virtue is instructive here, as he argues that the concept of virtue was entrenched in the constitution of the modern, liberal subject. The assembly of a good and virtuous subject was established through moralizing discourses in which "Christian virtues of faith, charity, and hope, were in conceptual service to the more fundamental notion of preventing sin or the production of evil" (Goldberg, 1993, p. 15). Individuals and populations who were construed as being outside of the capacity to be virtuous, were mainly those who were viewed as violating the social order and who could not possess the "capacity to be ruled by reason" (Goldberg, 1993, p. 16). These individuals were not seen as subjects, nor did they have access to modern, liberal subjectivity. The making of virtuous subjects in social work was administered through civilizing missions to regulate or 'help' disadvantaged populations (Jeffery, 2002), primarily through individual reform (Charity Organization Societies) and societal change (Settlement House Organizations). However, charity organizations societies and settlement house movements, although they engaged in different sites of change (individual versus societal systems), were both based in Christian understandings of virtue and morality. Both actively participated in the regulation and control of populations of difference (Jeffery, 2002; Sakamoto, 2003; Valverde 1991). Consequently, this historical formation of the profession has produced a lasting legacy in which practices towards social change and social control are in constant tension. However, as Rossiter (2001) argues, the binary between social change and social control is much more complex and social workers are never situated simply on one side or the other; oftentimes, they are entangled within both sites in contextually and historically specific

ways. Furthermore, both sites (social change and social control) dictate the conditions in which populations will be governed and what the conditions of change may look like (Rossiter, 2001). Following Rossiter (2001), I suggest that participant narratives about helping and social justice are not separate, but I add here that they are both informed by scripts of whiteness, in which the social work subject must know herself as ‘good,’ ‘heroic’ and ‘benevolent’ through her commitments to create change (individual and/or societal). Racialized social workers do not escape these governing practices; however, they do at times rupture them to develop alternative ways to understand and engage in practices of helping/social change.

3.5.1 Justice Is the Centre of Social Work

All of the workers that I interviewed recognized the negative effects of social and material inequities in our society, and suggested that social workers play a key role in addressing these inequities. For example, Tara, a black woman working in community health, offers the following account that points to her understanding of what social justice should look like for everyone:

Everyone has the same opportunities for access to what they need to live their lives, same opportunities for health, for wellness, for well-being, access to the systems where they can seek justice or employment, just everyone having equitable access to the structures in society, and for their well-being.

In Tara's account, key references are made to concerns around ‘access’ to opportunities for health, justice, and employment to ensure that that everyone’s human rights are protected (Ife, 2001). Ishar, a woman hospital counselor of South Asian descent, highlights the ways in which schools of social work emphasize the message of social justice:

Schools of social work teach us that justice is at the heart of the social work agenda that is the foundation. So we are here as change agents to try to address systemic, structural oppression and how that filters down and hurts people’s lives. But, underlying that there is always the expectation to help others. That is the definition that is given to us. We focus on social justice. We are here to address structural issues that affect people’s lives. We are here to empower clients’ and eradicate oppression and help people.

Ishar identifies many defining features of social work and specifically points to the role and tasks of the worker. The key themes running through her account suggest that a relationship exists

between social justice and helping. We see this in her references to educational directives for social workers to be change agents to address societal oppression and to empower individual clients. Although people's troubles are located within the "social, political, and economic conditions" (Lundy, 2008, p. 56) of their lives, the unitary subject of modernity is inescapable within Ishar's account, particularly through her inferences to empowerment for others. Critical perspectives in social work attempt to locate the individual within societal systems, but as Ishar's account illustrates, these practices are also located within processes aiming to change the individual. Ishar's account is instructive as it also points to specific belief systems: injustice is a regulative order of society; peoples' lives are gravely affected by injustice; and social workers have a specific role within the fabric of the state to challenge injustice. Later on in the interview she shares that her ideas and practices have since changed and social change is not something she defines as change on a larger scale anymore, but instead, she focuses on what change means to each person, within the specific context of each client's life. She describes herself as having become disillusioned over the years by the neoliberal agendas of most workplace settings, in which services are shaped by funding dollars, productivity and best practices (Ife, 1997), and states that the overarching goals of social justice are harder to achieve for workers. I wonder if the changes within her practice to focus on each client individually are a product of the neoliberal organization of social work, in which individual reform has intensified, making it increasingly difficult for activist preferences towards larger social justice-oriented initiatives. Critical activism in social work institutions is increasingly difficult for social workers due to neoliberal regulation (Smith, 2011). Lundy (2008) states that, although commitments to social justice address wide scale injustices, the site of intervention remains the individual who is helped at personal levels as opposed to the structural levels of intervention (pp. 56-7).

For Monique, a black worker employed in the field of corrections, a key tenet of social work practice is not only to have an awareness of social injustices, but also to be committed to the processes of eradicating difficulties in clients' lives:

I think one word that comes to mind is commitment. I think that good social workers are committed to their clients and that whole social justice part of it. They are committed to providing support, exposing injustices, and working for justice for their clients. So when I say committed, they are giving of their time and they are *sacrificing*. They get rid of

those assumptions so that they can do what it is that they are there to do. I guess that is what being committed to social work would be.

The assumptions circulating within her account (similar to Ishar and Tara) suggest that individuals join social work because of an existing commitment to exposing injustices in the world; in addition to creating justice for the communities seeking support. However, what is very interesting within Monique's understanding of commitment is how this practice is shaped through sacrifice. Sacrifice conjures up images of a selfless worker, giving of her time and putting aside her own needs so that she can meet the needs of others. Sacrifice appears here not only as a way to demonstrate or perform commitment; it is also, I will suggest, constitutive of the social worker's identity. Discourses of sacrifice reinscribe historical understandings of the profession in which early charity workers engaged in "*voluntary* [emphasis added] philanthropy and social reform roots" (CASW, 2012).

When I explored why the participants in my study chose social work as their profession, two dominant themes emerged: the first is shaped by their desires to help, and the second is molded by their own histories of struggle. Their initial decisions to join social work are largely shaped by marginalization in their own lives and perceptions of social work as a site in which they may engage in processes to change the injustices that they know intimately. Talk about social justice, however, folds easily into the traditional role as helper, and the hierarchy of helper/helped is not disturbed in these accounts of the importance of social justice.

3.5.2 I Always Knew I Wanted to Help People

Although some workers are critical of the profession's history of helping, the desire to help remains central in most of their narratives. Drawing from one of her first experiences as a counsellor, helping is described by Sim, a South Asian worker, as a "natural instinct." Sim recalls one of her first experiences as a counsellor, marking for her the moment in which she realizes she possesses a natural inclination towards being 'good' at helping:

I think it was something that I felt I had a natural instinct for. So when I was in classes, I was coming up with the right things and it felt right somehow. I remember when I did my first placement in school it was at an addictions place. There was this guy there who I ended up having a couple of one on one sessions with. When he graduated out of the

program he said to me, I know it's your first student placement, and you have helped me. He told me how what I had said, that we just managed to connect really well, and it was very powerful even though I had only spoken to him a couple of times. It really hit home to me how powerful that therapeutic relationship can be. I felt like I walked away feeling my goal is to help people, and I have already helped someone. I felt like that was already done and I could relax and just go forward and see what I can do with this.

There are a number of telling statements within her narrative. First, she describes helping not as a skill to be learned, but rather, as a natural quality residing within. This desire is only discovered when she begins her studies and training in social work, and through her encounter with the client. She describes the impulse to help as something that just 'felt right;' hence her description denotes helping as a particular kind of *sense* or *feeling*. However, the third observation is the most interesting: although the impulse to help is described as a natural instinct, she cannot know this 'natural' desire towards helping until she enters into a relationship with a subject who 'requires' help. We see a particular contradiction emerging in her account: helping is described as a natural instinct, an internal trait specific to a unitary subject; however, her knowledge of this trait cannot be discovered outside of *relations of helping* (Heron, 1999). The imperative to do good work for others and act on behalf of others is "internalized in moral terms" (Heron, 1999, p. 85). Although practices of helping are mutually constitutive and relational, goodness and helping are defined as individual characteristics that belong to the social worker subject. This is further reinforced by the ways in which her client perceives her assistance as well: he credits her for possessing certain traits that create ease and comfort between them.

The view of the social worker and the client as unitary subjects is still widely held today (Heron, 1999; Jeffery, 2002) and largely constitutive of the discourses of individuality that circulate in workers' accounts. For example, Charlise, a black worker employed in a hospital, states:

I started off with the simplistic notion of helping people, a simplistic notion. Of course, it has evolved 100 percent since then, but that is what I started off with.

HB - So what did that idea mean to you back then?

Nurturing, making people feel good. I think that was basically what I was focused on.

HB-You said that this understanding has evolved?

Yeah. It is more than that now. It is empowering people, helping people to be more self-directed and more assertive in the way that they conduct their lives...

Charlise has been practicing as a social worker for over 18 years. In the beginning, her initial practice is described as being informed by an idea of 'nurturing,' a trait that has been characterized by discourses of femininity associated with mothering, caring and assisting clients to feel better on an individual basis (Walkerdine, 1991). However, she describes a shift in her practice from nurturing to empowerment. For her this translates into assisting clients with self-direction and assertiveness. There is an underlying critique of helping operating in her account, which she never entirely abandons, as her practice has moved from simplistic notions of helping another to feel better, toward engaging in efforts that assist clients to create their own changes. In her role as a social worker, she is still positioned as a natural nurturer; however, she now sees herself as someone who is responsible for initiating changes in clients' lives, even though the structure of the change is determined by the client.

Margolin (1997) argues that the contemporary social worker is constituted through discourses of emancipation and empowerment to reproduce innocence. Margolin (1997) explains that the worker's professional identity depends upon seeing herself as a subject who is "doing good" (p. 65). While Charlise identifies a change in her practice that assumes a more critical engagement with notions of helping, both the worker and the client are constituted within a historicized relationship of helping: the worker is presenting as a nurturer, whose practices of 'helping' (read empowerment) will assist a subject who is otherwise situated as being less whole and in need of change. Charlise's role is situated as one in which her involvement assists the client to do good for and by themselves. Not only is the change located within the client, but the social worker is viewed as playing a central role to enable the client to create the change within them.

Following a similar trajectory, Kumar, who identifies as a new immigrant to Canada, states that his interest in helping people was developed during his childhood through his religious affiliations:

When I was a child I was very actively involved in church activities. We did a lot of fundraising and charity kind of work. So that's what motivated me to help the poor people who are needy. You feel that when you help others you feel a kind of satisfaction. So then I preferred that. That may be my future career or profession. Then I thought I

needed more skills and knowledge to be a... to give better service to the people whom I want to serve or who are in need of service. So I went to the university to get my Masters of social work from India.

His decision to go to school illustrates the ways in which practices of helping are professionalized and promoted as particular skill sets. However, similar to Charlise and Sim, Kumar ‘discovers’ his desire to help through practices that involve a relationship with subjects ‘in need.’

Kim, a Chinese woman, shares that her initial interests in social work were shaped by practices of volunteerism:

Oh, it was my unfulfilled desire. When I was a teenager, I volunteered in Red Cross cadet. I decided, hmm, that is something that I would like to do. I’ll be a social worker. That was my desire when I was a teen, but, for whatever reason, I didn’t have a chance to study social work when I went to university in Hong Kong, so I just leave it like that and I became a teacher. I loved to be a teacher as well. So when I had my children I stopped working. When my children are ready, I started my career. I am very glad that here I have a chance to study again. That is why I like to go back to social service.

HB-So what is it about the social service field, or social work, that you are attracted to? Why social work?

I like to serve people. It is the reward, you know, when connecting with people, that kind of people tell you it is helpful. I am glad. You know, some kind of encounter, and then you feel glad that the person is happier. That is attractive, right?

H-What do you think the values are that define social work as a profession?

Well, when I was young I just feel that social work is helping, helping people, but when I was at (names university) for my BSW I loved the program very much because it defined it so clear, the picture is so clear, it is not blurry, it is social justice. If you don’t like it, the teacher said it very clearly; you have to think about it if you really want to stay in this program.

A number of different, yet familiar discourses appear in Kim's narrative about helping. First, volunteerism and acts of charity inform her understanding of helping. Next, similar to Kumar, her engagement with acts of service invite feelings of happiness and reward, which emerge in her narrative about serving others. Present within her account is an investment in receiving positive feedback from subjects whom she is helping. The validation is described as a form of reassurance that she is creating changes for another. Both Kim and Sim rely on direct feedback from clients to assure them of their roles as good helpers. This dependency on reassurance from clients illuminates the relational processes involved in subject-formation and, in particular, the identity of social workers. Can these workers perceive themselves as good helpers only if there is a positive response from the communities they serve? How will their identity as good workers be affected if a client is not satisfied with their 'help'? If helping is shaped by a natural instinct, how do we explain the moments in which we do not experience ourselves or others as helpful? Service, or as Monique states, sacrifice, takes on a constitutive quality in which the workers' identities as good subjects are constructed through their relationships with client populations who in turn are constructed as subjects in need. Furthermore, Ishar, Charlise and Kim's accounts reinscribe helping, while at the same time making a distinction between helping and social justice.

I propose here that the influence of critical perspectives in social work pedagogy is, in effect, one in which social workers have been educated to critique helping (Rossiter, 2001). This is a point to which I will return to in more detail later in the chapter. Similar to Ishar, Kim's account illustrates the institutional apparatuses that define social justice as being at the heart of social work's mandate: her teacher's comments are directive and purposeful, if students' are not committed to issues of justice, then social work is not the career for them. These expectations raise many questions about what justice means in this context. Can our social justice-oriented commitments be expressed in different ways? What type of justice was the teacher referring to? The accounts illustrate the ways in which historical notions of helping are inescapable when describing the identity of the worker, specifically through discourses of sacrifice, volunteerism, nurturing and a naturalized practice of helping. Social justice-oriented and helping discourses illuminate the person-in-the-environment approach that is a key tension within social work education and practice (Fook, 1993; Healy, 2000; Moffat, 2001).

All of the above accounts echo Heron's (1999) cautionary notes about the ways in which practices of goodness are intimately locked into the constitutive scripts of whiteness, and to a sense of self that can only experience itself as a good subject through its interactions with subjects who in turn are constructed as being in need. This is a deeply imperial process. Whiteness remains concealed through discourses treating 'sacrifice,' 'nurturance' and 'charity and volunteerism' as natural states. Consequently, participants' narratives about social justice and helping serve to constitute clients as subjects who require help, who are in need and who rely upon social services to alleviate the struggles in their lives. Therefore, good social work practice relies on the foundational construction of 'client-hood' in which good practice "starts out from the client and the client's needs, and bad social work is understood as the opposite of this" (Juhila et al., 2003, p. 11). An objectification process is in operation in which the client is constructed as a subject who requires aid, charity, and reform (Juhila et al., 2003; Rossiter, 2001). All social workers are regulated and governed by the naturalizing qualities of these discourses. Heron's work allows us to de-naturalize the qualities informing goodness and helping to reveal the colonial and imperial foundations of the profession. Desires to help others are formed through acts of benevolence and virtue, shaping the identity of 'helpers' through relationships with clients who are constructed outside of moral superiority:

What is important here is not only the regenerative capacity of desire, but what is revealed about our investments in seeing ourselves as benevolent: moral superiority, a self-image as a savior, and self-satisfaction through favorable (to us) comparisons with Others. Thus are accomplished performances of self as moral, which secure processes of white, bourgeois identity formation *and* establish the necessity for us to continue our 'virtuous behavior.' (Heron, 1999, p. 88)

Heron's (1999) intervention, very similar to Margolin (1997), is very important here; she directly locates desires towards helping as practices that secure whiteness. Although the accounts in my study are spoken by racialized workers, I argue here that all subjects are measured and regulated against these dominant themes and dominance remains concealed by simply treating these practices as forms of innocent helping, natural traits of kind and good people. In the Western, liberal world, all subjects are invited into whiteness (see Razack, 2004). However, whiteness as performance requires an analysis that explores the ways in which racial scripts produce regulatory effects (Bailey, 1998). These commitments and practices set the course through which

subjects are governed to ‘be’ good subjects, as Jeffery (2002) states, “Whiteness is both the episteme in social work schools and the subjectivity to be performed” (p. 181). In other words, when social work practice is constrained or challenges emerge, white workers will not be assessed against race-based determinations, while racialized workers will.

3.5.3 Can I be a Different Kind of Helper?

Although helping narratives prevailed, it was also evident that for these social workers of colour, the helping imperative is often complicated. An overarching assumption circulates throughout the narratives to suggest that participants’ goals towards social justice, as well as helping, might be met through social work. How might we understand the tensions between these goals and expectations about the profession? I suggest here that despite social work’s history and implication in practices of violence and harm to many communities, contemporary critiques of social work’s history open up new possibilities for different subjects to enter the profession. Feminist, Marxist, anti-racist and various anti-oppressive perspectives construct social work as site in which differences and diversity contribute to the social justice agendas of the profession (Healy, 2000, 2005). Previously, communities that were historically ‘managed’ by social workers are now permitted a place within the profession to help meet its needs for ‘diversity,’ while at the same time enacting state policies (Jeffery, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Yee, 2005). But as Jeffery (2002) and Lewis (2000) have argued, the parameters within which issues of diversity are addressed continue to situate whiteness at its centre. The pathways to learning about the Other are achieved through a number of different discursive devices, such as cultural competency, critical self-reflection (a point I will return to later in the chapter) and discourses constituting anti-oppression (Jeffery, 2002). Multiple contradictions and tensions gather together and operate when racialized social workers attempt to perform dominant professional scripts. Although, the workers do not collectively name these practices as sites of whiteness, those who do name whiteness (namely Aboriginal workers) attempt to construct alternative understandings of helping that may minimize the effects of white dominance.

When I asked workers why they chose social work as a profession, in addition to their desires to help and create social justice, they also shared various experiences of marginalization that informed their choice to pursue social work as their career. For many of the workers, complex histories of marginalization shaped decisions to be social workers. As Deepi, as South Asian

woman says, “What drew me to it was my own sense of marginality and also being able to understand others’ sense of oppression and marginality.” Similarly, Charlise describes the multiple effects that a history of racism has had upon her sense of identity. She explains that her experiences of racism and her choice to be a social worker were motivated by the belief that she would be accepted by social work as a Black woman, a person of colour, due to the profession’s claims to support diversity and justice. Racialized workers construct a diversity of meanings around their role as social change agents. Often these meanings are constructed *within* a relationship to the dominant professional values and scripts in social work. The relationship to dominant social work discourses can be in tension with their values to address marginalization in their own histories, and result in carving out practices that talk back to social work (as will be illustrated through Aboriginal worker accounts).

In the following example, Susan, an Aboriginal worker, identifies tensions about becoming a social worker. She presents an alternative understanding about helping, an understanding that is shaped by the identity of the ‘strong helper:’

Knowing what social work has done to my community, and the role of social workers in my community, I was quickly reminded, even before my acceptance letters arrived, that I was going to become one of them, by my family, by my aunties. It was like ‘what are you doing, becoming one of them?’ ... so I don’t know. I know that I was drawn to it. I don’t believe in social work. I do not believe in the code of ethics. I do not believe in any of that white, Eurocentric, male-dominated, ways of engaging people.

In Susan’s account, we hear about the colonial practices through which whiteness is constructed in her experience, as practices and systems reflecting European and male ways of constructing the world. There is a connective thread between whiteness, social work and imperialism in her account. Susan makes a number of different critiques about helping and whiteness, and is conflicted about participating in a profession that has so gravely violated her communities. She shares how her choice was one in which members of her family established a ‘dividing line’ between their community and social workers, in which social workers come to represent whiteness, colonialism and violence. What is striking in her narrative is that she does not know why she is drawn to social work. However, we receive glimpses into what she desires through her identification of *what she does not desire*, i.e. a social work practice that is regulated by a

code of ethics, which from her perspective, is informed by white, male, Eurocentric understandings of the world. She is clearly situating herself away from the dominant scripts in social work. Instead she chooses to adopt an alternative understanding about helping from within her own community:

I believe in being a strong helper. It is a different form of teachings that we are given on how to assist people and walk beside them knowing that I may be their helper today, but tomorrow they are going to be mine. It is about reciprocal relationships and balance, and knowing that the individuals that I may sit with or have the privilege to hear their story are only one breath away from where I am, and me them.

Her commitment to helping encompasses a relationship with people that is marked by reciprocity and a recognition of each other's strengths and vulnerabilities and, quite pointedly, her narrative challenges professional boundaries shaped by a code of ethics that dictates strict rules of engagement and the enforcement of boundaries amplifying oppressive relations between workers and clients. This point is powerfully emphasized in her next statement:

What if your life changes? Am I just another Indian woman? I am just another Indian woman on a pig farm. What is the real difference?

The first question is directed to the mainstream social worker, a non-Native worker. If a non-Native worker's life changes and they were to suddenly find themselves in a similar situation to their client, how different is the worker from her or any other Indian woman? This question is incredibly powerful: it not only transgresses professional boundaries, but it also destabilizes traditional understandings about who the helper is (morally superior) and who the client is (subject of deviance). For Susan, being a social worker means a rejection of mainstream understandings of the profession and adopting practices from her community, which from her perspective work to minimize the differences between people:

That is part of why I don't like social work, but I like being a helper, but not in that '*I am a good helper*' [says in high sarcastic voice] type of...you know which one I mean, right? The strong helper comes from the idea that everything is interconnected. Physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual are all interconnected. Beyond that I am not just me. I am interconnected to my partner, to my family, to my community, to my office, to my

nation, to my clan. If I am out of balance then we are all out of balance, because we are all interconnected. The concept of strong helpers is people who try to alleviate the imbalance momentarily because you never can keep it in balance for more than two seconds. If the world was in balance, then we would all be out of a job.

Susan's description of her communities' values of interconnectedness offers us more information about what whiteness and social work mean to her. Discourses of interconnectedness are in stark contrast to European, Western discourses of progress, enlightenment and self-mastery (Pease, 2002). Susan strives to create an alternative practice of social work that aims to preserve and utilize values that are constructed outside of the individualizing discourses of white, liberal normativity. Her account describes the ways in which identities are produced in and through communities, relationships, and families. Moreover, her references to balance point to the temporal nature of change, its momentary expressions, as opposed to modernist understandings of social change that suggest overarching, emancipatory practices that eradicate oppression through fixed and linear understandings of power and marginalization.

Similarly, Sarah, also an Aboriginal social worker, explains that the value of helping others was shaped by practices in her community.

Coming from a First Nations community, and growing up understanding that there was more to the needs than just looking at the problem and that there has to be a way to find some kind of intervention. So that was a draw for me. Intervention was a draw for me. Looking at how I can help, you know, that was the biggest draw. Because of the way I was raised and that my mother was always helping people in the community, I liked that idea. I think it was a natural process or a natural order of how I was raised and what I observed with all these women who always helped. I liked it. It was something that gave me joy. When I helped my mom I enjoyed it. She was happy. It was something that was fulfilling. Because of the crisis situation or the crisis that our First Nations community is in, there is strong need for people to help I guess at the grass roots level but also at the professional level or the academic level. That is why I got into it.

The ways in which she describes the value towards helping situates the practices within gendered constructions, which are at the same time naturalized as an essentialized script within her community. However, commitments to helping are squarely informed by the context and

histories of her people, in which colonial violence and erasure motivates desires to intervene and make changes on a community level. Both Sarah and Susan share commitments to helping that are informed by histories of colonial violence, in addition to a consciousness about serving not only the individual, but also the larger communities. Susan refers to this alternative understanding of helping as ‘interconnectedness’ and for Sarah, helping takes on practices of larger scale ‘intervention.’

Sarah’s communities’ experiences with ongoing colonial violence and genocide construct a commitment towards ‘intervention’ in which change must occur at the grassroots levels, within professional sites, and throughout academic knowledge production. Like Susan, Sarah echoes a commitment to an alternative practice from mainstream social work. Once again, we see that professional boundaries are being challenged and her desire to help is framed within the context of the ongoing crisis in Native communities in Canada. Her motivations, similar to Susan, are to serve members of Native communities, and her desires to help are never outside of her historically produced subjectivity as an Aboriginal woman. She aims to work against scripts that construct rigid boundaries between workers and the communities they work with. For Sarah, there are no limits present around the forms of interventions needed to make changes:

I think if you compare me to a non-Native social worker, I think we would be coming up with different answers of course. I have heard my clients tell me many times that you are not like a regular social worker, you know, because intervention is intervention to me. It doesn’t matter, I will wash their floors if they are having depression and help them clean up and show them how to do this and actually do the work with them. They say they would never get this from a mainstream non-Native social worker. They say: “They just come and assess and tell us the services we can’t afford or services we don’t qualify for, but you are actually in the game with us. You are actually doing this with us.”

For me, when they ask me to help them, I help them. That is all I can do. They know that comes from a...(pause) there is a big difference in our belief system and the perspective that comes out, the philosophy that comes out when you are working with a First Nations person. I do the same when I am working with a non-Native person as well, but I choose to work with First Nations people because that is who I am, and I know that is different. So, I know there would be a clash in the mainstream because they would say

you can't do that. It is against policy. You can't do this. I guess that is the difference, in that I choose to operate in the belief system that I come from. People would say 'you are not being professional' because they have their own standards of what professional is in social work and about boundaries and being objective. It all comes for a western etymology, what you believe at the core of you, but I have different beliefs. Until we figure out what is indigenous social work, I am going to continue doing this because who is their champion?

Both workers point to key practices that challenge mainstream social work practices, particularly practices that constitute professional boundaries and form hierarchies between the worker and the client. Although these practices are 'alternatives' within mainstream social work settings, it is important to highlight that the particular practices described by Sarah and Susan are not alternative practices in their worlds, but foundational beliefs and values. Sarah describes these values as a part of her 'core identity,' shaped through ongoing experiences of colonial genocide.

Her account begins to illuminate the possible challenges that arise when practicing what she refers to as Indigenous social work in mainstream centers. Sarah describes a number of different encounters she experienced in her work within a Native organization. She describes many situations in which she raises concerns and questions about how Native communities are being served within this setting. She explains that the management within the organization is comprised of a white woman and a part-time manager who identifies as half Native. Due to a number of conflicts resulting from differences in opinions about how to work with Native communities, Sarah was suspended from her job without pay. She was charged with "over-identifying with her clients, crossing professional boundaries, and experiencing 'burn out.'" In Sarah's account, there is no separation between how she identifies as an Aboriginal person and her practices with members of her communities. Her commitment to step outside of the professional limitations set by the agency is the way in which she attempts to create meaningful interventions in people's lives. Sarah is very well versed in social work pedagogy as a teacher of social work and she is planning on pursuing her doctoral studies, with a particular interest in Indigenous social work practice. Her knowledge about whiteness and colonialism has been shaped by her experiences as an Aboriginal woman, but also her practices in the field and the education system. She is very clear that the present models being utilized within social work settings perpetuate the dehumanization of Aboriginal peoples:

...we are using models that are not culturally appropriate. These models are dehumanizing. Why doesn't anyone understand that? Why doesn't anyone stick up and say... I mean we have, throughout North America, people who believe in that too that are First Nations, but we are the foreign view and our voices are not being heard. This is the part where PhD work comes into play, where you would gain more respect with a PhD. At the grassroots level it just doesn't fly. The energy that it takes to keep pushing that and keep working at it, it's tiring. I know I am not the first one to say these things. I haven't been the first one to practice this way, but when you have a system that does not support you it gets very tiring. That is the burnout. It's not the clients that are burning you out, it's the system.

She makes a clear distinction between pathologizing discourses that situate worker competency and burn out produced by models, systems and practices that objectify and dehumanize communities. The difficulties she describes with her workplace mirror these tensions. She explains that the Native manager at the agency supported the white manager's decision, and when I asked how she understood this dynamic, she explained that the Native manager is trained to perform whiteness:

...they've been trained that way, right. You don't show your feelings. You don't cross that boundary. You have to maintain professionalism. That is it. Of the two, she was the more calmer person. In that meeting with her I said "your calming position is manipulation. It is manipulative, and you are going to get your way" and I said to the others "you support her because she is feeding into what you want to see. I am making you uncomfortable," and they don't know what to do with uncomfortableness.

Whiteness is produced through scripts that require workers to perform as calm and rational professionals. Sarah is constructed by her co-workers as a practitioner who is not capable of controlling her impulses, emotions and maintaining professional boundaries. Her 'lack of control' invites what she describes as discomfort for the organization: her very presence transgresses the established professional norms of the organization. Sarah's questions to her team come to mark her as the embodiment of Otherness, in which her anger and questions become a part of her identity, and she represents a disruption to the civility of the space and its practices (Goldberg, 2009). Her example also suggests that performing whiteness requires subjects to

remain in close proximity to the centre, to perform as the norm. If challenging whiteness informs her particular practices towards justice, how can Sarah or other Aboriginal and racialized workers be seen as good social workers (Jeffery, 2005)? Hence, alternative practices and values that challenge the centre are met with resistance, and her example illustrates the ways in which resisting or negotiating alternatives is never outside of established norms that dictate the professional role and practices of social workers. Razack (2000) argues that in the white landscape of modern institutions, such as academia, Native subjects are either revered in their roles as "native informants" or conversely, as Sarah's story suggests, viewed as the "ungrateful and uncooperative native" (as cited in Jeffery, 2005, p. 420).

The accounts shape an additional codified story about imperial helping, in which social workers are constructed as heroes within their own narratives (Todd, 2005). Like Susan and Sarah, racialized workers seek to alleviate the effects of marginalization for the communities that they are part of and identify with. Todd (2005) suggests that modern day heroic narratives about resisting oppression and developing allied relations with the oppressed are directly linked to "the necessity of moral citizenry; it is the possibility to be good" (p. 146). Within the context of feminist organizing, she states that the imagined autonomy of community organizing produces a feminist organizer who is a "self-regulated, moral citizen who does not require supervision" (p. 145), but instead builds her commitments around helping vulnerable segments of society. This helps stabilize a professional identity that is innocent within oppressive social relations.

The desire to be seen and known as the agent of social change is inescapable for most workers; even through their critiques about traditional modes of helping in social work, the hero narrative is unavoidable. I do not suggest the inevitability of this narrative in order to minimize or take away the importance of collective organizing against various forms of oppression. On the contrary, I am more interested in how these practices produce a particular type of subject. For example, Monique's practices towards social justice are expressed through her commitments to creating justice for black communities and other marginalized groups. Her preference for work with people she identifies with is constituted through a belief that because she has lived through oppression, she will be better equipped to understand the challenges faced by groups who also experience oppression and discrimination in society. She says:

I am more focused on working with groups of people that are like me and other marginalized people because you can kind of understand and see where people are coming from and what it looks like to be in a position of oppression. In the social work field it is weird because it is like, yes, there is that element of it but you also are in a position of power because you are there and you are the helper, I guess. It is a good balance because I feel like I can still be me, but I can effect change doing what it is that I would do for my own people.

Her desires to work with marginalized communities are shaped by her histories of having experienced oppression; however, she recognizes that within her relationships with people such as herself, power is afforded to her in and through her professional role as a 'helper.' A very important tension is named between seeing herself as similar to the populations she works with (an assumption built upon the shared experiences of marginalization), and the ways in which she is set apart due to her professional status. She negotiates this tension by reformulating her identity as a helper into a position in which she can use the power afforded to her to effect change; she attempts to create a balance between the different subject-positions she embodies. However, Monique's attempts to balance her professional identity with her identity as a raced subject assume that she can keep these separate, that her identity is fixed somehow, as she states, "I feel like I can still be me." Monique's reference to being able to maintain her own identity, while it sheds light on a particular critique about being a helper, still conjures up a unitary self, who is described as remaining stable and separate in her practices. Her accounts of being a helper (self-sacrificing, social justice oriented, self-less) are laced with the desire to be good. She still presents herself as outside of relations of dominance. Whereas Susan and Sarah also aim to address injustice in their communities, attempts are made to minimize the separation between themselves as workers and as members of their communities. For Monique, professional status and practices remain outside of constructions of white dominance, whereas for Susan and Sarah, social work's history with Aboriginal communities situates social work squarely with white dominance.

The difficulties arising within the accounts are related to the use of a 'unified' voice in which assumptions about sameness regarding the experience of oppression, its negotiations and how it is to be resisted circulate within participant narratives. This is exemplified by Charlise who believes that her experiences with pain and suffering situate her as a better worker:

Yeah, because I transfer that, when people are sitting with me and families are crying, there is something that I am able to draw on because of those experiences to help them through. There is something that emerges from me that they see, something raw, and I am able to connect to these people. A real and true connection to these patients and families, I am able to connect. I think they feel the connection.

For Charlise and Monique, their histories with suffering and marginalization take on a constitutive quality that shapes them as more ‘real’ or ‘raw,’ in Charlise’s words. There is an underlying assumption here that to be a good social worker, one must have experienced injustice, pain and suffering. I will add here that to have experienced suffering suggests that the pathways to offering empathy will be more readily available to the worker, another codifying script in the language of good practice. An essentializing quality emerges around how injustice is experienced.

Lewis’s (2000) study of black social workers in the United Kingdom parallels the responses of the participants of this study. Lewis (2000) illustrates the ways in which black identity is constructed in and through essentializing discourses of suffering and injustice, insofar as black social workers utilize this identity to construct a place of belonging within social work. Each of the workers describes various meanings attached to the ways in which they are shaping practices to effect change. Lewis (2000) explains that this is a direct response to institutional racism and suggests that black social workers call on foundational experiences as black women to legitimate their professional role as social workers. Foundational experiences are described by Lewis as understandings of struggle, survival and marginalization. These particular experiences are re-constituted into certain skill sets by black workers, in efforts to fit into social work’s agenda to empower oppressed populations. Foundational experiences are utilized to situate black workers as being better suited to connect with the client populations they worked with, which is evident with both Aboriginal workers and the black worker in this study. Foundational experience, according to Lewis (2000), constructs sites in which black workers may occupy subject-positions of authority within the profession, through narratives about struggle, survival and marginalization; hence constructing black social workers as experts on marginalization. Lewis (2000) argues that practices towards invoking foundational experience are in fact a more complex response to the racism that is experienced by black workers in social work.

Essentializing scripts constructing communities of belonging are a common thread running through the narratives discussed in this section. Foundational experiences are shaped by intimate connections to communities of belonging across ethnicity, race, culture and common experiences of marginalization. However, identity is a contested terrain in which multiple and conflicting discourses will operate (Scott, 1992). The workers are negotiating identities built upon their cultural, social and political histories, in addition to discourses shaping professionalism. In this respect, their voice is not a singular account (Britzman, 1991), but rather it is shaped by a simultaneity of discourses in which their speech and practices include the discursive arrangements of many other voices, ideas and values (Henderson, 1991). However, as I stated earlier in the thesis, the playing field upon which different discourses operate is not equal and the material conditions produced by various ideologies and practices cannot be divorced from the analysis (Hook, 2001). Complicated relations of power circulate within discursive arrangements to establish domination, in which subjects are regulated and managed (Rose, 1999). Hence, racialized workers' connections to creating social change and desires to 'help' are never outside of dominant scripts of whiteness. But I will also add here that racialized workers are stuck within tensions that are already designed for the profession – to either perform whiteness (heroes, nurturers, sacrifice, natural helpers) or be the Other (cultural expert, diversity consultant) – by the white world (Lewis, 2000; Razack, 2000; Yee, 2005).

3.6 What Is Good Social Work Practice?

Amidst the contradictions and constraints described above, how then do racialized social workers define good practice? Exploring their notions about good practice is significant, as the narratives yield very important insights into the discourses shaping 'goodness' in social work; simultaneously, we can begin to see how these are also contested. Three key practices emerge from the data as overarching and dominant themes: being empathetic, client-centred and critically reflexive. I will discuss each here and suggest that these examples serve to construct specific regimes of practice as scripts of whiteness (Bailey, 1998; Jeffery, 2002) to shape the conduct of social workers in contemporary practice.

3.6.1 Being Human – “Unflinching Empathy”

How do we explain non-white subjects' professional investments in performing empathy? Many of the social workers interviewed identified empathy as the cornerstone of professional practice. For many, empathy is viewed as an essential characteristic originating from within the individual. David, a South Asian worker in the education system, explains that empathy is a key spiritual quality that human beings come equipped with and take with them into their professional roles. Through analysis of the interviews I will show how empathy appears as another codified tool of governance shaping good social work practices. I am not critiquing empathy as a practice; rather, I am interested in the ways in which its (historical) construction is naturalized. Furthermore, as I will explore in Chapter Five, how do we understand the moments in which workers cannot be empathetic? How might discourses of empathy impart dominance through the expectation to perform as a certain kind of subject? The following discussion sets the stage to explore how empathy is constructed as an essential quality not only belonging to the worker, but as an innate quality of human beings.

The professionalization of femininity (through sites of teaching and social work) place white women in a powerful role in which practices of love, nurturing and empathy are utilized to model civility and shape the moral character of citizens (Dehli, 1994; McClintock, 1995). The CASW National Statement describes social workers as individuals who are committed to "charity, equality and compassion toward others in times of need" (CASW, 2000). However, the profession's participation in violence, colonialism and regulation through practices of governance is erased by creating an image of the professional as inherently good (Jeffery, 2002). White women gain the toe-hold on respectability by being imagined as subjects who are best suited to shape the moral character of the nation (Fellows & Razack, 1998). Therefore, women's 'natural' skills to teach moral virtues contribute to ongoing practices towards "strategies of individualization" (Boler, 1999, p. 40). Subsequently, the discursive effects resulting from the individualization of morality are to universalize certain practices (such as empathy or kindness) as innate qualities forming what it means to be human or possess a "basic social emotion" (Boler, 1999, p. 157). Foucault argued that various regimes of practice or disciplines "make" individuals by means of some rather simple technical procedures" (as cited in Rose, 1999, p. 135). Particular forms of regulation shape conduct and practice to establish personal attributes and normalize specific forms of conduct as human conduct.

Within the context of psychotherapy, Roger (1998) argues that the white woman's "desire for respectability within her profession would accentuate her frequent successful use of empathy" (p. 146). She states that tools such as empathy provide professionals with direction about how to perform helping and, in turn, elevate their "respect as a helping professional" (p. 141). Roger (1998) contends that empathy works to constitute the white worker's competency and skills as follows:

It is first, through the act of kindness and helping, that the white woman is historically constituted as a professional helper; and second, it is through this practice that she gains a professional status and respectability; and third, it is the subjective experience of the client within psychology through which the professional tool of empathy will be successful. (p. 145)

Within helping professions, these qualities are read as skills to be applied in work with populations and which, in turn, establish the social worker as an effective worker. Racial and gendered histories shaping what it means to be a moral citizen are erased, and what is left is a universal given about being a good human subject, or in other words, a good social worker. The danger of erasure and the naturalization of practices of empathy risk, as Boler (1999) argues, a "de-contextualization of particular moral problems" (p. 156) and raise questions about who benefits from empathy.

Empathy demands that the worker identifies in some capacity with the experiences of the Other. White workers (and I am including in this all subjects who attempt to perform dominant scripts of humanity) cannot claim a position of innocence without a differentiated Other, or as Boler (1999) and Razack (2007) state, without practices that consume the Other. As one participant states, "Even if you've not been in that situation or just being able to put yourself in that position and think of what it might be like... you might not get it perfectly right, but just to not feel sorry for someone, but to gain an understanding of where they are so this goes back to being where the client is" (Tara, black woman). However, in order to consume, validate or understand another's experience, Boler (1999) suggests that the difference (the client, their story, their history) requires that the story be consumed as sameness (p. 160). The helping professional requires the Other, while at the same time needing to erase difference to find a connection to her own self. Racialized social workers are not outside of these dynamics. A number of participants describe

empathy as a foundational practice within social work and a value held by most workers. Moreover, empathy is not only discussed as a key skill within the profession, but as an innate characteristic of the worker, as described by Jen, who identifies as Filipino:

For me, there is something, there is something just intuitive about it, there is something that kind of comes from within myself that is just when I am with someone I am completely with them. I am completely with them in that I am hearing them and they are leading me through where they need to go.

This participant describes empathy as a trait that exists from within, which is utilized to better understand her clients. Her practice of empathy encompasses ‘being with’ a client, listening carefully and letting the client direct the process. Furthermore, her empathetic practice is dependent upon an experience of herself as a subject who is both stable and fully present and available to the client. She suggests that when she steps out of empathy and an intuitive practice, she feels insecure or less confident about herself. When she is less confident, she explains that she runs the risk of slipping into the role of an expert and into a more directive practice:

I direct it when I am in an insecure place that don’t know where to go. I think that I am the best at supporting someone else is when I am confident enough to let them, to trust the process and to trust that they can take me where they want to go. I think I fall into, like I said I fall into an expert role when I am not confident. So there is something in there for me that is about, I guess, somehow relates to compassion and empathy. Um, and there is also a real, I guess there is also a real responsibility in there for me as well, a responsibility to them and how I want to be in practice and in respecting them.

Confidence, insecurity, empathy, intuition – each of these states of ‘experience’ is described as an individual characteristic, part of her sense of self as a subject who is confident and/or insecure. Although she describes these states as internal to her external environment, they are relationally produced. Similarly, David describes empathy as an experience that must first come from within, towards oneself and, like Jen, serve as an indicator about how he is feeling towards himself and the client:

Empathy, compassion starting first. In my journey it has been that empathy and that compassion came first from within me having empathy for myself, compassion for

myself. When I do that, and I really like myself and value myself, I really do, then I like and I value you. I don't judge you, and I show you that I value you.

Empathy here takes on a healing quality, in which acts of kindness towards oneself may result in better relationships with the self and others. Empathy once again appears as a given about our humanity, innate to all and accessible to all. David's point highlights that empathy is also to be practiced towards the self, in efforts to be of better service to others. He continues as follows:

HB-So would these traits that you describe then fit into your definition of good practice?

My gosh, it's the backbone of practice. That is the only skill that we bring, empathy. The inner spiritual skill that we bring. The rest is clinical acumen, but empathy is deeper than clinical acumen.

Similarly, Deepi's practice of empathy is shaped through her skills to be present, listen and 'be human' with a client:

There is a sense of empathy and sympathy involved in that, but there is also a sense of reflecting on the social structures of the world and how they impact on individuals and families. I think there is so much that I can take away from when people do share their stories, and I think the major skills that I learned when I first came into the profession were those very key sort of counselling skills like listening, being present, being human with another person, and those are the ones that are carried through very well in the field.

Her narrative suggests a relational component to the practice of empathy, and specifically an attention to the ways in which her clients influence her practice, to fine-tune her skills to listen effectively, be available to clients and 'be human.' Eaman's account is similar to Deepi's in so far as they both connect their practice of empathy to social justice-oriented concerns that shape their skills to support justice and challenge injustices:

The way... I think I understand social work, and it is that, it's an unflinching empathy. I know I read that somewhere. But it made so much sense to me. It's a profession. It's a group of people who are... who are always there for the client and to be supportive. But I also think... I mean when you look at the social work values – one of them is about social justice and social action. And I think that part is really important. But what I have seen

so far in the field is a lot of people that turn a blind eye. Or they say it's too hard for me to take on. Or it's too.... there are too many consequences for speaking up. And ... I don't know. I guess that's where I'm really frustrated. And... that's where I'm trying to conduct some change. Because I really believe in it. It's just... you can't sit by and let things happen, whether it's you know, racism, homophobia or anything.

Turning a blind eye or not speaking up reflects a lack of commitment to justice on the part of a worker. Her belief system requires that social workers challenge and speak up against various forms of oppression in our world, an important belief and practice and one that I support. However, I am concerned about the ways in which challenging oppression is the sole responsibility of the worker, disconnected from the context of neoliberal institutions they work for, or relations of power. Eaman presents singular and fixed understandings of empathy and resistance within her narrative. Foucault (1978) reminds us that resistance is never outside of relations of dominance. What conditions or supports do workers require to engage in resistance practices? How might workers' commitments to justice be constrained?

3.6.2 Client-Centred Practices

The majority of workers describe client-centred practices as a key perspective within social work and something they aspire to in their exchanges with clients. Social workers are trained to turn their lens onto their own subject positions, as a means to minimize power imbalances between the worker and the client (Healy, 2000; Heron, 2005; Napier & Fook, 2000). By de-centering their influence, workers support clients to lead the direction of the work, recognizing that clients are situated both within the relationship with the worker, and also in society at large, in a *powerless* position. When I asked Tara why client-centred practices are so important in social work, she replied by saying:

Well, I would say because our work is with the client... for them to achieve their goals or their wishes, so that we need to be focused on them, and what they're wanting to do, rather than us. They're the focus of the work. Yes...they're the focus of the work. It's their life.

This point is echoed by Ishar, who works in a hospital setting:

I think it is still very much a client-centred approach. So what good practice means to our team is to always meet the client where they are at, so we are trying to be conscious of minimizing our voice, our influence, and really staying with the client's experience. We definitely have a feminist undercurrent in our work. How each of us brings that to life is different, but I would say overarching discourse that informs good practice is to be very client-centred, giving them a voice, letting them lead, it is their agenda to set the goals. They get to determine the pace and what they want to talk about and don't want to talk about. We see our role of a counsellor and social worker as being a supportive collaborative presence to demonstrate compassion, empathy, and to be advocates.

Both workers identify the importance of the social worker minimizing their influence in their relationships with clients. Minimizing the worker's influence translates into prioritizing the needs and goals of clients, their experiences, their truths, goals etc. The flip side of this coin will imply that workers do not set the goals, nor do they share their feelings/experiences, and the practice is intended to be non-directive. Nuhad, a worker of Middle Eastern descent stresses, "I think a person-centered approach makes the most sense, both practically and ethically speaking. I don't feel we should make choices for other people, and if we do it's less likely to succeed than if they were to come to the decisions on their own." The worker's biases, judgements, and values are meant to be critically reflected upon, to remain focused on the client's needs, and this becomes an example of an *ethical practice*, to reduce any harm that may be caused by imposing one's values, ideas and beliefs on a client.

Social work scholar Rossiter (2001) cautions that social work's historical formations are inescapable within contemporary social work practices; to ignore the historical and social formations of the profession is to find oneself in a "flight towards innocence" (p. 2). Considering her own practices as a professor of social work, Rossiter (2001) states that

As much as I'd like to have a practice of freedom that is pure and free from doubt – a technique – there is no such ahistorical, decontextualized space. We are always acting in and through a history in which the contradictions of history are lived out in our practices, and no person – even ones who do it perfectly can be extracted from history. (p. 2)

In other words, 'trespasses' will be inevitable in our practices towards social change and social justice. Drawing on the work of Orlic (1997), Rossiter (2001) states that trespasses "are the

harm brought to others by our participation in the *governing ways* [emphasis added] of envisioning and making the world” (p. 2). As social workers, our commitments to examining the ways in which we both produce and reinscribe harm is a necessary move in critical social work, and I understand Rossiter (2001) to be suggesting that social workers are always implicated in relations of power and never outside of the historical and social formations of how knowledge is produced. Framing such practices as sites of trespass and harm is important, as critical perspectives simultaneously recognize that harm is inevitable (an important intervention to rupture innocence), and prescribe critically reflexivity and client-centred practices as an antidote to any harm that may occur.

Rossiter (2001) states that trespasses will occur when we participate in governing how one is to behave in the world. Inevitable tensions and contradictions take place for all social workers attempting to reduce harm. However, in keeping with the central focus of this thesis, I am concerned that racialized social workers are positioned and implicated quite differently within their roles as social workers. Is it possible that Rossiter (2001) and other critical perspectives in social work reinscribe fixed understandings of worker identities? In our efforts to avoid a “race to innocence” (Rossiter, 2001, p. 2), are we in fact reproducing innocence through our critical reflections about relations of power? Dean (1999) argues that practices of governance are intensely moral activities, and morality and civility are deeply racialized processes (see also Goldberg, 1993; Heron, 1999; Hesse, 1997). Therefore, performing as a good social worker requires that one perform as a self-regulating (white) moral subject (Fellows & Razack, 1998; Stoler, 1995). In other words, although I agree with Rossiter that all social workers are implicated in historically produced relations of power, we cannot divorce these processes from the material realities of the settings in which we work, realities which continue to be shaped by institutional white dominance. How might we examine the multiple and complex relations of power within contexts that are racially governed?

My contention with this particular understanding or theorization of power between workers and clients is that it does not take into account a multiplicity of subject positions that shape the identities of workers *and* clients. Too often, the fixed nature of the worker/client relationship does not permit examination of the fluid and complex operations of power. What is not explored are the ways in which subjects are mutually constituted moment by moment, through historical

and social discourses of power that are shaped by the institutional contexts in which social workers are employed (Healy, 2005). Sim's account begins to illuminate this absence:

I guess we come from an assumption too that there is a power imbalance because this client is coming to you for help, and I understand that and certainly believe that, but there is also another thing of individual power that people have. There is the societal power we can look at, like who has the power in our society, but there is also individually different types of power in some ways depending on who you are, and not just in terms of race but also in terms of other things, you have different power in the relationship, even with a client. I don't think that is something that is talked about. We talk about bringing diversity into social work, but necessarily does that change the practice or change the dynamics.

Sim begins to highlight some of the challenges that exist within client-centred and anti-oppressive conceptualizations of practice. She notes the larger structural formations of power, but also the particular ways in which power may be expressed at micro levels. Her narrative begins to address localized practices of power, which may be playing out in more than one dominant direction. Second, she questions social work's commitments towards more diverse workplace settings, suggesting that increasing the diversity of workers and client populations does not address the inevitable dilemmas that occur in practice encounters. Exploring the complexities of power and the ways in which it operates in multiple directions through various discourses is not commonplace yet in social work. In addition, these expectations or theorizations about the worker/client relationship do not take into the account the ways in which social work and practice settings are sites of white dominance, as visible whiteness and codified scripts about performing whiteness (Bailey, 1998; Jeffery, 2002).

The inescapability of whiteness is never made more evident than in moments when practices such as empathy, client-centeredness and critical reflexivity break down. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, when racism takes place in clinical encounters, client-centred discourses disavow any discussion about the violence taking place or the ensuing practice dilemmas that inevitably occur. Whiteness operates in the directive that workers remain empathetic, nurturing, calm and focused on the client, to de-centre their own influence. However, when trespasses occur, racialized workers' commitments to these foundational values fall apart. In those

moments, workers cannot perform as good, empathetic or innocent. The workers who talked with me offered numerous accounts of such encounters. Indeed, their frequency was overwhelming.

Client-centred discourses in social work pedagogy tacitly assume that the worker is a member of the dominant group. Hence I argue that another practice of whiteness emerges in these discourses, in which the worker maintains an identity of goodness through their acknowledgements of being *more powerful, naming trespasses or 'bad practice'* and remaining *client-focused*. Seema, a South Asian worker who has worked largely in the area of anti-violence, reiterates these concerns, raises doubts about client-centred practices and very clearly communicates the dilemmas that emerge when workers diverge from this practice:

I think it comes back to our training. I mean it is historical right, there were these do-gooders right (laughs) and that our motives are very pure, clear, sort of selflessness and I think that somewhat comes into some of the teachings. And that the client is first is a big one, so that the needs of the client take priority over the therapist, counsellor, social worker. And their needs are paramount, and I don't buy that for one minute, but that is what we are taught. If the client is not first, somehow it makes you a bad social worker. Then if somehow you think about your needs or your values or how you think about the world, even within the session, you know, talk about what is meaningful and important to you – god forbid, it is seen as some sort of selfish act and then it becomes about you and not about the client... And I think that the reality is, that both are in the room, both are in the room.

Seema communicates a key critique about the limitations to a client-centred practice. Her evaluation of this approach links the practice with particular 'characteristics' of the worker. These characteristics are constitutive of the historical and the contemporary identity of the worker, selflessness being the key. Seema's viewpoint disrupts dominant understandings about the subject-positions of the worker and the client, and complicates the ways in which the subjectivities of both the worker/client are present in the room. I do not think that critical social work perspectives would argue against this. Yet, I will state that anti-oppressive practices invite only a particular understanding of the worker's subject-position to be explored, as a powerful position (Healy, 2005). The fixed position of the worker as privileged and powerful requires the added practice of critical reflexivity in order to manage the ways in which 'their' power might

negatively influence the work with communities. Tara describes critical reflexivity in the following manner:

Being aware, and trying not to let my values, life experiences, assumptions, expectations, frustrations lead me down the path of telling people what they should do, or judging people... judging people. And from that judgment, telling them what they should do. How they should feel, how they should be impacted by things, or not.

3.6.3 Critical Reflexivity

In this section of the chapter, I suggest that critical reflexivity functions as another apparatus to secure innocence for subjects. Social work students are taught to reflect on the ‘self’ as a means to address biases, judgements or values that may impinge on their relationships with clients. This practice is an extension of anti-oppressive practice (D’Cruz et al., 2007; Fook, 1996; Healy, 2005) and is used as a tool by practitioners so that they may remain client-centred, minimize the effects of their power/privilege and be empathetic in their relationships with clients. Keenan (2004) offers the following characteristics of a critically reflexive practice:

Reflexive process, therefore, is the backstitch of action that facilitates continuous questioning of the factors influencing interpretation and behavior. Reflexivity is a continual process that reminds us that our experience is not everyone’s experience, that helps us think through the consequences of comments and actions, and that facilitates continual questioning of our interpretations (meanings) of our own actions and clients actions. (p. 544)

Keenan (2004) identifies self-reflection as the defining feature of clinical practice, through which workers describe themselves, their clients and the clinical relationship. The practice of reflection is to support an examination of the multiplicity of truths and identities that may shape clients’ lives. She suggests that the possibility for social justice and transformation is intimately linked to the social worker’s awareness of the self. Keenan outlines a summary for the ways in which critical reflexivity has been discussed in the social work literature. Some characteristics of the practice involve an awareness of one’s thoughts, feelings and behaviors (D’Cruz et al., 2007). Other scholars have extended these understandings to include a critical examination of relations of power, privilege and oppression (see Healy, 2005; Heron, 2005; Fook, 1999; Kondrat, 1999;

Moffat, 2001).

Although critical reflexivity is an important intervention within social work, it is not without its critiques, worries and hesitations. For example, Adams (2003) notes that “contemporary notions of reflexivity tell us more about the culture and traditions of Western, late modern society than they do about our liberation from them” (p. 225). Whiteness and ethnocentric understandings about society and subject-formation may in fact be reinscribed through practices of reflexivity (Adams, 2003; Jeffery, 2002). Adams (2003) argues that reflexivity be conceptualized as a “reflexive project of the self rather than being supremely capable to transcending cultural, social and historical restrictions” (p. 231). I follow Adam’s critiques here to express some cautionary notes about the high expectations that can emerge through the claims that are made about critical reflection in social work education.

I am arguing here that critical reflexivity has become another hegemonic script in social work, and its connections to whiteness are made through *reflections* on the *self* that restore the subject back to a place of innocence. Foucault has suggested that modern ethical practices centrally focus on self-examination through historically situated practices of confession and psychotherapy (as cited in Srivastava, 2005). These techniques were designed to assist a subject in becoming “a master of oneself” (Foucault, 1984, p. 349), as management of one’s subjectivity is a central task of modern organizations (Rose, 1999). Furthermore, these practices cannot be fully analyzed outside of their historical development whereby middle-class respectability was attained through practices of ‘knowing’ the Other *and the self* in relationship to Others (Goldberg, 1993). The art of managing the self, while at the same time being ‘skilled’ in one’s work with the Other, operates to strengthen the imperial self (Jeffery, 2002).

In her critiques of feminist social organizing, Srivastava (2005) argues that “practices of self-decipherment also describe the route of some white feminists moving towards anti-racism” (p. 50). Within contemporary practice, commitments to critical practice, anti-racism and anti-oppression require that the social work subject learn to work effectively with communities of difference, producing additional sites in which colonial continuities emerge through practices to learn about Others. However, to require knowledge about the Other, social work subjects must also learn about themselves, their own judgements, biases, values, privilege and power (Keenan, 2004; Kondrat, 1999). Learning about the self is a professional tool so that the subject may

regulate those aspects of the self which may negatively affect the clinical relationship. The ‘self’ that is being referred to here is the unitary self of modernity, a construction that remains common in our society today. Heron (1999) states that the unitary self requires knowing itself as a moral subject, and that this knowledge can only be assessed through “stories about being good or bad” (p. 83). Because the unitary self in reality is not a stable identity, it relies on normalizing scripts of goodness and badness to identify itself.

Boler’s (1999) scholarship on the pedagogy of discomfort and her critiques of self-reflection are also applicable here. Boler (1999) questions the role and function of reflective practices, which she argues serve to perpetuate Western investments in liberal individualism, even within their ‘critical’ expressions. Boler (1999) suggests that this form of “self-critique easily functions as a form of ‘confession’” (p. 178) to erase historical complexities and reproduce self-inoculations of either guilt or innocence. The unitary subject is reinscribed through these practices, and the analysis of these moments remains locked into discourses of morality. Self-examination becomes the vehicle through which subjects reflect upon on their conduct as moral beings.

Margolin (1997) offers an important critique of social work’s investments in reflective practices. His concern lies with the ways in which reflection about the discipline’s shortcomings restores the profession’s confidence in its perfectibility. He suggests reflectivity works to produce ‘self-inoculations’ in which social workers *cure* their own anxieties about their practice. He offers the following description of this process:

According to the formula, they take the established value or technique that needs restoration and support, lavishly display its inadequacies, the injustices it produces, the dangers to which it gives rise. Next they confront it with its most obvious excesses and contradictions; then, at the last moment, they save it in spite of, or rather by means of, these very contradictions and blemishes. (p. 165)

In contemporary social work, the formula takes shape by naming one’s power and privilege, through which the social work subject can constitute herself as a critical subject on the side of good and of anti-oppressive efforts. Heron (2005) insightfully observes that the “have/have not dualism of privilege” (p. 344) and simply naming one’s social location do not unsettle its operation. Often times, naming one’s anxieties, feelings of guilt and bad practices serves to restore or, as Margolin (1997) suggests, cure the social worker of their imperfectability.

Margolin contends that reflective practice does not challenge social work's foundations, but instead affirms them.

As I will demonstrate in Chapter Five, racialized workers do not possess the same access to the practice of reflexivity, for a number of reasons. The powerful/powerless binary that signifies the normative worker/client relationship sets up a dynamic in which critical reflections about one's practice centre around examining one's social location through sites of dominance (as identified by Heron, 2005), naming 'bad practice' or examining one's power-over relationship to clients. This practice re-centers members of dominant groups. Racialized workers are required to understand their identities through the lens of dominance, and the sites in which they experience their world through marginalization do not have room to be explored. When racialized violence occurs within moments of practice, workers' engagement in critical practices about the racist encounter is constrained by the powerful/powerless binary, in which they cannot claim an identity that experiences marginalization. Furthermore, critical discourses in social work, such as anti-racism, diversity and critical reflexivity, re-centre white subjects through heroic narratives (Todd, 2005) in which their reflections about whiteness, power and bad practice restore their professional identity back to a place of goodness and innocence.

In *Declarations of Whiteness: The Non-Performativity of Anti-Racism*, Ahmed (2004b) questions the move to reflect on whiteness, as the practice itself serves to centralize the white subject. Drawing on Rose (1999), Ahmed (2004b) suggests that reflective practice is at risk of turning "itself into a project" (Rose as cited in Ahmed, 2004b, p. 10). Ahmed's critique is very important here as she challenges the ways in which the white subject is re-centred through the practice. Practices to engage in critical reflexivity cannot be analyzed outside of the contexts of social work education and practice. These settings remain sites of white dominance (Gosine & Pon, 2011; Jeffery, 2002). Critical reflexivity in social work runs the risk of simplifying the operation of power and reducing the practice to white workers merely acknowledging their white privilege (Heron, 2005). Ahmed asks what does naming whiteness actually do:

declaring whiteness, or even 'admitting' to one's own racism, when the declaration is assumed to be 'evidence' of an anti-racist commitment, does not do what it says. In other words, putting whiteness into speech, as an object to be spoken about, however critically, is not an anti-racist action, and nor does it necessarily commit a state, institution or

person to a form of action that we could describe as anti-racist. To put this more strongly, I will show how declaring one's whiteness, even as part of a project of social critique, can reproduce white privilege in ways that are 'unforeseen.' (p. 4)

Ahmed (2004b) asserts that whiteness is only invisible to those who embody whiteness, while non-white bodies see whiteness everywhere. How does naming whiteness exclude or include voices of racialized 'others'? She is suggesting that such declarations reinscribe white privilege, by centering the white subject in reflective practice. Some of these practices include admissions of bad practice as signs of good practice, or white people expressing feelings of anxiety and shame about having participated in acts of racial domination. The use of the word 'critical' serves as an indicator to set apart progressive whites from racist whites.

The practice of engaging in critically reflexivity is a risk of what Ahmed (2004b) refers to as a project of the self, arguing that even within its 'critical' incarnations, the practice is at risk of becoming a "discourse of love, sustaining the narcissism that elevates whiteness into a social and bodily ideal" (p. 2). Ahmed (2004b) points to the postcolonial critique of anthropology, in which the desire to know the Other serves to foster narcissism, as the "other functioned as a mirror, a device to reflect the anthropological gaze back to itself" (p. 2). Ahmed's reformulation of reflexivity as a problematized discourse of love provides a very important intervention, as it points to the historically constituted identity of the worker who maintains dominance through practices that secure innocence, such as love, charity or selflessness. In social work, these practices translate into empathy, critical reflexivity and client-centred practice.

On a similar note, Berlin (2005) traces the value of acceptance throughout social work's history and points to early reform movements as the sites in which acceptance emerged as a core value in social work. Whereas Ahmed (2004b) examines the project of the self as a 'discourse of love' towards oneself, Hamilton (1943) suggest that a worker's 'capacity to love' and accept others, is achieved through a reflective practice (as cited in Berlin, 2005, p. 495). Drawing on Hamilton (1943), Berlin argues that reflecting on the self will create more self-awareness and self-acceptance, which in turn *increases our capacity* to love others. I am reminded here of David's use of empathy, whereby practicing empathy towards himself reassures him that he will be more compassionate to others. Hamilton (1943) states:

The social worker is, of course, not free from unlovely motives, but he will not prove really helpful to others unless he has learned to recognize these bad as well as good impulses in himself – learned to accept them as fact-and in spite of them, developed his capacity to ‘love’ many different kinds of persons, or at least keep from injuring them by being aware of the less admirable feelings that persist within. (as cited in Berlin, 2005, p. 495)

Hamilton’s (1943) representation of reflective practice suggests that ‘unlovely’ motives are inescapable, an unpleasant fact for social workers. Being aware of the bad impulses that ‘persist within’ is a sign of love towards self and others. Unlovely motives are individualized to the subject, they require reform, and love is the antidote. The distinction between its historical and contemporary formations exists within the language used to describe its intention. More specifically, building on Berlin (2005) and Ahmed’s (2004b) critiques, I am suggesting here that the word ‘love’ has now been replaced by the word ‘critical.’ To admit to bad practice is to restore one’s sense of self as good, loving and, in its contemporary manifestation, as critical. Consequently, Ahmed (2004b) states that declarations of whiteness and admissions of racism operate to restore the white subject back to “a positive white identity and an identity that makes the white subject feel good about itself” (p. 8). Therefore, the recognition of bad practice produces bad feelings, and the admission of bad feelings restores the white worker to a positive sense of self (Ahmed, 2004b).

Schools of social work serve as sites in which the practice of reflection is enforced early in students’ careers. Through their course work and practice placements students are required to build their written assignments around their reflections on their life experience and their ‘social location’ (Heron, 2005). A great deal of emphasis is placed upon getting to know oneself. Deepi describes her education as follows:

I was lucky enough in my program that they really drilled that into you. Like, who are you? What is your story? What has brought you here? Why do you feel that *you* are a person that other people can turn to in their greatest need? Why you? And we had to write these intense, personal, reflective papers on our personal journeys to school, our personal journeys in life, our life stories, our narratives that I think are crucial to anyone wanting to *enter the lives of other people*. So I think that a good social worker has started

that process of looking at their own selves and understanding who they are as a social worker, as a woman, as a white person, as an able bodied person, as a heterosexual, and really understanding that in relation to other people in the world, and in their communities, and in the communities that they would be working in, and in their smaller group of the cohort of their colleagues too.

Getting to know the ‘self’ is a pre-requisite to have access to another’s story, a way to ensure that harm will be reduced in the work with another. The assumption is that the practice of reflecting and retelling will lead to a greater understanding of empathy and produce insights into whether or not you are suited for the profession. Jen describes this process as follows,

I think that there is also just a real empathy and compassion, and you know, also why do I want to be here? Why do I want to be sitting with someone who is in a lot of pain? I guess that goes along with the critical self-reflexivity part, but those are some things that stand out for me.

For Farzana, performing these scripts reassures her that she is working “with people from a genuinely anti-oppressive perspective.”

All three workers’ comments suggest that self-reflexivity will open important questions about a person’s *intentions* surrounding their choices to work with vulnerable populations. In addition, Farzana’s comments imply that these practices will lead to an authentic or genuine commitment to the social justice-oriented practices of the profession. This landscape of motives and intentions suggests that a worker must be a certain type of subject and perform in particular ways to be deemed suitable for the field of practice: this subject is empathic, social justice oriented and committed to self-critiques. I argue here that these scripts reinscribe the ways in which, in contemporary practice, the social worker must perform as a moral subject.

Critical perspectives such as Rossiter’s (2001) critiques of innocence assume that social workers will inevitably experience judgments, feelings, and ideas that are in conflict with the clients they are working with. These “unlovely motives” (Hamilton, 1943 as cited in Berlin, 2005, p. 495) require acknowledgment and management. Acknowledging their operation is a way to diffuse their effects, so that the worker can maintain client-centeredness and be ‘present’ to the moment:

Ok, what is my awareness? Who am I? What am I bringing here? Noticing behaviors, noticing patterns, sort of why things are a certain way, why you react in a certain way. Really just always having that self-reflection and allowing yourself to be more present in whatever you are doing instead of just doing what you are supposed to do. I think that is really challenging. I think it is a lot easier to not be self-indulgent and be like this is what I am doing and I am sure I am doing good, because I am doing something good, social work is good, and not really questioning why you are doing something, what brings you to that field. (Farzana)

Farzana infers that the reasons for certain reactions and responses may be unavailable to the worker in the moment, hence, engaging in practices to build an 'awareness' of these reactions allows one to be more available to the client. We can see two different ideas operating within her narrative: the first is related to framing self-awareness as a good practice, and the second implies that if one does not engage in a practice towards self-awareness (or as she frames it, self-indulgence), the worker runs the risk of thinking their practice is secure in its goodness. She implies that the latter is the easier route, a confident place to stand. However, this comment implies its reverse as well, that engaging in self-awareness is in fact more difficult and a harder practice to engage in, but necessary if one is to facilitate ethical practices. The inference here is that regulating one's conduct requires a certain amount of discomfort on the part of the worker. This point is echoed by Lila,

When I took my social work degree that was part of the theoretical foundation of how to work with clients. So that self-reflection, self-awareness - in order to know how you are feeling about these situations right, and how much of it is you and how much is the client, and then to make your decisions based on that. And also to know, that you're not always going to feel great.

The following two workers imply that reflection supports not only minimizing judgments, but is also a practice towards a total de-centering of the self.

Yes, trying not to let me get in the way, right? Me meaning my experience, my values, my judgment, because I can't say they're not there, right? Judgment is sometimes there, but just trying not to have it, you know, totally take over the process. (Tara)

Checking in with myself and saying, ok, what's my reaction here, what is going on for me, what kinds of judgments are coming in for me here, where are those judgments coming from, how are those judgments having an impact on this person and being able to do all that really complicated work simultaneously while also being able to support them in that process. (Jen)

The implication within the narratives is that all judgments are negatively oriented or present as 'unlovely' motives (Hamilton, 1943). How might we invite conversations about the mutually constitutive processes that are at play in relations with others? The judgments and reactions are viewed as 'belonging' to the social worker, something that they possess, and something that they have the capacity and autonomy to assert or withhold.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the complicated intersection between desiring to be a good worker and understanding what one *must know* to perform one's professional duties as a good social worker. I have argued that contemporary social work practices reinscribe colonial continuities (Heron, 1999) to constitute social workers as good and innocent subjects. I demonstrate through the data from individual worker interviews that professional practices are intertwined with colonial constructions of humanity, in which imperial practices are tightly interwoven in scripts of civility and morality to shape goodness (Jeffery, 2002). I argue that historical notions of helping are intertwined with contemporary practices towards social justice. I demonstrate how these two terrains are linked through the production of innocence that is informed through imperial desires to help others. As modern day social workers, we still rely upon a 'helping relationship' to know ourselves as critical social workers. Today's social worker is a self-governing subject whose commitments to issues of social justice are demonstrated through practices of empathy, client-centred practices, and through critical reflections about herself, her power, privilege, values and feelings.

I have argued that these practices are embedded in scripts on how to perform whiteness, scripts that are unequally accessible and inhabitable by differently positioned social workers. Racialized social workers' narratives reflect the ways in which *all* subjects are invited into white

liberal normativity in modern organizations, yet they also suggest that taking oneself up or performing as a viable subject in the terms provided through these norms is both tenuous and messy. Their commitments to social work practice cannot be analyzed outside of the historical production of good practice. I am reminded of Schick's (2000) contention that whiteness "persists as what is worth knowing and as identification worth performing" (as cited in Jeffery, 2002, p. 178). It is through participants' narratives about the role of the worker, and examples about good practice, that particular storylines emerge describing what is *worth knowing* and *worth performing*. We are given a glimpse into the technologies that govern the conduct of all social workers. Participants' desires and investments in the profession are closely woven into a series of historically and socially situated discourses about helping others, changing the world and being critically reflexive about their subject-position and relations of power. I suggest in this chapter that the 'critical' moves within contemporary social work reflect new versions of innocence and goodness (Jeffery, 2002).

Social work's historical constitution within colonial and imperial projects is inescapable in the contemporary period. The previously unmarked, universal subject at the centre of the profession's colonial beginnings is now a marked subject, whose practice is shaped by examining relations of power, naming their social location and pursuing a critical lens towards the self. It is assumed that these critical moves in contemporary social work will minimize harm to client populations by minimizing the effects of worker power in practice moments (Healy, 2000; Hick & Pozzuto, 2005).

Social work imagines itself as a site of social justice (Margolin, 1997) and workers are the vehicles through which injustices can be challenged and changed. This particular image of the profession is seductive, and many of the participants based their decisions to become social workers on this specific perception of the profession. Their own histories and experiences of marginalization are also tremendously influential in shaping their desires to join a profession in which they can actively participate in change processes that support justice. It is within these particular storylines that we hear about the ways in which racialized and Aboriginal workers are negotiating the codified scripts of the profession. However, the particular meanings, alternatives and practices of resistance are not entirely outside of the governing scripts of the profession, but instead, they are produced in and through these scripts.

White scripts (Bailey, 1998) do not operate in straightforward or fixed ways; instead, dominant discourses are negotiated through a number of competing discourses. A complex web of discursive arrangements are revealed in this study's narratives, in which workers attempt to redefine helping, while at the same time being governed by scripts dictating the characteristics and practices of the worker. We see this most clearly in the narratives of Aboriginal workers who are actively working against particular colonial practices to find Indigenous ways of supporting communities. We also can identify foundational experiences in which racialized workers engage in essentializing discourses about marginalization to construct a specific form of expertise within the profession. Most importantly, the unitary subject is ever-present throughout the narratives, through which individualizing discourses continue to govern the conduct of social workers, and in which practices of helping, empathy, nurturance and sacrifice are naturalized. Racialized workers, although positioned differently, are still governed by these practices within the profession.

In Chapters Four and Five I demonstrate the ways in which social workers' investments in performing as good and critical workers end up in crisis. The moments of crisis that I discuss in the next two chapters cannot be understood outside of the historical constructions of whiteness, in which racism is continually at play (Goldberg, 1993). Whereas this chapter traces the ways in which participants' investments are produced through performing an identity that is governed by whiteness, the next two chapters examine the inevitability of racial violence when working in a profession that is organized and regulated by white, liberal normativity, even within its 'critical' manifestations. I illustrate how participant narratives rupture the inevitable tensions around performing as moral subjects, and grave contradictions occur for racialized workers as they attempt to perform as moral subjects but instead find themselves cast out of belonging, as their subject positions have been historically constituted as bodies outside of moral respectability (Jeffery, 2002).

Chapter Four

Bodies Out of Place: Institutional Belonging

For me it has been really interesting to see the disparity between the ideals that we project and really what we practice when it comes to these organizations, and how they run, and how power functions in them. Where does the power lie? It still usually lies within a small group of white people. (Nuhad, settlement worker)

...because subordinate groups that gain a measure of respectability do not by definition possess all of the attributes of respectability, they are in an inherently unstable position. Those attributes that remain classified as degenerate will always threaten their toeholds on respectability. (Fellows & Razack, 1998, p. 352)

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined the ways in which historical and codifying scripts of whiteness are reinscribed within contemporary social work practices that centralize unitary subject formations, and historical notions of goodness and innocence (Heron, 1999; Jeffery, 2002). I illustrated how social work practices such as client-centred approaches, empathy and critical reflexivity reinscribe historical notions of goodness and whiteness (Heron, 2000; Jeffery, 2002; Todd, 2005). Social workers of colour are situated within these scripts through a complexity of discourses, through which foundational experiences about oppression and alternative understandings of ‘helping’ are informed by their own histories of marginalization. However, these alternative narratives are never outside of the codifying and regulatory scripts about good social work practice. Whiteness persists and social workers of colour are governed by, implicated within and resisting these scripts at different moments. Their practices cannot be analyzed outside of white dominance. Whereas the previous chapter outlined how whiteness is produced through the values of the profession, in this chapter I turn my attention to the ways in

which institutional whiteness is anchored within social work sites of practice. I will specifically point the analysis towards diversity discourses to examine how technologies of white governance run through institutional commitments to address ‘diversity’ (Ahmed, 2012; Hesse, 2004).

Participant narratives offered complex examples about the ways in which racialized workers and their involvement in the profession is constituted through discourses of diversity. I examined participant interviews to trace, as Ahmed (2012) states, the “habits, contours and rhythms” of diversity (p. 141). I follow Ahmed (2012) who claims that “When we describe institutions as being white, we point to how institutional spaces are shaped by the proximity of some bodies and not others: white bodies gather and create the impression of coherence” (p. 35). White governance is not possible without the presence of bodies of colour and institutional whiteness must rely upon diversity initiatives to create the impression of inclusivity (Ahmed, 2012; Hesse, 1997).

To begin, I will situate the chapter theoretically and draw upon the work of scholars who examine the interconnections between bodies and space (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004; Razack, 2002). I use spatial theory to argue that space is never a neutral or objective site of engagement (Goldberg, 1993; Puwar, 2004; Razack, 2002). This theoretical entry point is important, as many of the participants described their workplaces as predominantly ‘white,’ in terms of the high numbers of white workers, in addition to the values that shape the norms, expectations and routines within them. Next, I investigate diversity discourses through two specific areas: the first explores narratives that relay how workers describe diversity initiatives within their work place settings (hiring practices, diversity programs, committees); and second, I share accounts in which workers describe the responses of institutions (managers, co-workers) when the acceptable parameters of diversity are transgressed. In other words, when racism is named in organizations, white workers express hurt and anger and, consequently, workers of colour come to represent a disruption to the “happy image of diversity” (Ahmed, 2012, p. 152), or, as I argue, a threat to whiteness. As the interview data will show, white governance (read diversity) will transpire through various technologies that constitute racialized workers as the literal embodiment of diversity.

4.2 Race, Space and Bodies

White bodies are materially and symbolically positioned as the rightful citizens of Canada. This positioning translates into the ways in which white bodies come to reflect particular norms, into which bodies of colour will be situated as simultaneously inside and outside of belonging (Goldberg, 1993). Drawing on Foucauldian governmentality, Hesse (1997) contends that racial governmentality takes place through European notions of humanity through which whiteness as a “source of legislative culture” (p. 97) weaves together nationalist political rationalities with moral directives to regulate the conduct of racialized bodies. The subject of ‘conduct’ is deeply raced and located within civilizing discourses about morality (Goldberg, 1993). Similar to Hesse (2004), Goldberg (2002) argues that the grave consequences of racial government result in the literal management of populations deemed inferior, in which racial states

govern populations identified in explicitly racial terms. The identification legally and administratively of groups as inherently inferior or historically immature, as native or indigenous to colonized spaces is taken invariably to entail – *to require* – their management and oversight. (emphasis in original, p. 110)

Building on Hesse’s concept of white governmentality and Goldberg’s attention to how racial governance requires the management of difference, I assert that diversity initiatives are a tool of regulation to govern bodies of colour.

Drawing on the work of spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre, critical race scholars Razack (2002), Puwar (2004) and Ahmed (2012) argue that there is a mutually constitutive relationship between space and bodies. These scholars work against the ideas that space is neutral, and instead contend that space is deeply organized across material and symbolic constructions of race, class and gender. A major contribution by Lefebvre (1991) is his argument that space is never innocent, but requires an analysis of the ways in which it is perceived, conceived and lived through the body (Puwar, 2004; Razack, 2002). Lefebvre identified three dimensions that shape the production of space: first, space is perceived in and through everyday social practices; space is conceived by planners and architects with particular agendas regarding the intended use of a particular space; and third, space is lived “through its associated images and symbols” (Razack, 2002, p. 9). My analysis of diversity discourses is shaped through Lefebvre’s first site (social practices) and third (symbols and images). The interview data brings into focus specific

technologies that are masked through diversity discourses, such as hiring practices and cultural sensitivity training. Furthermore, my interpretation of the narratives suggests that racialized workers are situated as the symbols and images that reflect commitments to diversity.

Through the construction of these practices and symbols, white governance is concealed and organizations are treated as neutral settings, and therefore, natural in their expression as neutral settings. It is only through the (regulated) presence of racialized bodies that institutional landscapes can be produced as neutral. Racialized bodies are not perceived to be the natural inhabitants of these settings. Linking these arguments back to the focus of the chapter, I suggest that whiteness in social work settings is instituted through constructing organizational space as neutral and natural against bodies that are constituted as sites of difference. Within these contexts, racialized bodies are invited into seemingly neutral spaces. Their entry into organizations is marked by practices of diversity, to address the problem of *their* exclusion/inclusion (Ahmed, 2012). In this sense, the ‘problem of diversity’ is located as a problem belonging to racialized peoples and institutional whiteness lets itself off the hook; the problem is organized around a lack of difference, not in the institutional organization of whiteness (Ahmed, 2012, p. 35).

4.2.1 Disembodied Narratives

In her book titled *Space Invaders*, Nirmal Puwar (2004) offers a very important analysis of the ways in which institutions are raced and gendered. Similar to Goldberg (1993) and Razack (2002), she argues that space is never a fixed entity, and that within modern organizations white people are institutionally situated to represent what she refers to as the “somatic norm,” everyday representations of the liberal, universal subject of modernity. Puwar (2004) builds her arguments around the analysis of the ways in which institutions are organized by means of “*disembodied institutional narratives* [emphasis added]” (p. 57). She suggests that white liberal normativity is constructed through ideas and practices centralizing the universal subject, blank (disembodied) figures who fulfill their responsibilities regardless of their particular positionality for example as raced or gendered subjects. I understand Puwar’s conception of disembodiment to mean the institutional inscription of the universal, free, autonomous, rational subject. She states that this subject is mythical; however, the mythology of the universal subject is anchored in a belief that white subjects are of “pure mind, their bodies are of no consequence” (Puwar, 2004, p. 57).

Furthermore, disembodied institutional narratives require the repression of embodiment, a possibility that, Puwar argues, does exist for certain groups. Building on the symbolism of the national subject, she argues that white men reflect this norm as they are instituted in the national fantasy as leaders who “represent and defend the nation” (Puwar, 2004, p. 6). White women will also signify the somatic norm, but she acknowledges that they too can be situated as ‘space invaders’ based on particular intersections of gender and class. Participant narratives within this research report that white, middle-class women predominantly reflect the somatic norm within social work to symbolically signify the material relationship between morality, whiteness and gender.

Puwar (2004) suggests that the “removal of formal barriers in the last two or three hundred years has meant that legally any(body), male or female, white or ‘black’, can occupy positions of leadership and authority in the body politic” (p. 33). Although legally anybody can enter into various positions within modern organizations, she contends that “subtle means of inclusion/exclusion continue to informally operate through the designation of the somatic norm” (p. 33). Diversity initiatives, anti-oppression efforts and practices towards cultural sensitivity have constructed pathways for racialized subjects to experience membership within the profession (Ahmed, 2012; Gosine & Pon; 2011; Jeffery, 2002; Lewis, 2000; Yee, 2005). However, as the narratives of the research reveal, workers’ participation within social work settings continues to be shaped and regulated by white people who are positioned as the managers of difference (Jeffery, 2005). As Puwar (2004) states:

While all can, in theory, enter, it is certain types of bodies that are tacitly designated as being the ‘natural’ occupants of specific positions. Some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong, while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically and conceptually) circumscribed as being ‘out of place’. Not being the somatic norm, they are space invaders. (p. 8)

Being situated as a ‘space invader’ is *by design* an effect of modernity’s construction of and regulation of difference (Goldberg, 1993; Hesse, 2005). The somatic norm is dependent upon defining itself against “bodies out of place” (Puwar, 2004, p. 49). Bodies outside of the somatic norm (racialized groups, immigrants, women, poor, sexual Others, etc.) come to “highlight the

constitutive boundaries of who can pass as the universal human” (Puwar, 2004, p. 8). Historically, racialized people have been constituted outside of discourses of humanity; however, within modern organizations, they are situated as being “both insiders and outsiders, they occupy a tenuous location. Not being the somatic norm, they do not have an undisputed right to occupy this space. Yet, they are still insiders” (Puwar, 2004, p. 8).

Organizational belonging will be regulated by the degrees to which one can perform the somatic norm, or be perceived to be in close proximity to this norm. Those bodies deemed to be the natural and “rightful occupants” (Schick, 2002, p. 101) of particular spaces require Others to establish a normative identity, but at the same time, the Other is regulated as to not disturb the norm. The normalizing effects of the somatic norm construct many contradictions and instabilities for different bodies that are trying to co-exist. The challenges will be present in and amongst relationships, practices, and various institutional processes within organizations. I will illustrate later in the chapter the ways in which participants describe the tensions that situate them to perform a normative identity, while at the same time being expected to represent diversity.

Historically, racialized workers were permitted to enter the field of social work as ‘experts’ on particular populations or as Native informants (Lewis, 2000; Razack, 2000) in efforts to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse client population. Lewis (2000) identifies two key strategies that were employed in the United Kingdom, “to train white social workers to be ‘ethnically sensitive’; and second, to go out and recruit people from these ‘ethnic’ communities to social work courses and social services departments” (p. 120). Similarly, in Canada, Yee (2005) states that the focus of social work on cultural sensitivity and diversity emerged due to changing demographics in North America, which meant that social service professionals required models to work with ethnically and racially diverse communities. She argues that cultural competency models of practice developed as a response to the increasing anxiety experienced by white workers about ‘how’ to work with ethnically diverse communities (Yee, 2005). Liberal values of equality, respect for diversity and multiculturalism have produced cultural competency models of practice as positive responses to supporting diverse communities; however, as Pon (2009) argues, these practices signify a new form of racism through which Canada’s history of racism and colonialism is forgotten. Cultural competence practices feed into modernist constructions of

difference in which culture is essentialized and the interconnections between power and whiteness are erased (Dean, 2001; Pon, 2009; Sakamoto, 2007).

To this end, many scholars have argued that diversity initiatives lend themselves to techniques of governance (Ahmed, 2007; Jeffery, 2002; Lewis, 2000). Ang and Stratton (1994) suggest that multiculturalism is brought into existence as something that Others bring to the nation (as cited in Ahmed, 2007, p. 235). Ahmed (2007) suggests that within this frame, difference is something that becomes a national property, which the nation can possess, to shape practices of acceptance, to integrate others. Diversity is turned into a commodity. Examples include hiring diversity consultants, organizing committees to address issues of diversity and/or anti-oppression, hiring practices of organizations that illustrate the inclusion of the Other. These strategies, Ahmed argues, become ways in which ‘diversity led’ initiatives can come to represent organizational sites as belonging “for everyone” (2007, p. 243). An underlying assumption within these practices is that all the players involved are gathering around the table on equal footing. This assumption is misleading and conceals the processes through which racialized bodies end up carrying the burden of change within their organizations. Ahmed (2007) refers to this dilemma as the “organization of commitment:”

The distribution of responsibility for diversity, what I am calling the ‘organization of commitment’, is uneven. It involves some individuals and units being ‘given’ this responsibility, in order that others not only do not have to ‘have it’, but can actually give it up. (p. 250)

Both Ahmed (2007) and Smith (2010) critique equity and diversity talk in organizations as sites in which business models and commitments towards social justice are intertwined. Smith (2010) discusses how equity as social justice marks the first wave of movement and action, largely organized by the welfare state and struggles experienced by women and racialized groups. However, the discursive shift has resulted in a second organizing principle, diversity as management (Smith, 2010). Smith (2010) draws on studies in governmentality to trace why equity talk breaks down in organizations, and academia is the specific site of analysis in her work. She claims that neoliberal constructions of individualism reject social collectives and, instead, promote a market-based logic in which people are viewed as forms of commodity. Within these contexts ‘others’ are welcomed into the academy for what *they bring* (Smith, 2010,

p. 46), and diversity is managed in order to ensure the conduct of individuals is in concert with the ideal professional self or, as is the case in my own context, the ideal social worker self (good, helpful, social justice oriented). Smith (2010) explains that neoliberal governmentality produces various techniques of power through which individuals learn how to modify their conduct with organizations. She states that changing one's behavior is partly informed by avoiding institutional punishment, but that it also happens because individuals internalize various practices that are deemed to be integral to their professional role. Therefore, racial subjects come to understand that they are to perform diversity within the schemas adopted by the organizations. The governing technologies of whiteness and diversity produce tensions in which racialized subjects have to perform the ideal type of academic self, or social work self, and at the same time, be expected to embody difference.

Building upon her work on diversity, Ahmed's (2012) recent book, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutionalized Life*, takes a closer look at the ways organizations construct a particular image through diversity initiatives. She argues that diversity is about creating the 'right' image and changing the 'wrong' image (Ahmed, 2012, p. 34). There is an underlying recognition operating that being a 'white' organization is the wrong image, but diversity practices lead to changing the perception and image of whiteness, rather than changing the whiteness in the organization (Ahmed, 2012). Ahmed's analysis examines how the far-reaching effects generated by diversity initiatives simply focus on image rather than changing institutionalized whiteness. She is interested in what 'diversity' as an image generates, and argues that one of the key effects is to reinscribe whiteness through innocence and to turn people of colour who speak about racism (as opposed to diversity) into the problem.

In my research, the narratives provided by participants point to many ruptures within organizational commitments to diversity, often resulting in racialized workers experiencing an organizational backlash from white workers. Racialized workers are constructed as a threat and a problem in settings that now feel overrun by initiatives towards diversity. Using Ahmed's (2012) argument that diversity is designed to secure whiteness, and Puwar's (2004) analysis of how race is organized within and through bodies and space, I will highlight the particular effects that are produced through discourses of diversity.

4.3 Being ‘Included’

Interestingly, when asked about organizational commitments to issues of social justice (a key tenet of social work), the language of diversity often circulated within workers’ narratives. The majority of participants describe working in settings that are dominated by white workers, particularly white women. Identifying the organizations as white spaces is marked in participant reports as having a high number of white bodies within organizations. ‘Diversity’ takes on multiple meanings and the narratives are constitutive of the ways in which difference is organized and whiteness is naturalized. The particular meanings produced within the narratives suggest that diversity is reflected in hiring practices, and special committees designed to oversee the tasks of *reflecting* organizational commitments to diversity. Hiring practices signify that good diversity work is taking place, but for some workers such practices produce critiques about these initiatives being merely a tokenistic change. The narratives also illustrate how ‘diversity speak’ operates to mask practices of racism. In other words, diversity (although the responses by white workers are varied), comes to represent a particular image of inclusivity, in which racism cannot be seen or named (Ahmed, 2012; Jeffery, 2002). I will demonstrate the ways in which inclusivity and exclusion are described by social workers of colour and the particular meanings that these processes produce in their experiences.

4.3.1 *Success and Belonging*

Many participants discuss hiring practices as an indicator of diversity. The responses suggest that diversity constitutes the worker as a subject who has been “accepted.” ‘Acceptance’ comes to mark a particular form of ‘success’ for the worker and, I will add here, for the organization. For example, Kim, a Chinese worker, describes how working in a ‘mainstream’ setting (white setting) has come to indicate a form of success:

In [year] I graduated from [university], and then I started to work in a mental health agency. I started full time as a case manager. That was my...I don’t know how to say it... it is a very specific milestone for me. For me, I was very proud. I tell all my friends. Whenever people ask me, I find myself... I was so proud. At that agency I am the only person who has colour. *Everybody, all the staff are white, and all my clients are white. On one hand I describe this so called fact, and on the other hand I am showing off saying finally as an immigrant I get into an agency like this and use English, and they recognize*

me and I can serve, you know, just like...Before I could only work part time, one day, and you know, as an immigrant, right.

Kim's apprehension about her success is locked into the governing technologies of whiteness, in which racialized subjects' success or failure is measured through discourses of 'belonging;' the organization comes to symbolize not only a site of belonging within social work, but a rite of passage into the nation itself. There are multiple ways in which the Canadian job market excludes new immigrants from full participation in the job force. Kim's sense of pride is structured through beliefs that her success (both materially and symbolically) relies upon mainstream organizational recognition and 'acceptance' of her 'foreignness' on one hand, and approval based on her 'ability' to perform a normative identity (Schick, 2002) on the other.

Similarly, Kumar, a South Asian man who identifies as a new immigrant, describes in great detail the difficulties he experienced when he and his family first moved to Canada. He was a trained social worker in India, and struggled to have his credentials recognized in Canada. He shares the barriers that he experienced, working in a restaurant and not being able to work as a social worker due to not having any 'Canadian' experience. Upon completing the certificate program at Ryerson University for Internationally Trained Social Workers, he was able to find work in Toronto. His first job was within a hospital setting, in which he was the only person of colour. He describes many examples of exclusion and discrimination, which subsequently led to his termination from the organization. However, following this experience, he began working in a community-based organization in which there is a great deal of 'diversity' and, for him, this has led to a more positive experience:

The organization where I am currently working is very diversified in means like staff ways. We have people from all over the world. That is one place I never found any discrimination from the staff. I always felt that I am more respected than I expected and most of the staff they listen to you. I found a huge difference among the professionals. People that are highly qualified, they are the one who discriminate against you. I have experienced that one. But when you work in any community-based organizations, most of the staff's qualifications are social service diploma or BA in psychology. They are not the typical health care professional like an MSW or BSW or OT or Nurse. So there is more acceptance, and I never felt any discrimination. I felt more respect than what I

expected. I got more than what I expected, but again when you look at monetary wise, salary wise and benefit wise it may be like a half of what you may be getting in a hospital or those kinds organizations.

Kumar's narrative points to a few different constructions of diversity. First, diversity comes to mean the presence of many different cultures and communities. But, it also reflects diversity with respect to professional status. The community-based organization is highlighted against the bureaucratic organization of the hospital setting where he was previously employed. Discrimination, according to Kumar's account, is linked with professional status and expertise, as opposed to 'racism.' He never explicitly names race or racism within his narrative, but instead frames his story around the language of discrimination based in discourses of professional standing and status. The separation between race and class points to the ways in which professional status and rank are situated as markers of success, while race remains concealed within constructions of professional status. Diversity comes to mean the representation of bodies of difference, according to race and culture in Kumar's current workplace setting. Therefore, his current workplace setting is meeting the requirements of diversity through the hiring of members of many diverse communities. This understanding of diversity reinscribes Ahmed's (2012) cautionary note about how diversity initiatives come to mean the presence of 'different' bodies, rather than a critical examination of the institutional arrangements that institute whiteness.

Kumar's previous workplace scrutinized his 'professional' practice, but he never refers to the organization's practices as racism, which suggests that his understanding of the operation of racism is informed by more overt examples. He suggests that the challenges were produced by a particular professional culture. For example, the only moment within the interview in which he names racism is when he describes the few incidents in which clients did not want him as their worker due to his 'accent.' Discrimination based on his 'accent' points to a more outward and overt understanding of racism, but scrutinizing his professional practice is viewed as taking place outside of the operations of race. In his previous workplace, Kumar describes encounters in which he experienced terrible forms of exclusion and surveillance. Despite his efforts to ensure he followed proper workplace protocols, Kumar's work was strictly regulated by his manager who closely monitored his clinical work case notes and participation in team meetings. As Puwar (2004) observes, subjects who fall outside of the somatic norm are often 'infantilized,' and there is a reluctance on the part of organizations to "accept racialised bodies as being capable" (p. 60).

Drawing on Goldberg's (1998) concept of Super/Vision, by which he describes the apparatus of micro-disciplines by police within racialized neighborhoods, Puwar (2004) comments that racialized men and women are constantly under the spotlight, seen as a potential hazard, with any mistake noticed and amplified (p. 61). Questioning professional boundaries, examining case files, repeatedly monitoring his practices with clients, all of these technologies served as devices to enforce a micro-disciplinary operation of power, in which 'evidence' was collected to 'mark' him as 'less than.'

As his three month probation was approaching, his case notes were closely examined and a few mistakes were highlighted, leading to his termination. Furthermore, his work 'experience' in Canada was questioned, with the charge that he did not have enough Canadian experience. For Kumar, the intense focus on his professional status and practice situated the discrimination he experienced outside of his particular understandings of racism. I will suggest that the hyper-surveillance of his professional skills and status works to conceal the operation of racialized governance (Hesse, 1997) and the ways in which race and class are interlocked in the operation of domination. These dynamics are intensified in the neoliberal workplace in which race is made invisible through practices that focus on the individual skills and merits of subjects (Goldberg, 2009). Although both Kim and Kumar crossed a particular threshold and obtained employment within their profession, their experiences are not straightforward, and their stories of 'success' are never constituted outside of relations of dominance. Both workers' narratives cannot be understood outside of their experiences as immigrants, who endure increased barriers to having foreign credentials recognized, and as a result, experience a different set of racist encounters (Tran & Yee, 2006).

4.3.2 Being a Checkmark

For many social workers of colour, practices of diversity were tokenistic. This point is expressed by Susan:

Sometimes I feel like you go in and I am just a good checkmark. Actually I always end up being a good couple of checkmarks. I have some severe disabilities, so I am always a good disability checkmark too. So I am both the Aboriginal and disability check mark. It's a good one.

Taxonomies of difference (Alcoff, 2002) are redeployed through diversity initiatives in which the categorization of ‘difference’ creates an illusion of inclusion. However, the classification of difference also operates to govern subjects, and difference itself is defined by institutions. As Ahmed (2012) puts it, “we are the ticks in their boxes” (p. 153). However, this is not a process in which racialized subjects simply adhere to these practices. The participants of this study communicate suspicion of, worries about and resistance to the ways in which race is organized amongst institutions. For example, Sim describes some suspicion surrounding the ways in which particular bodies are hired and come to represent the embodiment of certain skills:

I think you have to get the person that can fit to that population, and I mean even now even here sometimes I hear about people who are being hired and what you hear about them is that they speak this many languages as if that is the only reason that they are being hired. You don’t know what the skill level is. In some ways social work is almost like one of the few professions where I can be a woman of colour and that it is ok that they want someone with diversity, more so than with many other professions. There is also this thing of then are you just recruiting these people for the diversity aspect and you are kind of tainted with that a little bit. I think that is probably for a lot of other professions as well.

Particular skill sets form a specific relationship, in which certain abilities are required for diversity initiatives over others. I suggest here that Sim’s comments point to Smith’s (2011) arguments that diversity is a type of commodity in which particular skills (cultural competency and language interpretation) operate to assist the state in managing difference, in which difference itself becomes a property of the nation. Bodies of colour are literally situated as the tools that meet the needs of diversity in which their skills serve to create specific types of outcomes (Ahmed, 2012).

Sim’s narrative also constructs an assumption about the social work profession itself, as a site in which commitments to diversity are normalized, and where she can freely be a ‘woman of colour’. Her use of this term points to discourses that arise out of more critical schools of thinking such as anti-racist movements, to signal a politicized identity position. The assumption operates to construct social work as a site of social justice (as compared to other professions), in which her subject-position as a racialized woman will be recognized. However, alongside the

assumption of acceptance, contradictions circulate within her account of her suspicions about the motives for hiring racialized subjects.

Janet, a black woman, suggests that diversity initiatives do not promote inclusion:

People think you are just there because we needed somebody black on the team, you know. Like, we needed to show that we are being diverse. There is just something about diversity practice that isn't working. I think that the way in which diversity practices are set, you just have to have this 'other' that you need to be able to work with. It doesn't lend itself to inclusion or acceptance of difference within the scope of inclusion, right. In my mind it is just kind of another 'other' in practice, making people feel comfortable in the work they are doing with people that are different than them. I am not sure what could be done around that.

Janet is describing the limits to diversity and the centering of white subjects, who require various 'Others' to affirm their knowledge and comfort around working across differences. Diversity scripts reinscribe whiteness through technologies to construct institutions as sites of tolerance and equality. If tolerance and equality are the values or images an organization wishes to construct, then only some things come into view while others will fade into the background (Ahmed, 2012). For example, as the participant accounts report, organizations may create an image of being 'less white' by hiring more bodies of difference, but they do not do anything to shift the ways in which white dominance is instituted and organized to secure innocence and regulate difference.

4.3.3 Difference or Sameness?

The ways in which racialized workers must perform their duties are already set up against the backdrop of white organizations in which people of colour, although included, are required to perform dominant social scripts, shaped through whiteness. This point is exemplified in David's narrative in which he speaks at length about the hiring practices within the school board system, and he contends that institutions hire individuals who are "just extensions of Anglo-Saxon culture:"

She may be non-white, but she is raised in Anglo-Canadian culture. Take the skin away, and look at what that person has to offer. It is what all the rest have to offer. Do you

understand? How has she enriched this? Not just to look at. How has she enriched our pool of expertise? Then the question is would you hire me if I had a strong typical Indian accent with my qualifications and my background. I think those people fall short of the mark because of that presentation, or they might not know how to present at an interview.

David's comment, like other workers, addresses the significant gaps in the demographics between white staff and racialized students. David's construction of diversity suggests that he would like to see more workers hired who reflect the particular cultural identities of the children within the system. The organization's lack of 'diversity' is explained away by certain discourses that construct what it means to be qualified to perform the professional role. Here, skills or qualifications take on a different meaning from the ways in which they are discussed in Sim and Janet's narratives. The school board simply cannot find enough 'qualified' workers to meet the needs of the organization. However, his narrative suggests that the particular qualifications being sought by the institution reflect the dominant values of the organization, which in turn reflect the values of the dominant culture. In other words, whiteness goes beyond phenotype to include representations of workers who can perform the scripts of the dominant culture. His account suggests that 'inclusion' is based on how close a person can be positioned to the centre, and the further one is from the centre, the fewer possibilities exist for 'inclusion.' However, the narratives within this thesis call into question whether or not racialized bodies can ever fully occupy the centre, as a certain degree of 'difference' is required for whiteness to affirm itself against sites of difference.

Goldberg (2009) describes this dynamic as one arising out of the racial foundations of the state in which difference is treated as being 'separate, but equal at the same time.' Equality depends upon performing dominant notions of civility and humanity (Goldberg, 1993), and separation will manifest through practices to regulate difference within the state. 'Being' different continues to be dictated through the regulatory effects of white governance (Hesse, 1997), in which foreignness is only recognized through the parameters set by the state (i.e. as cultural experts). Racialized workers must perform dominant professional scripts and, at same time, they are required to represent an image of diversity. This is reflected in Charlise's comments:

HB-You said that some of your colleagues of colour wear white masks. Can you say some more about this?

I think because, one in particular, I think because she feels...she is an opportunist and latches on to anyone that she thinks have power. Here the ones that have power are white, so she will not...she is not real, and it comes through on a lot of levels. A lot of us know that she is not real in terms of her presentation. It is too bad. She has kind of lost herself in that trying to kind of find herself. So there are many people of colour who completely deny who they are and feel that it doesn't matter.

When entering the 'white' world, some racialized bodies are constructed in her speech as 'lost' and consequently, not 'real.' What does being 'real' mean against a normalizing whiteness? Her narrative suggests that anyone can put on a white mask, as a way to attain social power. Within her construction, there is an understanding that has been generated about how one must perform success or be able to pass as a normative identity. Her account suggests that racialized subjects are continually negotiating their identities within schemas that situate them as subjects who are either performing as non-threatening others or as those who resist whiteness (Alcoff, 2002). In particular, her discourse suggests that people of colour that perform whiteness do so as a conscious act to get ahead and are consequently 'less real.' For Charlise, identity takes on an 'authentic' quality which divorces it from the social conditions and systems through which subject-positions take form (Davies, 2000). Therefore, both David and Charlise reflect an essentializing quality (in relationship to and in tension with whiteness) to the ways in which whiteness is constructed in their narratives, alongside their descriptions about what it means to be non-white. Alcoff (2002), drawing on Fanon (1967), argues that these positions are already set up by the white, liberal world, in which racialized bodies cannot fully occupy whiteness *or* a non-white subjectivity.

I am reminded of Bhabha's (1987) conceptualization of 'colonial mimicry' in which he argues that mimicry is the "desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite" (p. 318). The desire for sameness is an ambivalent site for subjects, as racialized bodies, although required to perform as a 'reformed' civilized subject, can never fully occupy the centre. This is a tactic of white dominance. Essentializing discourses of modernity produce fixed identity positions, in which the discourses of 'humanity' (whiteness) are constituted alongside essentializing discourses of 'Otherness,' and both David and Charlise's accounts point to the ways in which racialized subjects are caught between performing sameness (whiteness) and difference (Otherness). Bhabha (1987) argues that processes of mimicry operate

as representations of diversity, through which “difference is itself a process of disavowal” (p. 318). He argues that mimicry must produce its slippage to regulate through difference:

Mimicry is, thus, the sign of a double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other as it visualizes power. Mimicry is also a sign of the inappropriate, however, a difference or recalcitrance which coheres the dominant strategic function of colonial power, intensifies surveillance, and poses an immanent threat to both “normalized” knowledges and disciplinary powers. (p. 318)

I understand Bhabha to be saying that the very processes through which colonialists exercise power (practices of differentiation) are the same dynamics operating in the production of ‘mimic men,’ who in turn must be controlled and regulated to secure liberal normativity; in other words, racialized subjects are required to be the same and different all at once. Their entry into full citizenship is never available, because their status as Other is never severed from the equation. Social workers of colour are placed within these ambivalent sites of identity-making in multiple ways within their roles in social work. Performing whiteness while at the same time representing diversity poses many complications for social workers of colour, and the effects are far reaching in terms of their professional lives.

4.3.4 I Am Diversity

Many of the social workers describe situations in which they come to reflect and embody the organization’s commitment to diversity. Their narratives point to the ways in which their bodies become the sites in which diversity “reifies difference as something that exists ‘in’ the bodies of others” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 235). For example, Jas, a South Asian social worker in the area of probation and corrections, describes her role as a ‘set up’ in which she experiences herself as having to bear the brunt of responsibility towards diversity initiatives, alongside the backlash from white subjects. Similarly, Ishar shares a story about her early encounters in the field, when she was completing her field practicum for her Bachelor in Social Work degree (practicum is a practice course in which students are placed in social work settings in the field to gain work experience). Upon joining the organization, she was positioned early on as the coordinator of the anti-discrimination committee. Although she was working within the centre in her capacity as a student, she describes how her role dramatically shifted over the duration of the time she was at the centre:

I started thinking about these issues... when I was doing a field placement at a community health centre in Toronto. I was positioned in the team to coordinate the anti-oppression committee or the antidiscrimination committee. Other skills that I had were slowly eroding away, and more and more of my work at the centre became about addressing diversity.

Racialized workers who experienced racism within the organization were being ‘problematized’ by upper management, and often these workers were turning to Ishar for support and guidance (as she was coordinating the anti-discrimination committee). Her narrative suggests that she was caught in the crossfire amongst these competing sites of injustice. Other skills that she recognized as important to her original responsibilities (counselling, group work, advocacy) were not being fully utilized; instead, her position as a person of colour was marketed to assist the organization’s diversity initiatives and commitments to inclusivity. Within her account, we see the ways in which workers of colour come to reflect a particular ‘expertise’ around issues of diversity, in which ‘race’ comes to mean ‘diversity.’ Ishar’s skin colour represents an image of ‘diversity’ (Ahmed, 2012) which quickly translates into a particular ‘skill type,’ a commodity for the organization to utilize. In other narratives, ministry mandated directives dictate how organizations implement various policies and practices towards addressing diversity, as described by Jas who works as a probation officer:

I feel as though we’re constantly... because there’s a big push for diversity, so when this big push for diversity comes on and there are different committees that are happening and different conferences are going on, I feel like me and this other individual are the only ones that participate. Again, it feels like we’re the token individuals. I think that people, because of this big push for diversity and because we have a workplace discrimination and harassment policy in place, it’s very active. They’re really pushing it. So if there’s any inappropriate situations or inappropriate comments, then we have this advisory committee. I think now that the ministry is pushing this, people are now very careful as to what they say around us.

In this example, Jas describes the ways in which she and her other colleague (also a woman of colour) are positioned as subjects to whom issues of race and diversity belong. In addition, the ‘organization of commitment’ (Ahmed, 2007) is unevenly distributed, as her account implies that

she and her colleagues of colour are the staff that primarily takes initiative to join various committees. Similar to Ishar's account, Jas's visibility is heightened to situate both workers as subjects who embody difference. Furthermore, the ways in which diversity comes to be situated 'in' the bodies of Others can position racialized workers to be on the receiving end of racism (Goldberg, 1993). As Jas suggests, the discrimination and harassment policy (mandated by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services) in her workplace, serves as a technology of surveillance in which workers are careful about what they may say or do (for fear of reprisal). However, white subjects experience anxieties about potential threats not only to the ways in which they inhabit the space, but also how they try to remain innocent within it. Because Jas comes to represent the embodiment of diversity, she will also be the recipient of the backlash being generated by co-workers, as Jas describes:

I had ordered posters for black history month for the office, and it was a secretary...I guess when they had arrived because there's this big push for diversity in the ministry, so when the posters had arrived the woman said to another woman that was sitting there, 'oh you know, when are we going to get posters for white history month?'

HB - Really?

I took this to my manager and she was spoken to, but that's it. Nothing happened to her beyond that.

HB – Do you know what the manager said to her?

That it was inappropriate. There was a meeting, I think, with her and the regional director, and nothing... nothing happened to her. She was spoken to and that was it.

HB – What would you liked to have seen happen?

Suspended. Directed to take some kind of course, but I don't think that just talking to her and just kind of dismissing it and tossing it under the carpet and just hoping that it would go away. It's not. I feel as though, again, I am set up because she is very careful as to what she says around me now because I've been deemed as, oh you can't say too much around her because she will rat you out, as they say.

A number of complicated discourses arise from her narrative. How diversity is expressed (posters for black history month) poses a ‘threat’ to the whiteness of the space, and white subjects, such as the receptionist, experience such displays of ‘integration’ as a dismissal of her identity as the norm. The arrival of Others, who do not fit the somatic norm, disrupts the established understandings of the space (Puwar, 2004). Puwar (2004) contends, as does Ahmed (2007), that although diversity has come to mean the inclusion of different bodies, racialized subjects are constituted in and through categories of difference as opposed to belonging to more general forms of humanity (Puwar, 2004). Therefore, displays of difference, such as black history month posters (diversity as commodity), reinscribe Otherness while at the same time transgressing the boundaries of what is considered the norm. Racialized subjects are caught within the crossfires that exist through such processes. As Jas’s narrative describes, other staff relate to her through their avoidance of her, or by situating her as a worker to be feared and rejected all at once. Jas and others are locked into a duality in which they carry the responsibility, the ‘organizational commitment’ (Ahmed, 2007), for how diversity will be represented within the workplace. At the same time, their bodies become the sites upon which white subjects express their anxieties and fears about losing their sense of place. Jas, as a coordinator of diversity protocols, represents the site in which “institutionally generated rationalities of self-governance” (Smith, 2010, p. 44) take place. Staff members are anxious and afraid to say anything in her presence; consequently, she literally becomes the embodiment of particular forms of surveillance.

4.3.5 We Are Not Racists!

Diversity initiatives can also serve to make invisible the operation of racist practices within institutions (Ahmed, 2012; Goldberg, 2009). The expectation to perform sameness and at the same time be a reflection of diversity creates inevitable challenges for workers of colour, as the landmines that are strewn across the field of organizational belonging and professional practice are many. However, within the narratives, a challenging dynamic is present in which initiatives to support diversity both threaten whiteness and operate to secure its innocence. Any movement or practice that steps outside of the parameters in which civility is constructed puts workers at risk of reprisal. Although scholars such as Bhabha (1987) identify sites of ambivalence in which the dichotomous operation of colonialism is disrupted, the consequent material effects cannot be ignored. Colonial mimicry entails performing as a ‘partial presence’ (Bhabha, 1987, p. 321) in

which sameness and otherness serve to objectify subjects. Although processes of objectification are inescapable, social workers of colour engage in practices to counter the effects of racism, but these practices are never outside of relations of dominance.

In his role as a social worker within the public school system, David explains that he is often asked to provide multicultural training for principals and teachers. During one of his presentations, he shares that he was invited by one of the principals to speak about multiculturalism in Canada, and during the workshop he steered the discussion towards an examination of the close connection between cultural work and racism. The general response to the workshop was very positive; but eventually the principal interrupted the workshop by charging David with inducing feelings of white guilt:

I was talking about transcultural work and how people view the world and what they (students) bring to you when they sit in front of you as a student with a book in front of them. They are not all just a student with a book in front of them. Behind this book is a student, and this is his world. So they we're all going on that way, and he eventually stood up and said "*This has to stop. This is precisely what leads to white guilt, and white guilt will get us nowhere.*"

First, it is important to note that David was the one invited to run the workshop on diversity for his teacher colleagues. Diversity and multiculturalism allow the institution to feel good about its practices of inclusivity, through which David is expected to perform a particular role and exercise certain skills to reflect this commitment. However, naming racism invites a threat to the board's investments in being seen as fulfilling their commitments to inclusivity. The injury that is described in the moment is connected to feelings of 'white guilt' and David, as the person who speaks about racism, is produced as the cause of the injury (Ahmed, 2012). David stepped outside of the boundaries in which diversity is permitted to be discussed. Being a body that provides the institution with diversity requires that the education about difference remains about how teachers can know the Other. However, naming racism turns the gaze towards whiteness. Revealing the practices of racism and their anchorage in whiteness is not a part of the diversity agenda of many organizations. Racism is heard as an injury that white people experience, and that the institution itself also experiences as a wound (Ahmed, 2012). David highlights the double bind that operates for him in his role as a facilitator of diversity initiatives: he is at once

the site in which accusations of racism are punished, while at the same time he is required to be the ‘expert’ that the institution consults about matters of difference:

But I’ll tell you how that translates. I’ll tell you what I am conscious about. These sorts of reflections get us in touch with our vulnerable moments. I am conscious about my professional standing compensating for my outspoken racial belittlement. ... I am a person to go to about this dilemma that *we* are having. The “*we*” that are having the dilemma are mainstream white folk. I am this copper coloured Englishman. I am that person, right. But I am MSW, RSW, right? Got me? So what if I am not? What if I am a taxi driver? What if I am a truck driver and the parent of this child in this room right now?

His professional status does not shield him from experiencing racism, but his construction of the tensions between his professional and class-based status as an expert and Other illustrate the varying degrees of privilege and status that can organize the expression of racism differently. Class is the site of difference that David draws upon to illustrate this difference, but I would also add gender to these processes. David’s narrative alludes to the ways in which his performance as a “coppered coloured Englishman” or, in Bhabha’s conceptualization, as a mimic man, creates a constrained possibility for him to counter the racist violence differently than a person of colour (who is also gendered, poor, etc.) who does not hold the same professional standing and exists even further away from the centre (whiteness).

In another, perhaps more volatile example, we can see the interlocking dimensions of both race and gender in Jen’s narrative, a Filipino worker who shares how the organization where she previously worked had undergone multiple changes to diversify the institution. Unfortunately, she and another colleague of colour experienced terrible backlash from the community when they filed a racial harassment complaint against the chair of the organization:

going through the trenches, that is what it felt like to change that organization. We probably lost a huge number of our membership. We certainly lost most people on the boards of directors, but to change our organizational values, to change the way that the programs look, to change the look of the people who come into our programs, just, you know, it was horrendous, it was horrendous. I have heard that I was the first person of colour ever hired there 6 years ago in Toronto, and the first time I met (names chair of the

organization), he said something that was incredibly racist, incredibly racist, and I went to the ED (Executive Director), and the ED who just really comes from a great place, comes from, has a great analysis, just kind of said ‘I think you misunderstood him.’

When the second woman of colour was hired, a black woman, and the first time she met the chair of the board of directors he was also horrifically racist to her. Then the two of us got together, and we laid a charge of racial harassment against him, and that was the start, I mean the management was doing it but they were and are white women and they are doing amazing, amazing, amazing work. They are doing that work from their experience. Now you have two women of colour coming into the brand new organization, and both of them have had this happen. The fallout from that, I can’t even tell you. It was horrific. I mean, we had like, volunteers would call into our lines and we would pick up the phone and people would call us bitch, people would call us like, oh my God, yeah.

HB - people from the general public would call?

Um, volunteers.

HB - Volunteers...

Who ended up leaving in protest. I mean, the chair, the matter was never resolved, so the chair just left and said I’m done. And when he left, I would guess, I don’t know the number, but I would guess half the board members got up and left with him, and when he got up and left so did half of the, if not more, of the volunteers. And these were volunteers who had given up so much of their lives to this organization. Volunteers who had been there for like two decades...

HB - Why do you think half the board members and so many volunteers fled the organization? What was your understanding of this?

Well, I think they were angry. It was a nice, safe, comfortable container. It was kind of like in an almost like a gated community in some way, you know when the new people came in and messed it all up and it was easy for me to be able to lock myself up and the other person into a particular container, uh, they just, they just didn’t want to be part of

that anymore. They didn't want to be a part of, I think it was just very threatening to see the organization was changing, how values were changing.

We see a number of different dilemmas throughout her narrative. First, racism is heard by the institution as an accusation, an injury that affects its reputation (Ahmed, 2012). Diversity initiatives are literally defined through the organization's practice to hire two women of colour; however, the charge of racism is experienced as a literal threat to the organization's investments in being perceived as sites of goodness. Jen describes the experience as 'going through the trenches,' images and symbols of going to war, to the battle lines. She and her colleague once again come to represent the literal embodiment of diversity, particularly during a moment in which she questioned the organization's commitment to the value of the diversity, and the chair of the board replied by saying "I can assure you that we are committed to the value of diversity. We hired you didn't we?"

The chair's comment attempts to secure his sense of self as a leader who is open to difference, and hiring people of colour serves as *evidence* of this commitment. Conversely, what is implied in his comment is that Jen ought to be grateful, as her literal presence within the setting is evidence enough of the organization's obligation to liberal values of equality, tolerance and diversity. I will argue here that challenging the chair was received as a great insult, a betrayal of the spirit of acceptance shown by the board of directors, of their sense of self as good subjects. The white executive director is implicated within this dynamic as well, as she reassures Jen that the chair of the board is a good person and that Jen likely 'misunderstood' his comments. It is not clear if white women managers in the organization are also positioned through some vulnerability along the lines of gender in relationship to the power and status of a white, male chair. Jen reassures us of their 'amazing work,' but also describes the slippage through which the chair's behavior is not only dismissed by the executive director, but Jen's perception or experience of the encounter is reformulated as a misunderstanding. White women managers are not outside of the practices that collude with racialized violence, as Fellows and Razack (1998) argue:

When dominance is contested, dominant group members experience an engulfment, a literal loss of self that can feel extremely destabilizing. It is this, among other things that we see exhibited in the race to innocence when an intellectual understanding of how

women oppress women competes with an emotional attachment to innocence. What cannot be admitted, what is, in other words, repressed but always feared, is the permeability of the boundaries, the fact that they are never securely in place and have to be made and remade until the difference between the self and the subordinate Other appears natural and thus fixed. (p. 343)

Fellows and Razack (1998) offer an important framework here: in Jen's narrative, the race to innocence is put into motion by white women managers, as well as by the chair. The executive director, situated as the overseer of the organization, protects it by invoking doubt in the participant's concern. Puwar (2004) argues that white organizations circulate doubt as a strategy towards surveillance. Ahmed (2012) states that the minimization of racism is exercised through a "fantasy of paranoia (it doesn't really exist)" (p. 156). It is not until another woman of colour is hired, who encounters a similar experience, that the reputation of the organization is ruptured.

The threat to the organization is displayed through the mass exodus of members of the organization in support of the chair. Jen is turned into the problem, and constructed as a worker who does not adequately display her gratitude to the organization for all of their sacrifices and commitments towards addressing diversity. Her charge of racism literally breaks the 'comfortable container' of whiteness. The 'permeability of the boundaries' (Fellows & Razack, 1998) is revealed, and the backlash from the organization goes beyond the internal culture of the institution and spreads out into the community of volunteers who verbally assault Jen and her colleague. These are volunteers who have given their time and energy to the organization for over twenty years – the uproar is not only about Jen and her co-worker but, I argue here, rather the trespass is experienced as a threat to the social body.

Hage (2000) argues that nationalist practices are designed to mark white bodies as "spatially dominant, as masters of a territory in which they have managerial rights over racialized/ethnicized groups" (p. 48). In this sense, the participants' formal racial harassment complaint disturbs the space in which white bodies exercise dominance through their roles as managers or leaders of space. The organization becomes symbolic of the nation, national citizenry and belonging, and the two racialized workers to whom they opened their doors are viewed as disturbing the sanctity and innocence of their (white people's) space. At the close of the interview, Jen informed me that she left the profession of social work permanently following

this experience. She is currently employed with the government, in a completely unrelated field. She states,

I've just lost some kind of faith in humanity, and I was just saying this to my supervisor the other day. I said, you know, in this work that I'm doing with government, it's just not me. It's not me, and I know it's not me. I hope that somehow I can find my way back, but it won't be any time in the near future because I think I'm just so, I'm just fed up with it really.

To experience belonging, even partially, requires that the racial subject perform as non-threatening Other or resist (Alcoff, 2002). Jen chose to resist and, consequently, her actions were interpreted and experienced as a literal transgression to the borders of civility (Razack, 1999).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the ways in which diversity practices are a tool of governance in modern organizations used both to contain racialized others and to reinscribe institutional whiteness. This chapter describes the various contours of diversity from the perspective of racialized workers. A key theme arising from the narratives is that social workers of colour are positioned to be the literal embodiment of diversity, and race is situated as the visible marker of diversity in many of the organizations. This is an understanding that is utilized by both white and racialized subjects. Diversity projects are designed to change an institutional image into one that is more inclusive of diversity, but the focus is not on changing institutional whiteness (Ahmed, 2012). In the majority of social work sites of practice, diversity has come to be defined through the inclusion of people who look different. However, a double bind is evident within the narratives, as social workers of colour are expected to 'perform' diversity through practices dictated by their organizations, e.g. as cultural experts, language interpreters or facilitators of diversity projects. At the same time, the expectation to perform diversity exists alongside the expectation to perform whiteness. These two terrains converge in multiple ways throughout the narratives, but the most challenging moments are those in which social workers of colour step outside of the established rules of diversity engagement, and instead speak about racism. These narratives clearly illustrate the particular threat that is experienced by white organizations, a

threat to their reputation as inclusive, welcoming and, ultimately, good (Ahmed, 2012; Heron, 1999).

My central contention in this chapter is that the participants' particular responses are shaped through how they are made into racialized subjects in the larger nation-state, but also within the context of social work, in which their racialized subject-position is shaped through diversity discourses. They are caught in practices that situate them as 'mimic men' (Bhabha, 1987), in which white subjects rely on the ways in which the participants are different, and at the same time experience a threat as a result of the difference. As I have argued throughout this thesis, the narratives are ruptures in and of themselves to the dominant discourses shaping the sites in which social work practice takes place, in addition to scripts that define social work. In the next chapter, I will continue to build on arguments presented in this chapter; however, I will shift my focus to moments of direct practice with client populations. The dilemmas and challenges presented through the narratives shed light on the ways in which social work values fall apart in the face of racist expression, at the same time that they are reinscribed through racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009).

Chapter Five

Racist Encounters: When Social Work Ideals Converge with Neoliberalism

...is it ever possible for the racialized subject to be the moral liberal subject? The answer is only when race is ignored which is socially not possible. (Jeffery, 2002)

There's an overall culture where you don't talk about race, it doesn't really create an environment where you're going to take that risk and talk about it. And I have to say that I used to, in the back of my head have this fear that if I... and I don't know how legitimate the fear was, but this is how I felt that if I talked about my client who's racist and I found it difficult to work with her, would that mean... would that somehow be used against me in terms of my professional abilities and skills. (Lila, social worker)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter revealed that social workers of colour experience their work places as racist environments. Describing themselves as the embodiment of the institutional commitment to diversity, they relate racist incidents from co-workers, institutional indifference and even hostility. In such fraught environments, it is a small wonder that social workers of colour ask themselves whether or not they can be good social workers. The concerns related to being seen as a good social worker are informed by another more pertinent question asked by Jeffery (2002), “is it ever possible for the racialized subject to be the moral liberal subject? The answer is *only when race is ignored* [emphasis added] which is socially not possible” (p.188). Jeffery’s (2002) pointed question and answer underlie the tensions and dilemmas presented in this chapter, and the thesis as a whole. I build upon this question to ask, what are the discursive practices that allow racism to be minimized, ignored or completely silenced in modern organizations?

Furthermore, when racialized violence is not challenged, what are the effects on social workers of colour and what do these processes secure? I explore these questions by examining the relationship between the ideals of social work (presented in Chapter Three) and racial neoliberalism.

I will show how the ideals of social work conspire with institutional neoliberalism to secure whiteness and perpetuate racial injuries. Throughout the different periods of social work's development (colonial civilizing missions, state formation, social welfare and presently neoliberalism), white dominance has remained intact through civilizing discourses shaping liberal normativity (Goldberg, 1993). The current neoliberal climate espouses an intensified individualism, with a specific slant towards developing marketable skills and competences (Rossiter & Heron, 2011). I examine how social work's critical practices (empathy, client-centred practice and critical reflexivity) function as technologies of self-governance to reflect worker competencies and skills, in addition to reinscribing innocence to the social worker identity. The interplay between social work's ideals and neoliberalism allow for an analysis that reveals how colonial practices remain at the centre of social work knowledge production and the organization of neoliberalism to secure whiteness.

The interconnections between the ideals of social work and neoliberalism are not always obvious, but I argue that their relationship to each other emerges through practices of racism. The key method through which this interplay can be understood is through a tracing of the colour-line (Alcoff, 2002) that runs through their convergence. This analysis will illustrate how white dominance and its colonial legacy continue to "Live up to the ideals that secure its identity" (Ahmed as cited in Schick, 2001, p. 11). My analysis builds upon the previous two chapters, and in this chapter I focus on micro sites of practice and micro-expressions of racism (Goldberg, 2009). My intention is to shed light on a different set of racially organized dilemmas in social work. I present narratives from racialized workers describing incidents of racism in everyday practice encounters with clients. Social workers describe various forms of injury as a result of the racial trespasses taking place in everyday encounters with clients and co-workers. The breakdowns between clients and co-workers communicate a complicated story in which their commitments to social work values are momentarily suspended and compromised. Workers describe situations in which their practices spiral into crisis and produce grave doubts about their

commitments to the ideals of the profession and their ability to perform as good and critical social workers.

Worker narratives illustrate how racist encounters are typically separated from practice discussions and treated as individual incidents or as ‘personal’ issues experienced by the social worker. In the rare situations when racism is recognized by the organization, pathologizing discourses shape how both the client and the worker are perceived, namely how they are situated as problems for the organization. A complex paradox is revealed through participants’ accounts about their practice: the discursive arrangements within social work that construct an image of the profession as a site of goodness and social justice (as discussed in Chapter Three) are the very discourses that disavow practices of racism. When violations occur and practices collapse, hegemonic scripts within the profession conspire with neoliberalism to limit the possibility of addressing the multi-directional expressions of power and subject-formation. These include the worker as professional (helper), the client as a subject in need, and the cross-sections of race, gender, and class. All of these discursive and material arrangements struggle for recognition within work places that are organized by an intense focus on individual skills and competencies (Rose, 1999). In this chapter, I argue that naming these encounters as sites of racism is destabilizing to a social work profession that imagines itself to be a site of social justice.

I begin the chapter by examining the ways in which race and racism are foundational features of the present neoliberal climate (Davis, 2007; H. Giroux, 2008; Goldberg, 2009). Theoretically, I situate the analysis using Goldberg’s (2009) conceptualization of racial neoliberalism. Goldberg argues that modernity and the neoliberal operations of the state are founded through race and the individualization of racial violence. Goldberg’s conceptualization of racial neoliberalism lays the foundation upon which insights are gained about the ways in which racism remains unchallenged and privatized within social work institutions. Second, I present data from the interviews describing racist encounters. By utilizing Goldberg’s concept of born again racism, I am able to take a closer look at the micro-processes that shape race-based micro-aggressions. Racial neoliberalism is evidenced throughout the participant narratives through a focus on individual skills and competency, and an intense regulation of the self through the use of critical social work discourses. Finally, I end the chapter by sharing various strategies that workers employ to negotiate the effects of racism. I do not offer ‘fix it’ strategies in this section, but instead the

narratives demonstrate how social workers of colour are negotiating the terrain of racial governance in social work practice settings.

5.2 Racial Neoliberalism

5.2.1 Social Work and the Effects of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism is informed by the privatization and individualization of the ‘social fabric’ (Goldberg, 2010, p. 91). Free-market rationalities have paved the way for globalization to supersede the interests of the social welfare state (Pollack & Rossiter, 2010). Kellner (2000) notes that globalization marks a victory over all other forms of life, such as social and political terrains (as cited in H. Giroux, 2008, p. 64). A central consequence of neoliberalism is that capital gains become the marker of human well-being, in which the role of the welfare state is eroded and the individuals are responsible for their own productivity and successes (Ife, 1997). In this climate, social services are increasingly motivated by business models of practice through the advancement of the privatization of services, and the standardization of practice into ‘skills’ and ‘competencies’ is replacing the social justice-oriented concerns of the profession (Baines, 2006; Ife, 1997). Social workers are increasingly practicing within environments preoccupied with efficiency, cost-effective service delivery, cuts to funding and surveillance of client populations (Baines, 2006). Consequently, commitments to social justice are subordinated to practices of social control and regulation of marginalized communities (Rossiter, 2001). State-run initiatives formally concerned with the well-being of citizens are morphed into an intensified regulation of individuals and populations (Goldberg, 2009) in which socio-economic and political struggles are increasingly privatized. Social workers are continually negotiating their commitments to social justice, while at the same time recognizing their participation in practices of social control (Healy, 2000; Rossiter, 2001). Pollack and Rossiter (2010) assert that neoliberalism extends beyond economic designs and into non-economic arenas such as the production of identity itself. The neoliberal subject is constituted and marked by discourses of consumption, individuality, surveillance and illusions of individual autonomy (Davies, 2005). An ‘advanced liberalism’ is induced within this climate in which subjects are treated as self-contained beings who can draw upon psychological resources to cope with the demands of the market (Walkerdine, 2006).

Pollack and Rossiter (2010) assert that social work's values of equality, autonomy and individual choice are compatible with the governing technologies of neoliberalism, through which the collective good is replaced by the production of "individual good as civic responsibility" (p. 156). In many respects, the orthodox discourses of individual reform that marked social work's historical emergence as a profession, (Berlin, 2005; Lynn, 1999) continue to shape social work practice today. Donzelot (1991) observes that a modified understanding of social risks and intervention is in operation, and it is the individual's 'civic obligation' to shift the burden they may be placing on society (p. 178). The problems of the state are redirected back onto society and it is society (i.e. the individual) that is implicated in resolving the problems that were previously the responsibility of the state. Individual responsibility is overshadowed by what Bauman refers to as "liquid modernity," in which all socially constructed responsibility is eroded (as cited in S. Giroux, 2010, p. 3) and successes and failures are connected to the individual's merits, skills and competencies (Ife, 1997; Rossiter & Heron, 2011).

Pollack and Rossiter (2010) examine the technologies of self-governance that underpin the Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (OCSWSSW), Continuing Competency Plan (CCP). The OCSWSSW is the governing organization for professional social workers in Ontario. The CPP document is a self-assessment tool mandated by the College and registered social workers are required to complete the assessment every year. Some components of the CCP include developing professional goals and assessing how one may reach these goals through the use of SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Timely). Every year social workers must declare on their renewal application that they have completed the CPP self-assessment tool. Pollack and Rossiter (2010) note that the quality assurance goals of the College and the subsequent CCP document promote an entrepreneurial subject who is, above all, self-monitoring. Furthermore, the CPP shifts the responsibility for challenges in one's practice to individual care and self-monitoring.

Critics of neoliberalism draw attention to the ways in which social workers grieve for a time when activist change and possibilities were more available to workers (Baines, 2006; Smith, 2010). Funding cutbacks, standardization of practices and a focus on competency do not support a larger social justice vision or a voice for workers and clients (Baines, 2006). A significant shift has occurred within social welfare agencies and all social workers are currently measured against the ideologies of neoliberal restructuring. However, the discursive production of loss suggests

that the previous activist period was a more equitable time within the history of the profession. Longing for a 'better time' invites questions about what exactly is being mourned. As I will illustrate through the narratives provided by racialized social workers in this study, their particular involvements in the profession have always been complicated by the individualizing scripts of white normativity, even within their critical formations. However, critiques about neoliberalism erase the ways in which the profession has long been implicated in colonial violence and ongoing practices of racism.

In her PhD thesis, Smith (2011) offers a nuanced and complex analysis of the effects of neoliberal restructuring on activist social work practice. Drawing on the work of Jeffery (2002), who argues that social work is intimately produced through whiteness, Smith (2011) suggests that the activist practices being mourned by white workers are in actuality a mourning for whiteness. Smith (2011) shows how "commitments to social activism, much like the "talk" of social rights in Canada, can be used discursively to secure social workers' sense of themselves as compassionate, innocent and morally-transcendent" (p. 138). I share Smith's (2011) concerns about the particular type of social work subject that is produced through scripts about mourning, and her observations about the production of grief as a technology of self-governance to forget the profession's involvement in the history of violent colonization are instructive. Discourses of mourning and critiques against a newfound enemy (neoliberalism) serve to obscure the ongoing effects of colonialism within social work knowledge production and practice. Although critical perspectives in social work have made many gains around linking the needs and challenges of individuals with the larger social structure (Healy, 2000; Hick, 2005), the profession's commitments to social justice remain complicit in imperial notions of helping. Social workers' desires to be critical (client-centred, empathetic and critically reflexive) may in fact reinscribe the savior/saved dichotomy of the helping relationship (Heron, 1999; Jeffery, 2002; Margolin, 1997). Processes of racialization disappear through discourses of helping, compassion *and* social change. Minimizing, forgetting and denying the role and effects of colonialism within social work produces great costs and risks for racialized social workers who attempt to perform a professional identity that has always been preoccupied with the management and regulation of difference. I argue that colonial practices have remained intact throughout all periods in social work's development as a profession, including the present neoliberal moment.

5.2.2 Privatization of Racism

Roberts and Mahtani (2010) argue for an analysis that centralizes race within the production of neoliberal discourses and practices:

Neoliberalization is understood as a socioeconomic process that has racial implications, but little is said about the ways that neoliberalism modifies the way race is experienced or understood in society. We suggest that this theorization is incomplete. We recommend a move from analyses of *race and neoliberalism* towards analyses that *race neoliberalism*. This kind of analysis more clearly delineates how race and racism are inextricably embedded in the neoliberal project. (p. 250, emphasis in original)

I highlight for my purposes the writers' contention that we need an examination of how neoliberalism modifies the ways in which race is experienced. The writers assert that the connections between race and neoliberalism must be understood as "an organizing principle of society" (Roberts & Mahtani, 2010, p. 254), as opposed to individual flare-ups of racism. When we shift our lens to examine colonial underpinnings of neoliberalism, racialized violence can be understood as an inevitable consequence of how society is organized (H. Giroux, 2008; Roberts & Mahtani, 2010). Therefore, the present analysis is not related to whether or not racism occurs, but instead, the focus is on the ways in which an neoliberalism constructs racism or colludes with its erasure. Davis (2007) explains that race within our neoliberal moment is characterized by a silencing of race and racism in which race blindness prevails:

Under neoliberal racism the relevance of the raced subject, racial identity and racism is subsumed under the auspices of meritocracy. For in a neoliberal society, individuals are supposedly freed from identity and operate under the limiting assumptions that hard work will be rewarded if the game is played according to the rules. Consequently, any impediments to success are attributed to personal flaws. This attribution affirms notions of neutrality and silences claims of racializing and racism. (p. 350)

Race and racism are evaded through discourses of neutrality, individuality and hard work. However, these technologies of erasure do not mean the absence of race, but its privatization (Goldberg, 2009).

In the *Threat of Race*, Goldberg (2009) provides a much needed reconceptualization of neoliberalism, in which he argues that neoliberal apparatuses (individualism, civility) privatize the experience of racism. Goldberg (2010) contends that “race has figured among the most prevailing, pernicious, persistent and destructively productive” (p. 100) factor in the formation of the modern nation-state. Consequently, the privatization of race and racial violence is a key apparatus of the state in which race is kept socially alive, but its expression has been displaced from formal governance (Goldberg, 2010, p. 106). One of the many consequences resulting from the privatization of racism is what Goldberg (2009) refers to as born again racism:

Born again racism is racism without race, racism gone private, racism without the categories to name it as such. It is racism shorn of the charge, a racism that cannot be named because nothing abounds with which to name it. It is a racism purged of historical roots, of its groundedness, a racism whose history is lost. (p. 23)

Goldberg (2009) argues that racial neoliberalism fashions a new racism that attempts to move forward “without (fully) coming to terms with racial histories and their accompanying inequalities... to transform, via the negating dialectic of denial and ignoring racially marked social orders into racially erased ones” (as cited in S. Giroux, 2010, p. 4). When racial trespasses occur, racism is treated as the consequence of individual deficit and not the effect of racially organized institutions (Giroux, 2010). Although neoliberal ideologies and practices negate the operation of social injustices through individualizing discourses, Goldberg (2010) is careful to state that the invisibility of race does not mean its absence. Racial neoliberalism operates to produce racism as a phenomenon of the past that has been adequately dealt with through initiatives such as liberal commitments to equality, diversity and anti-racism, and I will add here, cultural competency models of care in social work (Pon, 2009). These initiatives work to conceal the operation of racial violence, however, the weight of race remains (Goldberg, 2009).

Colonial violence and regulation of difference are concealed through discourses of charity and civility (Heron, 1999; Rossiter, 2001; Valverde, 1991). As discussed in Chapter Three, practices of helping are intensely imperial and historically produced. Colonial violence was largely concealed through ideas such as the ‘white man’s burden’, to construct middle-class subjects as innocent saviours who took it upon themselves to bring civilize degenerate classes (Pratt as cited in Heron, 1999, p. 82). Susan Giroux (2010) argues that in the present moment, racial

neoliberalism works to switch the ‘white man’s burden’ into his ‘unburdening’ (p. 3) through discourses of neutrality, objectivity and individualism, where all subjects are measured against a universal ‘sameness’ predicated on practices of moral superiority. Neoliberalism relies upon discourses of civility (being moral), in which the social processes of subject-formation are made invisible (Walkerline, 2006) and liberalism is advanced through a heightened focus on the individual merit of subjects (Rose, 1999). Civility as a dominant discourse within the nation-state is context specific and expressed in multiple ways, but what remains central across different sites are the ways in which difference is produced through discourses of civility. Subjects who are perceived to be outside of civility are positioned within institutions as “the differentiated the divorceable, the alien and excludable” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 38).

Social work is entrenched in discourses of civility, and kindness is one of its devices. Goldberg (2009) draws on Mbembe to argue that the civic virtue of kindness “can also be a vice (“to kill with kindness”)” (p. 49). He states that the key methods through which populations are ‘killed softly’ are through practices of charity (p. 49) or what in contemporary social work can mean empathy, empowerment or client-centered practice (Margolin, 1997). Such practices are constitutive of subjects deemed to be civilized (helpers) and those who are produced as being outside of civility (to be helped). Consequently, discourses of civility form a “presumed homogeneity, or [is] at least predicated on a set of presumptive homogeneous commonalities, not least in the face of perceived threats” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 36). Civility comes to mark the larger social order, designating its character and personality. The key thread running through the production of civility is that sameness, ruling through differentiation, marks how civilizing discourses are produced (Goldberg, 1993, 2009). Sameness or discourses of equality require a certain degree of white amnesia to forget colonial violence, racism and the historical racialization of whiteness (Hesse, 1997). In order for social workers to secure an identity based in goodness (civility), they must forget the history of colonial violence that shaped the profession’s emergence (Jeffery, 2002; Smith, 2011). The implication for racialized social workers is that they too must deny the profession’s involvement in violence, and declare their commitments to the imagined social justice orientation of the profession. In white-normed practice settings, the violence done to racialized communities is not remembered and “if you are not memorable, if you have no worthy history, then you are deemed to have no claim not simply on national remembrance, but on the nation-state itself, because you are seen to have no place in it”

(Goldberg, 2009, p. 23). Practices towards equality are designed to extinguish difference so that the “self and other merge indistinguishably, their contours smudge into cloned figures” to form state personalities (Goldberg, 2009, p. 42). The institutional contexts described by participants in this study are specific sites in which various operations of civility are shaped by the overarching values of social work, in addition to the specific culture of each institution (e.g. hospital, shelter, community agency).

In her study of working class women and neoliberal agendas, Walkerdine (2006) uses the metaphor of the border to illuminate the experiences of pain and violence that occur when particular forms of ‘beingness’ in the world are omitted through the individualizing discourses of neoliberalism. Although Walkerdine’s analysis focuses primarily on issues of class and gender, her conceptualization of the border is useful to this discussion. She argues that subjects exist at various borders. These borders may be geographical, social or psychic and they are critical sites “because the border is fundamental to Western and modern ways of understanding the individual” (p. 11). Crossing particular borders that are governed by Western modernity require a relationally produced self to change and conform to the institutional arrangements of “new forms of work and ways of being” (p. 12). Walkerdine specifically focuses on the processes of objectification that result from differentiation that is produced in and through individualizing discourses. Inevitably, she states that pain and violence will occur when subjects attempt to cross particular borders (professional, psychological or social). For example, In Chapter Four I argued that racialized workers are situated as ‘bodies out of place’ in social work, and various institutional arrangements (such as diversity) both govern and position workers of colour not only to perform diversity, but also to be the literal embodiment of diversity (Ahmed, 2012). Any practices on the part of racialized workers to challenge this positioning are of great consequence to their sense of institutional belonging, and their relationship to their identity as social workers. Building on Walkerdine’s (2006) metaphor of the border and Goldberg’s racial neoliberalism, key questions emerge: What types of ideals do social workers of colour have to invest in in order to belong to the club of civility? And what do social workers of colour have to forget, deny or file away in order to be perceived as effective and efficient workers? Racialized workers are crossing the border into whiteness and entering into sites in which race is made invisible/visible, and subjects are assessed through an intensified individualism (sameness) that constructs civility in modern organizations.

In this chapter, participant narratives reveal that racism is inevitable once participants cross the border and join the profession. In addition, naming the operation of racism is of great consequence, as discursive practices of whiteness (civility) individualize its operation and, in some instances, render it invisible. Furthermore, colonial legacies shaping social work practices of kindness, goodness and helping continue today, but they are disguised in discourses of social justice and critical practice (Jeffery, 2002; Margolin, 1997). The link between their historical development and contemporary manifestations is that social workers maintain innocence through practices aiming to secure their goodness. The criteria for goodness (being empathetic, client-centred, critically reflexive) inform individual worker competencies. The degrees to which social workers can be perceived as good, skilled workers is also dependent upon their proximity to liberal normativity. Liberal normativity relies upon racial neoliberalism in which civility “is not the purging – ending – of violence but its veiling (the iron hand in the velvet glove), the positioning of socially sanctioned violence out of sight – behind walls” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 49). The narratives in this chapter demonstrate how the convergence of social work values with neoliberal agendas (intensified individualism and skills development) converge to bury racism so that it remains unchallenged or denied through imperatives to be good, critical workers.

5.3 Killing Us Softly: Everyday Encounters with Racism

In this section of the chapter, I present narratives from the interviews that describe racially charged encounters in everyday sites of practice. The stories are complex, and illuminate the interwoven processes of the ways in which born again racism and state civility work together in the regulation of racialized social workers. In the examples that follow, I trace the ways in which the workers’ investments and commitments to good practice are disrupted in the face of racist practices executed by clients and co-workers. During these difficult moments, social workers of colour cannot perform as empathetic, client-focused and critically reflexive. They describe a number of examples in which racism is operating throughout their clinical practice, examples such as white clients refusing to work with them, racist ideas being spoken during appointments, or close encounters with physical violence. These moments are described by the workers in a number of different ways: as challenging, violent, shocking and painful. Some accounts depict the confusion and doubt experienced by workers when they question whether or not it is

permissible for them to interrupt or challenge these sites of racism. Confusion and doubt are troubling and offer significant clues into the modes of governance that shape workers' relationship to their identity and practices as social workers. I am interested in the discursive production of doubt and confusion that invites a fear that commitments to social justice are being betrayed.

5.3.1 Inevitable and Anticipated

In her classic text, *Understanding Everyday Racism*, Essed (1991) illustrates the ways in which racist encounters are an inevitable occurrence in our modern world. She argues that day to day racism is to be expected; however, the operation of racism is often unpredictable in terms of the specific practices or the subjects involved. Furthermore, Essed argues that everyday sites of racism are also unanticipated due to their unpredictable operation. Racism's operation unfolds in both overt and more subtle ways, but Essed (1991) reminds us that its process "activates the whole pattern of injustice of which it is a part" (p. 147). In a similar vein, Goldberg (2009) states that race works through everyday micro interactions, in addition to macro-political arrangements of geo-political interests, that the two go "hand in glove" (p. 25). Goldberg (2009) also states that micro-expressions of racism are just as equally disturbing to subjects as macro expressions, as they are deeply unsettling due to their cumulative effects. This point is very important as the workers' responses to the racist encounters are shaped by histories of racial violence and multiple experiences of racism both within professional practice and outside of it. Although racism does not operate exactly the same in every situation, and racialized workers will make meaning of the occurrences in different ways based on history, context, differences across subject-formation (class, gender, sexuality, and so on), I follow Essed's (1991) contention that "experiences of everyday racism are repetitive and shared rather than unique" (p. 148). Worker accounts report a diversity of reactions and responses to production and practice of racism. Cueing into racism's operation is the product of having lived through multiple and ongoing experiences of racism, in which subject-formation is still defined along colour lines (Alcoff, 2001).

The specific sites of racism that I am exploring in this chapter are face-to-face encounters between social workers of colour and their clients, co-workers and supervisors. The face-to-face encounters illustrate the ways in which micro-expressions of racism operate and can appear as "non-racial experiences" (Essed, 1991, p. 146). Non-racial understandings of these encounters

operate through the expectations to be the same or neutral, as apparatuses of whiteness (Giroux, 2010). However, while difference is denied, it is also objectified through discourses of diversity, cultural sensitivity and equality. These processes work to keep social workers of colour just outside of professional belonging, constituted as both separate and equal (Goldberg, 2009). However, the day-to-day acts of micro-aggression described by workers in this chapter illustrate another dimension of outsider-ness: social workers of colour cannot experience themselves as caring practitioners in the face of racism. The following example, from Deepi, a South Asian woman who has been practicing social work for about five years, highlights some of the main tensions that operate when racist incidents occur in client interactions. She states:

I think that there is a moment of intense, like a moment where it feels heated, where you've strayed from the person's personal story into this grey area of social work and, like the elephant in the room, is conflict. In those moments you are sort of both looking in a different direction rather than in the direction of their story. I feel like they see you more as a person or two individuals like any two strangers on the street who are encountering moments of racism. Whereas in that relationship when you are talking about them and their life story, you are there as their social worker, their helper, and your gaze is on their story. For a moment when that happens and you turn and are looking at something else that has come into the room, that is attached to both of us but not personally, or even if it is personally you won't say it in those moments because it's like this... whatever construct it is, racism, classism, sexism...it is awkward. I feel like I have never been really truly equipped to deal with it. I think that is why I sometimes feel as though I am at a loss for words.

Deepi's account eloquently describes the moments experienced by many of the participants in this research. An organizing theme within her narrative is that racism pulls the worker outside of their good practice, and good practice is constructed through remaining focused on the client needs. Furthermore, Deepi's account describes key ruptures in dominant constructions about the identities of the worker and the clients, as her account explains that the client and the worker are no longer the helper and the helped, but they are like two strangers on the street tied up in a racist incident. The 'stranger' metaphor is relevant here, and raises questions about whether or not social workers of colour can be recognized as helpers, since they represent 'something else' to clients in these moments. Similarly, is it possible to understand and name a client's use of racism

alongside their position as a client who is vulnerable, marginalized and in need of help? The overarching and fixed understandings of the worker/client relationship as powerful/powerless leave very little room, if any, to discuss such transgressions within the context of social work education and practice. The underlying assumption is that these incidents are not possible in the practice encounter.

The distress and conflict surrounding these practice situations can be explained through Ahmed's (2000) conceptualization of encounters. She argues that encounters are meetings "which are not simply in the present: each encounter reopens past encounters" (p. 8). Encounters are sites in which subjects cannot be located simply in the present, but are intimately linked to multiple perceptions, histories, and sites of difference. Consequently, encounters will involve conflict, as the "face to face meeting is not between two subjects who are equal and in harmony; the meeting is antagonistic" (p. 8). Ahmed (2000) argues that these meetings are antagonistic because "they also *reopen the prior histories of encounters that violate and fix others in regimes of difference*" (p. 8, emphasis in original). When subjects come together, they attempt to recognize each other by looking for what might be *familiar* about the other subject. However, she states that the processes through which subjects determine if they are familiar to each other are socially and historically produced. Therefore, this line of analysis asks us to consider the ways in which some bodies are constituted as bodies out of place, whose very presence disrupts or shifts the "boundaries of what is familiar" (Ahmed, 2000, p. 8).

The site of familiarity in social work is the helping relationship as described in Deepi's narrative. Clients seek social services for assistance and the worker's role is to meet their needs. Even more, the social worker is to assist (improve) the client. As I illustrated in Chapter Four, social workers of colour are positioned as bodies out of place; therefore, when white clients meet social workers of colours, how do they recognize the worker? How we come to see or recognize each other is never outside of the normative horizons of various contexts (Butler, 2005). What discursive schemas are called upon to situate this worker (racialized Other) against their perceptions of other Others (foreigner, immigrant, less qualified, etc.), so that they may recognize (even for a moment) the worker to *be* a helper? How must the racialized social worker perform their professional role to be recognized as the helper? As I have stated throughout the thesis, subject-formation within modern states is still produced through the colour line (Alcoff, 2002; Goldberg, 2009). What do the visual markers of difference mean to white subjects (clients

and colleagues) when working with racialized people? Conversely, how might the social worker understand the subject-position of the client? Dominant discourses within social work, construct the client as someone who is marginalized, a victim and oppressed, and in need of care, empathy and advocacy. What happens to the dominant representation of identities or sites of familiarity when racism shapes the encounter?

Racial neoliberalism would have us believe that racism is a thing of the past (Goldberg, 2009; Giroux, 2010). However, as the narratives in this chapter reveal, treating racism as outside of systemic organization and the act of individual pathology (Hesse, 2004) serves to perpetuate racial violence (Ahmed, 2004a). Locating racism as a problem of the past negates a colonial history embedded in the present in which subjugated communities “have yet to have their pain recognized” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 33).

5.3.2 ‘I Want a White Worker’

As mentioned above, I identify two specific threads within participant storylines about everyday racism. The first describes the racist encounter with the client and the second examines the institutional responses that regulate the ways in which racialized workers perform on the job. As the narratives are very complex, I will address the racist encounter and the institutional response within the presentation of each worker’s account. I have chosen to organize the discussion in this manner to illustrate how racism is intertwined with the responses from co-workers to shape the operation of a born again racism in which the individuation of racism and practices of civility (through discourses of helping) anchor white dominance. The narratives point out the costs and effects of racialized violence, in addition to the tensions and contradictions that rupture the cherished ideals of the profession. What is important to note here are the ways in which race is made visible and simultaneously invisible within the accounts, thus illustrating how “race represents itself and what it does around and in the name of such representation and extension” (Goldberg, 2009, p. vii).

A number of participants described situations in which their skills and abilities as social workers are called into question. In some instances, they recalled white clients who refused to work with them, asking instead to be placed with a white worker, thus exemplifying Puwar’s (2004) notion of “disorientation” in which white bodies are literally destabilized when they are in close proximity to those considered foreign (Puwar, 2004, p. 42). These disorienting encounters

include white clients asking to be moved to a white worker, or ones where the social worker's skills and capabilities are called into question. For example, Seema and Janet offered accounts in which racism is diffused by organizations through processes that individualize the injury caused by the encounter, and second, by maintaining their commitments to client communities regardless of the racial trespass.

At the time of the interview, Seema had been working in the field for over ten years, mainly in the areas of violence against women. She describes an incident from very early in her career in which a white female client refused to work with her because she was South Asian. In one of their first appointments together, the client called her a "paki," a derogatory term used towards South Asian people. Although her team members were aware of the incident, they chose to move the client to a white worker. When I asked Seema how she understood their decision, she said it was "because they (clients) are a victim and they should get what they want, the agency will honor them and move them to another social worker." The language of victimhood shapes how the client's subject-position is formed for Seema by her team. Furthermore, social work education is an influence; Seema states that students are taught that clients' needs are "paramount" over the workers, primarily because "they are the ones who have been hurt." The language of 'need,' 'victim' and 'hurt' shapes a dominant understanding about the subject-formation of clients. Seema shares here the complexity of emotions she experienced as a result of the team's decision to move the client to a white worker:

I was pissed. I was really angry. I was very upset that they did that to this client. And I felt completely like she was more important and I was given a clear message that she was and her needs were paramount and I wasn't a good social worker and that even my right to complain – 'what are you complaining about?' (Team responses), but I felt betrayed again you know? No backing from the agency. She didn't want to see me because I was South Asian.

I will suggest here that the complexity of feelings and viewpoints described by Seema are shaped by client-centered discourses in social work. Client-centred discourses invite Seema to question her reactions to the client's racist behavior. She describes anger, and her anger is met by the team with a decision to move the client to a white worker, and her concerns and anger are framed as a complaint. Moving the client to a white worker does not address either the micro or the

macro processes of the racial trespass. Seema's anger and stress are individualized through the team's decision to move the client to a white worker, which they stated "would be less stressful for you and we are also thinking about you." The team's choice to move the client to a white worker not only dismisses the racist slur uttered by the client, but also absolves the organization from any responsibility to address the racism:

This particular incident was very early on in my career and I just went with it, even though I felt all this, I didn't say anything. If that same scenario would happen now, I would probably have a different reaction. But back then I didn't know, and they just moved her and maybe to some degree I bought it, but it is sort of one of those things where I also felt the sting of it. I felt...horrible...I felt like they didn't...like why would they do that? Why wouldn't they back me up? And I felt like they were giving her an important message that it is okay to do that and it is okay to call somebody that – a and b, she got what she wanted and in the end she got a white social worker. And I felt like she was smug when she saw me you know, every time I saw her... and by the agency as well, it felt like they were saying that to me over and over again. So I felt small. So, certainly it happened very early on and I am sure it is a story that many people can relate to.

By moving the client to a white worker, the organization maintains its commitments to serving and meeting the needs of vulnerable populations. Discourses of victimhood work to fix the identity of the client as someone 'in need'. The organization has an obligation to ensure services are provided to the client. These discourses operate to neglect the ways in which subject-formation takes place in a number of different directions as opposed to a fixed identity of victimhood. Through ignoring the racial content of the encounter, the client's practice of racism conspires with client-centred discourses in which the client remains a subject who is oppressed, disenfranchised and marginal; and cannot be a subject who may participate in acts of hurting others. This point is expressed by Seema as follows:

it is this piece around victim, it's one piece of their identity that is seen as paramount to everything else right, so if you work with a racist victim the fact that she's a victim, or a homophobic victim, whatever you want to say, the fact that *she's a victim* trumps everything else and she's not really responsible for all that, so it's sort of like, she gets a free pass on all of it. It's that piece where we look at people and dissect people in sort of

these one dimensional ways in social work, so it's interesting to me in that everything else is sort of excused you know.

The fact that client populations seeking services do in fact experience great oppression and marginality is not being refuted by my analysis. Instead, I aim to bring attention to how this understanding of client communities conspires with other forms of marginality and dominance. The underlying message to workers is that their needs are to remain de-centred and apart from the interaction; this includes their feelings, beliefs and values. The de-centering quality of the practice, I argue, tunnels into discourses of goodness and compassion to produce the criteria against which a worker measures their professional practice. In other words, an effective social worker will not let 'their' personal stress get in the way of meeting the client's needs. In this situation, the team thought it was best for Seema that the client was moved to a white worker, to reduce Seema's stress and anger. While this practice claims to recognize Seema's stress (anger, feelings of betrayal), the problem is individualized, treated as *belonging* to Seema, separate and removed from the practices of the organization. Responsibility is deferred by maintaining the commitment of the organization to the client, while at the same time situating their response to suggest to Seema that they are taking care of her. It is assumed through these practices that Seema needs healing and not justice.

In another example, Ishar, who has practiced social work for over fifteen years, describes a similar account in which she discussed racist incident with a client at a peer supervision meeting. She explains that peer supervision meetings are sites in which workers come together to debrief their clinical practice and attain support around various dilemmas related to their work. The meetings are intended to facilitate the practice of critical reflexivity, which is considered a key practice within social work. Ishar describes the encounter with the meeting as follows:

I started to feel like I just wasn't a very compassionate worker because my colleagues kept reverting back to expressions of compassion for the client, wanting to hear about her childhood, wanting to hear how the trauma had impacted her, and how the trauma is what is creating this problem over here. I continued to feel like even in that space I was doing something bad by naming the racism, like it was not okay for me to do that. Tension started to brew on our team because I began to critique the space. If we are going to talk about how the work impacts us, that means we are only allowed to talk about certain

things and not others. Things became so heated on our team, so problematic, that the peer supervision space stopped. To this day we don't have it.

Similar to Seema's account, racism is made raceless in and through discourses of compassion and trauma. First, Ishar experiences herself as an uncompassionate worker, through her co-workers' desires to remain focused on the client's sites of vulnerability. Second, trauma organizes the encounter as one that is dictated by the client's personal injuries. Ishar's workplace focuses on violence against women, and feminist and trauma discourses are central to how the program defines violence:

It is about trauma. It is about recognizing the effects of trauma and violence. So a good social worker recognizes the impacts of trauma and violence on a client's life and how the impacts of trauma and violence can really shape how the client sees herself or himself, because we see men as well.

Within this site, discursive production of trauma, violence and feminism work in concert with each other to constitute understandings of good practice. As with Seema's organization, victim discourses shape how the subject-position of the client is produced and in Ishar's story, compassion dictates how workers are to perform attentiveness to client stories of vulnerability. Seema states that in these environments,

Gender was more important, to understand women – that's the other thing right...and in a lot of these agencies, especially in agencies that work around violence against women – it might be changing now, but gender also is paramount to anything else, it trumps everything else too.

The history of white feminist organizing situates gender analysis at the core of many social services (Srivastava, 2005). I wish to highlight here again that the point is not to dismiss client vulnerability, trauma or violence, but instead, I am interested in what these discourses *do* when they are used as explanations for the occurrence of racism or used to deny the operation of race altogether. Ishar's questions to her team about how the peer supervision space is being used literally results in its demise. Her insistence that racism be recognized disrupts the supportive climate of the peer supervision space, in addition to the investments that white women carry to be seen as good and helpful subjects (Heron, 1999). Ishar explains that for a long time her

colleagues did not speak to each other, there was a clear divide between white women and women of colour on the team. The peer supervision space was never reorganized and she explains that it was a long time before she and her white co-workers could work collaboratively with each other on the team. She explains in the following account what her relationship is like with one of her white colleagues:

But to this day, as close as she and I are, we have never talked about that. It is almost like an off topic. We don't even want to go there, because our relationship now is so good. She is probably one of the members of the team that I am closest to in some ways, but we don't talk race.

It is interesting to note here that in part, connection in the relationship requires an absence of race. In order to resume some semblance of normalcy amongst the team, the conflict from many years ago is never re-visited. Maintaining her relationship to her colleague and the organization requires that Ishar cuts off parts of her beingness in order to maintain good relationships on the other side of the border (Walkerdine, 2006). The parts of her beingness, her subjectivity as a racialized person, are left at the door.

Severing various parts of one's identity is another theme across the narratives. Seema explains that her attempts to bring race into discussions at case conferences are often met with comments like, 'race is abstract,' or 'of course you would talk about race as a woman of colour.' She explains that these responses eventually resulted in issues of race being silenced, and she had been raising these concerns as a supervisor on the team. Her professional status as a supervisor did not afford her any authority to address issues of race:

It's almost like they dissected my story, they dissected a piece of me, a part of me right, and either exploited it or were condescending towards it, or called it abstract or whatever. There's lots of terminology used. So it's almost like when you go to these, or when I was in some of these spaces I was seen as somewhat parts you know, and that was really a struggle and what I was saying was very rarely mirrored back to me. Instead I faced a lot of rejection or this sort of you know, what I used to call a polite way of being unseen.

Crossing the border results in an objectifying gaze, one in which the subject is "trampled on to produce the subject as an object of a knowing gaze" (Walkerdine, 2006, p. 12). The knowing

gaze is provided by her male co-worker whose language constructs her as an object of race, while at the same time he defines race as an abstract concept. Processes of objectification and abstraction are not one-dimensional, as Seema describes the ways in which her position as a woman of colour is also utilized by the organization to either exploit her around issues of race or to dismiss her by behaving condescendingly towards her. Seema's positionality on the team is at once divorced from its relational production through the inference that race (read Seema) is abstract, impersonal, removed; as opposed to knowledge that is considered to be concrete, practical and grounded. Organizations construct issues of race according to the terms, signifiers and practices that are permissible within state organizations (Goldberg, 2009). Racialized workers are caught within a myriad of responses that construct how race will be recognized. I am reminded of Fanon's (1967) analysis of the ways in which black bodies cannot construct an identity outside of whiteness: the white gaze is not an imposing practice, but "a *definitive structuring* [emphasis added] of the self and of the world – definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world" (p. 111). The team's response to Seema's queries is described by her as a dissection, an effect of the objectifying gaze or, as Fanon (1967) describes it, "an amputation" (p. 112). Although the glove in which the hand of racism fits is velvet, it is still spiked with blood (Goldberg 2009), and civility operates through what Seema describes as "a polite way to be unseen" in which the hand of racism enacts violence through the racelessness of racism. Seema and Ishar's account illuminate the painful effects that result from issues of race and racism being constrained and in many cases, denied by their colleagues.

Janet has worked in the areas of probation and parole, woman abuse shelters and hospital mental health programs. Her story exemplifies the more insidious operations of racism. Janet describes a situation in which a white client did not come out directly to call her any derogatory names, as in Seema's situation. Instead, the client posed many questions about her skills and abilities:

That stuff is always hard because very rarely is it ever explicit, so you are often relying on your, 'Did that just...', 'Could that just be...?' 'I think that was just an act of someone being racist'... (laughs). I do have one client that really likes to use his vocabulary lately, so he is explicit about the language that he'll use with you, but often it comes in more insidious ways like questioning your ability, what your level of education is, asking for other opinions from other people, just those things that kind of question your capacity in

the role and you just know it is about something other than your capacity in the role and it is about the person that they see before them, I think.

Janet's account illustrates the operation of suspicion circulating within her client's engagement with her to invite questions about her capabilities as a worker. Her narrative also alludes to the ways in which the colour-line inscribes particular bodies as sites of inferiority. As she states in the above account, "it is about the person that they see before them." Her client's line of questioning points to the deceptive ways in which racism operates: as a body that is situated and perceived to be out of place, Janet does not represent someone who is known and familiar (Ahmed, 2000) in the world of helping. Unlike Seema's client who exercised a direct practice of racism by calling her names, Janet's client employs a subtle form of racism, in which racist exclusion is concealed through the language of skills and capabilities. Janet's subject-position as a person of colour invites doubts and questions about her abilities as a professional, exemplifying Puwar's (2004) notion of 'infantilisation', in which people of colour are assumed to have reduced capacities. Janet's encounter with this client is further exacerbated when one of her colleagues begins to intervene in her work with her clients. Janet states that her co-worker was re-doing her work and bringing to "fruition" the problematized perception that her client held of her as a worker. When she confronted her co-worker about her involvement, the co-worker replied that she thought Janet could "use a little help." Janet describes the moment as follows:

I pulled her aside and I let her know I was more than fine in the role and capable, but she continued to do it. She essentially said that she didn't feel that the clients viewed me as capable, so she thought that I could use a little help. How do I not look capable in somebody's eyes? I am speaking and wearing a name tag saying 'I am a social worker', and I am in my role. Yeah, that was really weird and very challenging because you don't want to label it about race, because people just run and get so upset when you talk about race with people. I couldn't feel that it was anything but that. While I addressed it with her and with management, I never talked about feeling that it was a racial incident.

There are a number of challenges present through this encounter. The production of surveillance emerges (and is camouflaged) through the language of helping. Janet's colleague acknowledges that she is being judged by clients, but similar to the response from Seema's team, Janet's colleague intervenes by directly surveying her work and literally conducting her duties for her.

Consequently, in making the choice to confront her colleague, Janet makes a conscious decision to not name the incident as one in which she experienced racism:

I just spoke about how demeaning and inappropriate it was because it completely took away from my ability to do my work; and the credibility that she said I didn't have, that my clients saw - she is just bringing that to fruition in doing that. After that she kind of left me alone, but you could kind of feel the tension from the staff afterwards...

Discourses of helping and neoliberal emphasis on the individual as autonomous and self-directed operate through each other to mask the experience of racism and Janet's responses to the incident. Janet does not name race to disguise that she has experienced racism. She keeps the discussion located at the site of individual merits and abilities, and confronts her colleague by defending her skills. The inappropriateness of her manager's intervention is named, but race and her experience of racism is circumvented through a discussion about her capabilities as a social worker.

Alcoff (2002), drawing on Fanon's (1967) conceptualization of the 'epidermal schema,' states that people of colour experience responses that are shaped by what she refers to as the "habit-body" (p. 280), in which a double layer of awareness exists for racialized subjects, who are moved to either defend or protect themselves in their interactions with the white world. Alcoff (2002) argues that when non-white subjectivity emerges in the white world and white subjects feel threatened (colleagues and clients), racialized people have two choices: "to resist or to return to the category or non-threatening other" (p. 280). Ishar, Janet and Seema describe their responses in ways that attempt to diffuse or minimize increased risks to their well-being and their professional status. Seema accepts with great hesitation her team's rationale for their decision to move the client to a white worker, and Janet's account sheds light on how race is avoided to prevent increased surveillance by her team. Alcoff (2002) argues that these responses are already set up by the white, liberal world. However, I wish to be clear here that these particular responses are produced in and through histories and relations of dominance, and not as a reflection of their individual abilities to challenge the process. Both Seema and Janet's accounts describe the complicated effects of working in settings that emphasize individual skills and competency (Pollack & Rossiter, 2010). Seema describes "feeling small" and questions her

commitments to the client; and Janet disguises racism to avoid further difficulties with her team. When I asked Janet effects of such practices, she states:

It makes you think about you as a person, which is frightening and uncomfortable. It just kind of lends to those moments where you are kind of questioning the way in which you do your work, the way in which your role is viewed. The good thing is that I can always remember that it is about power. If maybe I was in a more structured, not structured negatively, but just a different role, I might view those types of things differently. It is really hard as a social worker, because it makes you wonder about your ability to provide the best service to somebody when they are always...do you know what I mean, like when somebody is not completely viewing you as the best or right professional to be able to help them, how can you best help if they are consistently looking at you as less than?

While Janet's account illustrates how power relations can invite feelings of doubt, fear and discomfort about one's professional performance. Liberalism has always been preoccupied with the management of subjectivity (Rose, 1999), and Janet's account describes how the effects of racism invite inspection from the organization, but an intense scrutiny towards the self as well. The helper identity is so central to social work that it makes an appearance in her narrative to set social work apart from other professions. Her question about whether or not these forms of surveillance would be evident to her if she worked in a different profession brings attention to the ways in which discourses of helping (being compassionate, empathic, good) are an organizing feature of the worker's identity. Consequently, I will also add that her narrative illustrates the ways in which the social worker identity is also a raced identity that is produced through civilizing discourses of humanity. How can a racialized worker be a good helper if they cannot be seen as a moral subject? (Jeffery, 2002). Racialized workers are in a precarious position in which they are continually negotiating the effects of being perceived as being 'less than' by their colleagues and the clients they serve.

5.3.3 Values in Suspension

Another layer of complexity within the data demonstrates the dilemmas that appear when clients communicate racist ideas during the practice encounter. The racist accounts are not always

directly aimed at the worker, but are a part of the story they are bringing to the social worker. The indirect quality of the racism expressed raises questions for these workers about whether or not it is good social work practice to interrupt the communication of racist ideas. Racist scenarios showed up frequently throughout the data. A recurring question evident throughout their narratives is whether or not they compromise their practice during these moments of racial injury, as Deepi's question illustrates: "Am I not doing my job? ...I don't know... (long pause)...everything is suspended in that moment. It's really hard to be empathetic for someone who is demonstrating racism or any form of oppression towards another group." The worries surrounding the possibility of compromising one's practice and commitments to social justice is what shapes the next set of narratives from the research.

Each account is a reflective piece, in which the research interview opens up different questions to reveal tensions about how one must engage in social justice-oriented practices with clients who utter racial slurs, stereotypes, and, in one narrative, a very close encounter with physical violence. For many of the social workers, their commitments to the ideals of the profession are held in suspension, and cherished values of the profession are de-stabilized. A dominant concern for the workers is whether or not their 'reactions' to the racism are "professional" concerns or their own "personal" reactions.

Tara's workplace is located in a geographical setting in which members of white, lower-class communities represent the dominant population. Many of the clients Tara works with in her organization are members of these local communities. During the interview, Tara describes an encounter with a white client who was very angry about her neighborhood being 'overrun' with immigrants:

I had a client come in, she was originally from (names city), and, well... she was talking about how the building where she lived was being taken over by the Pakistans, and that now in (names city), half the population are Pakistans and I'm saying Pakistans because this was the client's word, and 'not only are they half the population', and I said 'half the population of (city)?' And she said 'yes, like out of 30,000 people, 15,000 are Pakistans, and they come with their cockroaches.' 'And I said how do you mean?' And she said, 'well they have a belief that the more cockroaches they have the more children they'll have, they'll be more fertile.' So then I said 'from Pakistan?' They bring...a moment of

such absolute absurdity, that I almost...(her voice gets quiet)...so these are the kinds of things you hear, and I'm thinking first of all I don't even know where you got that from, second of all, do you not see me here, *apparently not*.

H – You mean yourself as a..?

A person of colour. Where do you even start...right? And then to also say 'no offense, don't take offense', but then continue on and on about how the building manager moved them all out, them being the Pakistans, into some other building and put them in a project in town.

Tara's reactions highlight how she cannot separate her reactions to the client's racist ideas from her subject-position as a person of colour. In addition, Tara is made both invisible and highly visible within the practice encounter with the client. There is enough recognition on the part of the client to suspect that her comments may be offensive when she asks Tara not to be offended, but at the same time the client chooses to continue expressing the comments regardless of the effects it may produce. In spite of her attempts to ask a different set of questions to this client, to interrupt the racist ideas, the client's beliefs remain dominant in the encounter. In another example, Tara describes a moment in which a white client expressed racist ideas about Black communities:

I had another client talk to me about how there's black people and then there's niggers.

HB- (gasp)

I'm a black woman, and then you know just lots of talk about immigrants coming and taking jobs...you know that frigging story that just won't end. I've had clients who have been out to bars around town, in the neighborhood, and feel it necessary to let me know when there's a big black guy in there that people don't know. I had a person at group make lots of homophobic comments, constantly, constantly.

When I asked Tara how these moments affected her work with the client, she stated:

Physically my body starts to shake. I feel my cheeks flame, I'm hurt, I'm flabbergasted, I'm shocked, I'm angry, I'm at a loss of what I can do with it. So then all that stuff we were talking about before...it comes right in my face.

HB - Stuff?

Being non-directive, empathy, client -focused, because what I want to do - is say '*why do you think you can say this to me?!'* You know, then I start doing my education piece, but then I start thinking - *that's not what they came here for*, but at the same time, do I have to listen to this? Can I not say something about it? So all this is going on in my head, as the person continues talking, right? And then I'm off, I've separated them from the clinical process. So then I'm sitting there left with anger and frustration, and I can feel the conflict coming, because when I challenge what they're saying, they come back to hang onto their point, and then it's like okay - this is not going to go anywhere, so now I've got to sit with this lump in my throat, because this person just told me there's a difference between black people and niggers. I don't know where I fit in that...

Tara describes the multiple forms of injury present in the moment – anger, shock, and physical reactions taking place in her body. Here, I am reminded of Ahmed's (2004a) concerns about the ways in which words and feelings 'stick' to particular subjects, to produce various effects. She argues that emotional responses are not produced internally within the subject, but are constituted through complex relations of dominance relationally between subjects. Tara and her client do not enter the encounter as strangers to each other; their interactions are predicated on historically produced notions of the helping encounter on the one hand, and on the other, historically produced experiences of racism. In Tara's role as a helper, there is an underlying assumption operating in her narrative, which implies clients can say whatever they choose within the counselling relationship. Within this assumption, business model approaches circulate in which the client (customer) is always right and the services within the helping encounter must provide what is needed to ensure the client is satisfied.

Client-centred discourses remove the possibilities to explore how power between the worker and client can travel in a number of different directions. Moreover, Tara's description points to the ways in which the effects of the encounter can disappear through client-focused perspectives. Anger, pain and confusion are not separate from how racism is produced and maintained in Western societies. Therefore, when Tara asks, "why do you think you can say this to me?", I argue here that the "me" is not simply the individual "me," but a "me" that has come to embody multiple histories of racial violence, histories that are shared with many other Others (Ahmed, 2000; Essed, 1991). Present interactions always involve re-enactments of past histories (Ahmed,

2004a; Walkerdine, 2006). Tara's emotional and physical reactions are generated through the exchange with her client *and* a history of racism in her own life. Ahmed's (2004a) work on affective economies and the sociality of emotions reminds us we must investigate how surfaces of bodies come to be wounded in the first place. The anger, hurt and shock are historically produced, and the "past is living rather than dead; the past lives in the very wounds that remain open in the present" (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 33). Exploring how emotions are socially produced offers a direct challenge to neoliberal practices that situate emotions within the individual psychic realm, divorced from the social conditions of people's lives and mutually constitutive subject-formation. Injuries have a history and they are not simply the representations of that history, but as Ahmed (2004a) stresses, they are the "*bodily life of that history*" (p. 33, emphasis in original).

It is difficult to surmise how the client viewed Tara or what it meant to the client to utter those ideas to a black worker. Did the client intend to offend Tara? Or does Tara's authority as a professional figure and her educational status situate Tara as 'less black' than the black populations that the client is referring to? Is Tara perceived to be an outsider to these particular understandings of who is black? Or who can be a professional? Tara's attempts to educate the client result in lost efforts, conflict with the client and constrained experience of racialized injury. Client-centred and critical discourse in social work do not prioritize how the practice encounter affects Tara. The client believes in these ideas, and Tara in her professional role is left to respond. There is no place for the anger to be expressed, hence, it is held in her body at the same time that Tara struggles to hold the practice moment (to perform empathy, remain-client focused) and to stay mindful of her professional privilege in relationship to this client.

It is assumed that the social work relationship between the client and worker requires a particular understanding about connection within the relationship. I observe within Tara's account a moment in which she describes herself as separating from the client. This separation is noteworthy here as I surmise that it has come to mean a distancing, in which she is no longer present with the client's stories and needs. The underlying assumption circulating within the act of separating is that good practice entails social workers' efforts to maintain their attention on the needs of the client. Similar to Deepi's worries, Tara describes the encounter as a moment in which all of her commitments to good practice are suspended, and the act of suspension invites questions about whether or not she may challenge racism and if the separation being experienced

during the session is, as Deepi describes it, a compromise to good social work practice. Tara states that social work's ideals are in "her face" during the crisis, an automatic consideration. Her attempts to challenge the client's ideas do not result in changing the client's views about racialized communities. Similar to Deepi, I think a more significant question being asked by Tara is, "is this good social work practice? They did not come here for this:"

I've experienced the impacts and I've been suspended in that moment, and then I will say well is that true? Like I will challenge in those ways, but I don't know, but that's when the stuff comes in my face, in my challenging, that's when the stuff comes in my face. Is this good social work practice? They didn't come here for this. They came to talk about something else. This came out as a side conversation about something else, or I'm describing a situation, but that wasn't the point of the conversation so I guess it's taking me out of my client focus, client directive, empathy, right? There's something that still feels different, you know, yes I could say that it is good social work practice, it's not, maybe it's not, maybe it's not good practice. Maybe it is good practice? I guess the thing that keeps coming to mind is, this is not what they came here for. Right? This is not what the client came for.

The back and forth in her line of questioning about interrupting discriminatory comments speak to whether or not this is a legitimate part of social work's social justice-oriented agenda. But these questions are complicated through contemporary critical discourses in social work that situate the client as an oppressed subject (Healy, 2000). Within this understanding, clients cannot be seen as exercising the potential to perpetrate violence.

In her text, *School Girl Fictions*, Walkerdine (1990) describes a very similar scenario in which two four year old boys verbally sexualize their female teacher, uttering obscene and derogatory names at her. Walkerdine argues that subjects are produced through a multiplicity of discourses, in which they can be produced as both subjects and objects. However, the young boys' resistance to female teacher's power as an authority figure does not mean that she ceases to be a teacher but that "she has ceased to *signify* as one" (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 5). I make a parallel here to the accounts given by Tara and others: in these racially charged encounters, they cease to signify as social workers. Very importantly, Walkerdine (1990) stresses that subjects' experiences of themselves as being powerful or powerless is reliant upon the "terms" in which their subjectivity is constituted. The "terms" in which social work subjects are perceived as

powerful/powerless are already designed for the worker by social work education, by the ideals and practices of the profession, and by particular agency cultures in which the worker is positioned as being “more powerful than the oppressed populations they work with” (Walkerdine, 1990, p. 23). Throughout, workers are to remain compassionate and centred on the needs of the client. Tara’s practice is celebrated by her co-worker for creating an environment of comfort in which the client can have an experience of openness with her social worker:

I had a colleague say, ‘well just think that means you’ve made this person feel so comfortable. You’re a great social worker because this person now feels that they can be open’. I guess that I became invisible in the room, so all the racism could come flying out, right or be verbalized because it was probably there already. I guess... I am such a *good* social worker that they felt they could just...I don’t know... spew venom at me I guess, I don’t know, I don’t know what that means.

Although Tara ends the account uncertain about how to read her colleague’s praise, her narrative provides insights into the expectations that circulate about good practice performance. A comfortable and open environment requires that social workers remain quiet about themselves (stressing a de-centered positioning). However, the silence is produced in the moment through competing tensions between Tara’s experience of racial injury, and the expectation to remain focused on client-centred care. Her colleague interprets this silence as evidence of care, practicing a neutral stance in which the client feels comfortable enough to be open about various views. In other words, Tara did not let her own feelings get in the way. The underlying message to Tara is that good social work practice requires being able to be fully present with anything that a client brings to the practice encounter. Full presence and attentiveness require practices of empathy, and I will add here, an intense surveillance of the reactions and responses that social workers experience in the line of duty.

In a similar situation, Sim, a South Asian worker employed in a psychiatric unit at a hospital, also shares her questions about whether or not the discrimination communicated by clients ought to be addressed:

Is it about my need to do that? I don’t know what is the right thing. I guess I am just thinking that I want to make sure that is not my issue of how I am being perceived or how my people are being perceived coming in to play, versus challenging that idea. Because

people say nutty things all the time in sessions. You have to pick and choose what you are going to focus on. Maybe I should think about it, because if they said, I have some people say things about homosexuals or another group like that, and I would challenge that as well, but I wouldn't jeopardize my relationship, but I would challenge it gently.

In one example from her practice in which a white client held significant stereotypes about South Asian people, she shares how her process of challenging a client is very gentle as she does not want to "jeopardize" the clinical relationship. When I asked her what jeopardizing the relationship means to her, Sim replied "I didn't want her to just quit. I thought what we were working on was really important. She had made some really significant gains, and I didn't want that process to stop because of this." She chooses instead to "preserve the therapeutic relationship," fearing that if she intervenes in interrupting the client's ideas, the client may walk out of the relationship. Her concerns to protect the therapeutic relationship reinscribe her role as the helper and the client as the subject in need of help, as the client was making significant gains in their relationship. Sim does, however, suggest that there may be some benefit to interrupting the ideas if it might serve as an opportunity to educate clients, but for Sim, preserving the clinical relationship is more important. She reflects: "As I talk about it what I think is that in the times that it happens I minimize it in order to continue with the job at hand." For Sim, this means silence around the issues of race. When I asked her what silence means she replied:

I think about the fact that I was working at an organization that was talking about breaking the silence and all those types of ideas, and yet this was something that I kept silent about. I am not really sure why. I wonder if I even spoke about it to my partner or anything in dealing with that kind of thing, but I don't think I did. Some of it is just an expectation that you are going to run into some of this in your life. I am not sure that there would have been a point other than getting some support, but I probably should have talked about it to my clinical supervisor, but I don't recall doing it and I had clinical supervision monthly at that time from someone who was outside of the organization so I could have very easily processed it, but I didn't. I am not sure why. I think part of it is that you just let things like that roll off your back unless it is really in my face. When I run into racism that is really in my face, then I notice it enough to talk about it and tell people about it, my friends and other people. I can't really think of anything else.

In Sim's account, silence is both produced by seeing some acts of racism as worthy of mention, and others are just a regular part of life. There is a difference being noted in her narrative about variances in what is seen to represent racism. For racism to be recognized, it needs to be overt and in her face. This observation sparks my curiosity around how racialized subjects come to recognize some acts as racist and others as less racist. How is the continuum of racism constituted? How might the discourses of overt versus covert acts of racism conspire with Western liberal ideologies in which racism is viewed as an individual act of bad behaviour, a pathology that is removed from the well-meaning discourses of universal connectedness, equal rights and multiculturalism (Goldberg, 1993; Hesse, 2007).

Sim's narrative points to her investments in the dominant practice scripts of the profession. Her narrative suggests that sites of therapy are unpredictable, places where "nutty" things can be said. A good social worker is someone who is able to respond to the unpredictability and irregularity of professional practice, and is able to pick and choose the issues carefully and to avoid jeopardizing the relationship with the client. Furthermore, to challenge racism is to slip into the personal terrain of self-interest. She makes an interesting distinction between the sites of personal need and professional practice. But at the same time, over the course of the interview, she begins to shift somewhat to say that there may be instances in which workers need to challenge clients ideas, but these practice dilemmas may not be recognized as legitimate concerns by the workplace. One of the ways in which Sim negotiates this tension is to engage in the practices that are not driven by her own needs, but by the therapeutic encounter:

Not that I am minimizing the experiences of other people, but I think there are some problems with invisibility because sometimes you don't get recognized or it isn't acknowledged at all. If I had said something, I have to make sure it is done therapeutically and is not coming from my own ideas of who I am or my people or whatever, but also that it is not then coming across as defensive to my client, because it is who I am and who I appear to be to the world.

Sim is clearly anxious not to be seen as defensive and as taking anything personally. When I probed further about the separation between racism and clinical practice, Sim stated that her process is to minimize the racism so she can do her job, but at the same time there is some

distinction between the different forms of racism, as more direct forms of racism might warrant a different response from her:

Yes. I am essentially saying that I am not taking this personally. I am not reacting to this personally. I am going to challenge them but I am going to try to maintain this relationship. We think about if someone were to do something that were a bit more out there, that wasn't so, subtle isn't the right word because she wasn't being subtle, but she was indirect in some ways. Maybe if it was more direct, then I would have more of an ability to react that way.

The separation between therapeutic processes and the personalization of identity/injury underscores neoliberal operations of individuality and personal responsibility in which one's reactions to situations are treated once again as something private and personal. Regulating the self is necessary to absolve the self, so that the worker can appear to be a neutral and objective representative of the institution. Neoliberal ideas about personal responsibility work to bury the operation of racism and alter its meaning (H. Giroux, 2008; Goldberg, 2009). Sim insists on separating racial injury from the overriding need to care for the client. She stresses that clients

“weren't there to come talk about their perceptions about race or people or whatever. So as much as we come from this anti-oppression strength-based perspectives that I want to use, that is about how I approach the client – it's not about how the client approaches me.

When I asked her how she has come this particular understanding of practice, she says that it is a “self-imposed expectation of how I should be working as social worker and how I should be practicing where they are at and using what they are giving me.” The self-imposed expectation suggests another dimension of neoliberal subject formation, in which the individual subject's ideas and skills are perceived as being of their own making, separated from history or the social world, and indeed, even from the schools of social work where such approach to practices are taught.

5.3.4 “Arguments”

Lila is a South Asian woman who has been in the field of social work for over ten years. At the time of the interview she was employed at a community health center in Toronto. She describes the health centre as a site in which most of the staff are white subjects, including front line staff

and management. However, the majority of the populations being served by the centre are new immigrants, racialized communities and members of low income communities. She states that the centre prides itself on its commitments to diversity and community-based social justice activism. However, most of the interventions and programs address issues of poverty, with little analysis about how race and poverty are interlocked (O'Connell, 2005) for the majority of the service users of the centre. For Lila, the exclusion of race from team meeting discussions has created an environment in which she hesitates to bring up racism. A violent encounter with a white client presented Lila and the health center with the tensions that circulate about prioritizing the client's needs over the worker. She describes the following encounter with the client:

Each time she was in my office she would say really terrible racist things about different communities. I never really felt comfortable with her. And it was like she would choose different communities each session, and in one session, I tried to attend to it but I don't think I did a very good job... And then she started saying things about...Paki's (racist term used against South Asian people) and then she would do other weird things. Like I remember... I guess she had stereotypes about what a South Asian woman is like... so one day she threw all these condoms at me and said something sexually graphic, I think to shock me right. Because she already told me what she thought of the dynamics between a South Asian man and women. So she had ideas right. And one day she started talking... she went into this rant about immigrants' rights.

And that is when I realized...all this time I didn't do anything about it right. It speaks to how I had such poor supervision and had no one to talk to during this... And it's also in an environment that's not supportive when it comes to these issues right.

So... she's in my face, we're both standing up and I'm scared...and I'm thinking can I take her... should I press the panic button?

HB: (shock)

These were the thoughts in my head (nervous laughter)... and I said, "You know what, I think we need to stop. Let's go outside." And we went outside and she kind of calmed down and then she left.

Lila's account of the violence shows how the racist behaviours were escalating over many weeks. The moment when the client physically assaults her by throwing condoms at her is the moment in which her "practice" is compromised. However, the challenges to practice had begun long before the physical assault. The client's racist ideas were being expressed for a long time and Lila ceased to signify as a social worker long before the assault occurred. Lila's body as a racialized woman (read immigrant) signified a threat, an assault to the client's understanding of who can legitimately belong as a citizen in Canada.

Lila's discomfort within the account, and the uncertainties circulating about her practice signify the absence of good practice when she says, "I didn't do anything about it." However, a powerful reflection is made in a moment during the interview in which she states that she is not sure that any person of colour has the skills to deal with an encounter such as this:

I don't feel like I had those skills set to deal with her you know. I don't know... I don't even know if there are for a person of colour. I mean I suppose there's maybe a person of colour out there - a social worker who could have dealt with that. Yeah I mean there's definitely ways I could have dealt with that situation better. But, I don't think I was out of place then... I don't look back and think if I'd only done that... I just accept that that's where I was at that time right... and that's what I did.

What is interesting to note here is Lila's use of the language surrounding skills. She is not sure that she or other racialized subjects possess the skills. Lila reinscribes the language of skills to suggest that there may be other methods available to deal with these situations. Her reflection keeps the discussion located within individualizing discourses related to skills and competencies and points to the ways in which professional lives are continuously organized around individual merits, skills and talents. When I explored the effects of the encounter she says:

I was scared for my life really. I didn't know what she was going to do. I felt physically threatened. She already sort of got to me emotionally and psychologically. And then she was up and in my face.

But what I remember mostly and I'll never forget...that feeling of '*can I take her or do I have the panic button*' because I felt like I was... I never thought that I would think of getting into a physical confrontation with a client...it's so bizarre right? That's sort of what stayed with me.

The potential for a physical confrontation is a possibility that Lila had never anticipated in her career as social worker. What is most troubling for Lila is to have an experience of herself in which she could potentially retaliate by using physical force. The possibility for violence has a lasting and heightened effect on how she sees herself as a social worker. I asked her about her commitments to social work values, and she was clear that she did not care about any of it in the face of the encounter with her client.

Subsequently, the team made a decision to place a ban on the client for a few weeks. Lila later learned that previous bans had been placed on the client for uttering racial slurs at other staff, leading her to question the usefulness of the bans. Removing the client from the centre provides a temporary intervention, and is a response from the organization, but what does this response do? I will suggest here that it offers a temporary method to regulate the client, while the issues of race remain untouched within the organization. The only way members of the organization can recognize racism is to view it as evil (Hage, 2000) or as Goldberg (2009) states, the practices of “the socially dislocated heart” (p. 23), as opposed to a regular effect of white supremacy (Hesse, 1997). Born again racism operates through these responses to pathologize the practices of racism (Essed, 1991; Goldberg, 2009). When I asked Lila what supports and responses might have been useful, she stated that she needed proper supervision on how to address the client:

I mean maybe if I would have gotten the proper supervision but when there’s an overall culture where you don’t talk about race, you know it doesn’t really create an environment where you’re going to take that risk and talk about it right. And I have to say that I used to in the back of my head have this fear that if I, and I don’t know how legitimate the fear was, but this is how I felt that if I talked about my client who’s racist and I found it difficult to work with her would that mean... would that somehow be used against me in terms of my professional abilities and skills?

This insight from Lila illustrates how social work values can collude with the operation of racism and regulate the conduct of social workers of colour. Naming racism and stating one’s limits to working with a client who exercises racism produces anxieties about how her skills will be perceived by the organization. The anxieties are shaped through an overarching silence about issues of racism, within an organization that claims to celebrate diversity (Ahmed, 2012). As I reflect upon this account, questions arise related to whether or not management has a

responsibility to notify teams about situations in which harm may be inflicted, whether this is a racialized expression of harm or any discrimination across a number of different axes of difference. What supports might be put in place for workers prior to being assigned this client?

The watershed moment for Lila arrives when the team approaches her about the client being offered services again in the agency:

I remember months later the sub manager came to our team and said somebody's got to see her. She still needs social work services. And I... it was weird...I never cried ever. And in that meeting, I started to cry. And I couldn't stop it. I felt like such an idiot. Because I realized that that had really impacted me on such a major level. And I have to tell you, I've never cried in a meeting. That was the first time. And I realized, wow that was just awful. And then, it's not my current manager, my old manager, she came back and actually she was supportive. She was like this is a health and safety issue and that's awful that that happened. So it's kind of uneven right. Oh and I think that the other manager, the one that ignored me and then realized that she shouldn't have... she started to do damage control right. She said, it was so hard because it's... there's so many layers, there's also class. So basically saying this is a poor woman and she's so vulnerable. Yeah they keep saying this vulnerable client. So therefore, we have to... basically... I felt the message was we have to make exceptions so suck it up right.

A conflicted relationship exists for Lila around giving space and evidence to the injuries caused by the incident. The fact that she has never cried in front of the team is of significance to her. But the account also points to another example in which racism disappears from the encounter, because it is framed as a health and safety issue (which is also correct); in addition, racism disappears through client-centred discourses that refocus the attention on the client's vulnerability. Lila is clear that she did not feel powerful within this incident, "you know normally as a worker you have more power than the client... I didn't feel like that in that situation. You know it just blurred all those roles right..." This particular incident marks a limitation for Lila that she believes is important for organizations to understand, i.e. that there are *limits* to client-centred practices:

I realized then afterwards that there's a limit to who I can work with. You know I'm not in a place right now to work with somebody so profoundly racist. You know I can't work

through that. And that's my limits you know. So it helps me understand my limits. And then I think as a social worker and it's not my belief that as a social worker you have to work with every single population. I don't believe that.

Within these contexts then, is it ever possible for a racialized social worker to be viewed as experiencing vulnerability or constrained power? Can she be seen as a 'good and compassionate worker' if she refuses to provide services to the client? How would she be perceived if she physically defended herself when she was assaulted by the client? The tears mark the strong and lasting effects of the encounter:

When I was growing up I had a lot of really awful racists things happen to me right. And I think it... now I feel stronger, I can deal with it better I don't... it all happened as a child when you're so defenseless right. I mean it still hurts and bothers me if I'm... if I experience racism as an adult. But I feel like I'm so much better able to deal with it now than when I was a child right. But having that experience and then sitting in that room crying.... it made me feel that oh you could easily *go back there*. I mean that's the feeling I had...

The history of racialized violence is imprinted on the encounters with the client and, I suggest here, with the team as well. Recognition of the injury is framed in terms of a health and safety act, which is certainly appropriate in the workplace, but the racial content of the incident remains off the page. The effects of the incident for Lila and others in this study point to the importance of understanding how racialized bodies are harmed historically and the ways in which these injuries are re-enacted in the present (Ahmed, 2004a). However, this particular analysis is lost within hegemonic, institutional practices (intertwined with social work values) to sever histories of violence and reinscribe pathology, individuation, and worker competency.

Who is permitted to have an experience of vulnerability is very important here. In *Precarious Life*, Butler (2004) argues that "vulnerability must be perceived and recognized in order to come into play in an ethical encounter and there is no guarantee that this will happen" (p. 43), as grief and loss require the pre-condition of humanization and norms of recognition. Is it possible for Lila's vulnerability to be recognized here? Or in Tara's account, in which her white colleague applauded her practice for her client-focused care, what happens to the racial injury, in addition to addressing the consequent dilemmas with the client? For Tara, Seema and Janet, their work

places maintain innocence through ideas about the importance of being helpful and compassionate, and view such encounters as the bad practices of a few lost individuals (Hesse, 2004).

The participants describe an emotional life that is produced through these and similar encounters. There is also an assumption within their narratives that their feelings must be hidden from view, for fear that white co-workers will respond in negative and possibly dismissive ways. Tara's story illuminates these struggles insofar as she is figuratively and literally swallowing away the pain ("lump in my throat"). Hiding the emotional side of the experience is a move back towards processes of individuation, in which subjects are to perform not only as neutral, but as rational subjects (Davies, 2005; Schick, 2000). In her critiques about the privatization of emotions, Ahmed (2004a) reiterates this point by stating that, "To be emotional is to have one's judgments affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous" (p. 3). Both workers' accounts reveal the operation of the complex binary between the private and the professional, in which reactions to racism are treated like a personal concern on the one hand, and on the other, professional discourses dictate that workers maintain an objective and distant stance.

Jas, a Punjabi Sikh woman working in the area of probation and parole, describes an ongoing challenge with a white male client. In her interactions with this client, he would come in weekly and make vicious threats against people of colour:

He was very violent. Very, very violent. And basically he spat on the ground when he was talking about me and about the colour of my skin and that people like me should be shot and killed. It was very violent and it was extremely abusive.

HB – (expresses shock) What would you do in the moment when he would say these things?

I was very angry, and it was very demeaning. It was very humiliating. There was no talking with him. After I kicked him out of the office and went back to my office, I literally sat there stunned to the point that I had tears and was crying. And again my manager came down and validated those ... she told me it was 'inappropriate, disgusting and I can't believe that happened.'

Jas explains that although her manager was disgusted by the client's behavior, there was still an expectation to maintain the professional commitment to the client and to book follow up meetings with him. This expectation needs attention as it begs an inquiry into the safety protocols of the service. This man was making death threats that were racially organized. As the incidents with him carried on in the same way at each appointment, Jas made the decision to have her manager sit in on the meetings:

We would get into it every time he would come in. It was actually becoming very difficult, and I would advise my manager to sit on the meeting to witness what was going on, and he was racist in the meeting and she interrupted him, but again I didn't feel as though it was very...she wasn't very direct and very clear about it. I felt as though she was very intimidated by this client. In the end the client was transferred to a white probation officer. The way it was set up, and the way it was presented to me, was that we don't want to make it difficult for you every time he shows up. It's going to be difficult for you emotionally. It's going to be draining. Do you really want to get into *arguments* with him each time? You know it's not going to be *productive*. So they transferred the case.

HB – What did their response mean to you when transferring him?

That I wasn't good enough, and that he would be better suited with someone who's obviously not of colour. I mean the things I really wanted to say to him, I could not say. You know, so it was very difficult for me to maintain that professionalism...

The manager's attempts to halt the client's racist behaviour results in her direct intervention with him, but also in his transfer to a white worker. As in Seema's encounter, Jas is told that they are moving him for her well-being. The encounters are described as arguments resulting in distress, emotional difficulty and a lack of productivity. Framing the encounters as 'arguments' suggests that the interactions between Jas and the client are simply disagreements and the effects of this language is to divorce historical processes of subject-formation from their professional relationship. Jas describes the meetings with him as violent, humiliating, and demeaning, resulting in moments where she cannot maintain professionalism within her work with him. In addition, Jas observes her manager's discomfort with the client as well. In this situation, there is no doubt for all involved that the client is exhibiting violent and racist behavior. However, the

expectation within this situation is that the client must still be granted services. The decision to move him to a white worker suggests that the situation will be less stressful with a white worker and therefore, more productive. However, what does productivity mean within this setting? Early in the interview, I had asked Jas about the particular role social workers play in corrections, and she stated that although they are required to offer counselling, support clients and so on, in reality work is dictated by practices of enforcement:

I think that we're more enforcement oriented. As much as there's a push for the ministry to be asking us to work with our clients, to validate their concerns, that social work piece, the bottom line is that we're enforcement. That's what we are. And the unfortunate thing is that if something happens, if one of our clients commits some sort of crime, or something major happens, a lot of the probation and parole officers, the first thing they think about is not what type of impact that has had on the client or how is the client doing. It comes back to you and protecting yourself, because unfortunately the ministry is going to come after you.

Within Jas's narrative we can identify the tensions between critical social work practices and government regulation, defined through practices of enforcement. Their clientele are individuals who have become involved with the law, and probation officers come to represent a regulatory body within the state to ensure that offenders will not perpetrate again in the future. If the client runs into trouble, based on Jas's description, probation officers are first in line for having their practices questioned. This description of the particular social work role within corrections offers a clue into the motivations to keep the client within the system (as a body that needs to be managed) and offers some explanation into the manager's preoccupation to ensure that regular appointments are booked to guarantee the client is abiding by his probation regulations.

The other layer to this situation is the fact that the racism exhibited by the client remains intact within the governing practices of enforcement. Client-centred practice is not motivated by social work values toward empathy, caring and support. On the contrary, social workers are employed to enforce surveillance in which subjects involved with the law are to be monitored. Shaping the exchanges between Jas and her client as arguments operates to minimize the violence invoked by the client through his threats to shoot and kill people of colour and spit at the worker. Is this practice not seen as a breach of his probation agreement, to utter death threats at a worker? What

kind of behaviour constitutes concern or reason for action on the part of the institution? Furthermore, productivity is centrally connected to the emotional distress Jas experiences each week. She is situated as the worker who cannot perform her duties, i.e. to regulate and manage her client. We can argue that Jas's safety is at the center of the decision to move the client to a white worker. However, it can also be argued that within the institutional culture of law enforcement, probation services cannot be refused to a client due to the Ministry's regulation of corrections practices and services. Therefore, it is better to move him to a worker who will be less affected by the client as long as productivity (read regulation) is maintained. The white supremacist behaviour exhibited by the client disappears through the language of productivity, moving him to a white worker, and framing the emotional distress experienced by Jas as a private experience, personal to her. There are many costs and effects of this encounter on the role Jas plays as a social worker, but also, as racialized woman. I am reminded here again of Lila's question as to whether or not any person of colour possesses the skills to respond to these moments. The language of skills once again makes an appearance to divorce the crisis from practices of domination. Racism must be acknowledged as one of the risks of the job, yet it is a risk that white people do not share. It needs to be named as racism within organizations, in which people of colour are not problematized for having responses to violence, but instead, the violence is recognized as a consequence of institutional whiteness.

Racist practices across the various accounts illuminate the micro-processes involved in what Hage (2000) refers to as "nationalist practices" (p. 39), in which an ideal nation is defended through utterances and practices that classify "undesirability" (p. 38). Lila, Jas and the other participants of this study are subjects who were constructed outside of national belonging and who do not fit in the national imaginary as members of the white nation, or to be more specific, within representations of civility. I am also bringing attention to the ways in which racial differentiation, according to Goldberg (2009), eventually brings with it the "suggestion of a threat" (p. 28, emphasis in original). Building on the arguments that racialized social workers are bodies out of place in the national imagination, their presence comes to disturb the "institutional landscape" (Puwar, 2004, p. 48). Responses to the disruption manifest through a number of different practices, such as questioning Janet's skills and capabilities, or moving Seema's white client to a white worker without any discussion of the effects of such a move. In incidents such as those described by Lila and Jas, where clients exercise violence as a response to the threat the

racialized workers pose to the purity and moral sanctity of the white nation, Lila and Jas are constructed as problems and their problems of racism create challenges for the organizations.

The common thread running through these incidents are that social workers of colour question their capabilities as professionals. In participant accounts, conflict is anticipated, as it is in Janet's account during her discussion with her colleague, or Tara's when she attempts to address the racist comments being made about black and South Asian communities. Not only is conflict anticipated, I maintain that conflict is inevitable (Ahmed, 2000; Essed, 1991; Goldberg, 2009). Once racism makes its presence known, the participants in this research share a diversity of responses from their institutions that silence the racist event, or deny that these concerns raise relevant questions for social work education and practice. Furthermore, identifying racism also depends upon how each subject understands racism. For example, in Sim's account, there is recognition of the operation of racism, but it is taken up as a personal reaction that does not belong in the therapeutic encounter. It was through the interview process that the intersections between the personal and professional became evident for her. An individualist discourse runs throughout her narratives, as it the case with most workers' accounts about their practices to highlight the inescapability of how a unitary subject informs understandings about identity formation and experience (Heron, 1999).

For the worker to remain client-centred and helpful they must regulate their emotions and divorce their responses from the social and historical processes that have shaped their reactions, such as histories of racial violence (Ahmed, 2012; Walkerdine, 2006). Service user needs are organized within the particular context of each institutional site, whether it is a woman's centre providing anti-violence services, or a correction's office facilitating rehabilitation programs. Critical social work discourses attempt to bring the social to traditional practices to challenge individualism, but in our contemporary moment, critical discourses may lend themselves to racialized neoliberal agendas, largely due to their unexamined colonial underpinnings, in which civility (whiteness) is kept intact through regulatory practices of helping (Heron, 2007). Success or failure, efficiency or lack of productivity are all largely understood to be shaped by the worker's skills and effectiveness.

5.4 Wish Lists and Negotiated Strategies

A question was posed to me about including resistance practices or particular strategies that social workers of colour employ in the face of these difficult dilemmas. Although these particular sites of inquiry are vital to the larger analysis of this thesis, I hesitate to treat resistance or strategies outside of and separate from the encounters themselves. My hesitation is largely informed by my argument that resistance practices are enacted throughout various arrangements of power and never outside of them. I follow Foucault (1978) who suggests, “Where there is power, there is also resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (p. 95). Deconstructing the practices of racial formation and their subsequent effects is not intended to produce a ‘one size fits all’ understanding about change, nor is it a move that absolves individuals of responsibility. To do this would infer a prescribed formula in which a particular ‘to do’ list is designed to ensure that various trespasses do not occur again.

Instead, I propose thinking about the question of strategies as practices of negotiation, which are dependent upon the social, historical and contextual practices within particular sites. Negotiation shifts the analysis away from fixed points of success or failure to a discussion about how specific responses are organized discursively, shaping certain meanings for the workers interviewed in this research. Howarth and Hook (2005) advocate for approaches that move beyond the fixing of racism, and stress the impossibility of such a project. Although the project of fixing racism feeds into idealized notions of a world free of racism and colludes with born again racism (Goldberg, 2009), Howarth and Hook (2005) stress the importance of not freezing the analysis at sites of resignation or defeat whereby the logics of race and processes of racialization are the sole sites of analysis. As an alternative, they argue that an effective analysis of racism involves “the ways in which it becomes *unintelligible*, problematic, contested and rejected in people’s everyday sense-making cultural practices and social relationships” (Howarth & Hook, 2005, p. 12, emphasis in original).

Following Foucault (1978) and Howarth and Hook (2005), I present accounts that describe how social workers of colour negotiate a different set of practices. Although there are some common themes, they are also varied. Some of these accounts describe worker practices that have shifted over time, centralizing the individual efforts of workers. Although I am providing some specific

examples here of how workers construct alternative practices, as argued at the beginning of the thesis, all of the narratives within the research serve to disrupt hegemonic practice scripts linked to social work's social justice ideals. The struggles, doubts and questions that are raised by workers are not sites of weakness; instead, I argue that they are sites of rupture and discontinuities (Foucault, 1991b). As sites of discontinuity, the concerns raised by workers open up different ways to think about critical social work practice.

5.4.1 Is It About Me or You?:

The following accounts describe the varied meanings that workers construct about racism and the changes they wish to see. In some situations, workers strive for strategies that entail developing particular sets of skills, and for other situations workers require a greater response and recognition from the institutions where they work, and in social work education. The narratives provide insights into the different ways in which social workers of colour understand resistance, change and support.

David, who has been a social worker for over thirty years, shares that his vulnerability to racism has shifted over the duration of his career. He explains that his experience of vulnerability to racism was much more intense when he first began working as a social worker. However, over a number of different encounters in and outside of his role as a social worker, he has developed what he describes as personal confidence:

I think it is important for us to measure our vulnerability to racism, whether it be personal, institutional, societal, longitudinally along the career of the non-white worker, because I think at the beginning we are likely to be more vulnerable to it. As we go along we can absorb it much more easily. I am strong, competent, in dealing with it today.

It can be argued here that David's relationship to vulnerability is also informed by gendered (masculine) constructions about confidence, through which vulnerability is eventually conquered and transformed. When I asked David what it means to absorb racism, he explained that it requires an acknowledgement of the racism:

Well when I say absorb it that is I don't ignore it. I take it into the working baggage that this person brings to me. That never leaves the field of my consciousness.

For David, there is an expectation that racism will take place in practice, it is anticipated and he refers to it as a form of baggage, a container that will hold various feelings, histories and ideas. The metaphor of baggage also depicts a certain degree of heaviness, or extra weight that is to be carried around. Therefore, assessing the weight of race comes to mean an assessment of the vulnerability produced by racism; for David, this process means that its absorption will get easier over time. When I asked him what it means to respond to racism now as opposed to earlier in his career, he states:

I know how to deal with it and field it. I know how to field it back to them as what does this mean to you and what difference might it make and bring it back to their own sense of lack of self-compassion.... the way in which they value themselves and feel about themselves is externalized onto this person.

HB-Being you?

Yes. The helper. So it is not me. I am me.....ok, it's not me. I'm me, and I'll help you with being you. You don't have to externalize your vulnerabilities onto me.

To refocus it back onto the client would just be the method to get to exactly dealing with and processing, deconstructing our personal put downs, our personal interpsychic vulnerabilities that we merely externalize onto other people. What do we/I mean, the heart of racism is an externalization of your preoccupations.

Professional confidence comes from personal confidence. I love I have this freedom of using my strengths of being articulate, humorous, intelligent, and multilingual. I value those things, but it all flows very easy when you have this confidence about yourself. So that gets played out for sure.

His practices to address racism are intended to reflect the discriminatory act back to the client. According to David, the client embodies a flaw, a lack of self-compassion, and it is this flaw that invites the client to hurt others. As I argued using Hamilton's (1943) work in Chapter Three, self-love and compassion are treated as antidotes to 'unlovely' motives. According to Hamilton, the more self-reflexive a person is, the more they are able to love others. David's response to clients who hurt others fuels this idea, and more importantly, within his account there is an assumption that he (the helper) has a key role to play in assisting the client towards greater

practices of self-love. The assumption here is that racist behavior is motivated by vulnerabilities and insecurities that are misplaced onto racialized subjects. This particular approach divorces racism from its historical and normalizing effects, in which white subjects are embroiled within normalizing discourses shaping what constitutes humanity, morality and civility. Racist practices become the individual property of troubled souls or, in other words, racism is an individual pathology, innate to white subjects. What histories, ideas and beliefs shape the client's vulnerabilities? How might social work education make the connections between the normalizing effects of whiteness and micro-practices of racism? Charlise also identifies practices of racism as evidence of a lack of self-worth,

I think what happens is that I realize it is not about me. It is about their deficiencies in their own lives and the lack of compassion that they experienced and their lack of self-esteem and the nothingness in their lives. I believe it is coming from that place for them.

Although vulnerability and insecurity are factors in the process, the deficiencies are individualized, as are discourses about strength. Strength and confidence are produced as attributes made of one's individual abilities as opposed to sites in which subject formation and subjectivity are produced relationally (Davies, 2000; Walkerdine, 1990). David and Charlise offer understandings that point to influences from psychological discourses in which problems can be addressed at the "level of psychological processes" (Healy, 2005, p. 49). Within these accounts, we see the circulation of a self that is contained, and change is described as a linear progression in which responding to racism becomes easier over time.

Seema's narrative points towards a different understanding of racist dilemmas. Like David and Charlise, Seema notes a difference her responses over the course of her career. However, her narrative points to the complexities involved within practice and a movement away from individualizing discourses:

It's a daily occurrence that you have to build a tolerance up for. You develop thick skin that's for sure.... over time. I clearly pick and choose my battles. I'm really strategic. You know, and they're days still you know, that still that get to me. Or there are certain clients even if you have the discussion and the dialogue, you still have the anxiety because you're waiting for them to basically ignore the conversation or not talk about it right. So I mean you know... I don't know. I have had clients where I have had the

discussion, we've had a dialogue, but you still have some anxiety about it, 'I've got to address this... Like I've got to bring this up again.' Those discussions are never easy. They do create some anxiety sometimes for sure. And then the worst ones are sometimes the ones where you didn't address it. Like especially from earlier on where you didn't address it and you keep sitting with it. Because you were told that you have no choice too. Can you imagine what that does to somebody? I had to sit there and listen to a client over and over again, who was racist towards me, who *liked me*, right but thought I was different. I don't know what that meant. And I'm not sure that I explored it with her at that time.

Although Seema describes a process in which her responses have changed over time, ("developing a thick skin"), her account illustrates that the processes are complicated and ongoing. In other words, the effects of racism are always circulating and workers do not simply conquer the effects through the development of certain skills, such as confidence. Picking and choosing battles requires an assessment not only of how a worker develops an understanding of self, but being strategic requires taking into account the contextual conditions in which action is possible. Anxiety can still make its appearance, and the production of anxiety is not innate to the subject or her lack of skills, but produced both relationally and historically. Second, the instability of these moments suggests that practices are regulated by the ideals of the profession through which workers receive the message that there is no choice but to accept what a client says and does. Whereas David and Charlise locate the responses to these moments as sites of personal confidence and skills, Seema's account contextualizes these encounters to illustrate how anxieties are produced through the relational context of the practice moment. Seema's account offers a different way to look at how the conditions shaping the encounters may or may not facilitate change:

I don't fault people, honestly wherever they are in their practice. I mean I think you've got to do whatever you've got to do. Because some people you know, it's... it's really complicated. And I think, I certainly don't pass judgment on what people need to do to survive. I don't. Yeah I certainly have a colleague I can think of who is a person of colour who in her situation she wouldn't have been able to say anything... because she couldn't risk losing her job. She's got kids to feed. And I thought to myself back then,

what was that like for her and how she was older than me... and how many stories has she heard. You know. So it's a lot to think about.

Seema's narrative moves practices out of the realm of skills, personal confidence or individual pathology, to offer a more nuanced understanding of the different ways in which subjects are positioned, and how their experiences are shaped by complex relations of power. I am also reminded of Lila's insistence that racialized workers ought to be able to exercise choice about working with a client who exhibits racist behavior, and her questions about whether or not these challenges can ever be addressed through the construction of skills. Lila is forthright in exploring the possibilities to exercise limits on our client-centred, critical practices. Her encounter with the client raises serious concerns and questions about whether or not we can refuse services in situations where discrimination and violence is occurring.

5.4.2 Acknowledging Racism

Each of the accounts presented in this thesis illustrates how racism is made invisible through social work ideals and how neoliberal preoccupations with individualism and competency fuel a raceless racism that casts the effects of racial violence into the realms of the personal and private experience (Goldberg, 2009). Racism is treated as an obscure occurrence, and efforts to recognize its operation require that social workers of colour be supported to bring these issues to members of their teams, during clinical consultations meetings or to managers. Many workers shared that they want to discuss these moments as legitimate dilemmas in practice with their teams. Deepi explains how the construction of the worker/client relationship as one built on notions of helping results in a different response to the racist expression:

Even in moments outside of the social work setting...the amount of times that you come across people making racialized comments, there is a second of decision making in those moments. Do I confront this? Do I say something about it? In those moments you have a choice to walk away, to never see that person again, to heal your injuries that have happened, and to carry on. But with a client that you are going to see them on a daily basis, you don't necessarily always have those choices.

Deepi's distinction between racism as random and racism that occurs during professional practice highlights the ways in which race-based aggressions can operate in multiple and shifting

ways. Within the context of the worker/client relationship, the client is not a subject the worker can simply walk away from or refuse to work with. Is it possible to set boundaries and limits when the worker is experiencing violence? This question invites further questions, e.g. what forms of violence would elicit a response from co-workers? Would the racial slurs expressed by Lila's client during the weeks leading up to the physical assault be considered violence? Organizations must first recognize that a violation has occurred, to ever consider setting limitations to client-centred practices. For many workers, it is important to have support through clinical consultation, as described here by Tara, who also stressed that the significance of these questions must first be raised at the level of social work education:

Well after having this conversation, and being able to name it as a clinical issue, I'd like to be able to, you know, bring that into the workplace more, have those kinds of conversations, right? And policies around ...we can't change folks' minds, but you can talk about what's okay, and talk about it here. Maybe for staff to be able to come and talk about it, I know we have clinical supervision, but I just want more opportunities to talk about this at work I think. How that will happen I don't know, just dreaming the big dream right? But this can be recognized as a clinical issue, practice issue, even at the schools right? The social work schools so you can kind of start trying to wrap your head around it.

Tara wishes for these dilemmas to be recognized by organizations as legitimate practice dilemmas, and education or policy development may be a way in which some accountability could be created by organizations. Although providing an analysis of the ways in which racism operates in social work education is out of the scope of this thesis, I will mention briefly here that many of the social workers interviewed for this study explained that their social work education did not prepare them for these difficult moments in their practice lives. Most of their education focused on strategies to work with diverse communities through cultural sensitivity models, but their education did not examine what it means to practice social work as a racialized person experiencing racism. For some workers, this gap in education is striking in comparison to what they describe as an overemphasis on educating white students about how they might work with populations of difference. The overarching critique suggests that social work education is still about and for white subjects (Jeffery, 2002). Critiques about whiteness and anti-racism reinscribe the very practices of oppression that they wish to address, and white subjects remain at

the centre of knowledge production. Through humour, Seema describes the effects of having to read the classic text by Peggy McIntosh (1988) on the “Invisible Knapsack of White Privilege:”

The material never talked about people of colours’ perspectives and it’s all geared more towards white audiences, educating white audiences. I certainly got pieces out of it – it wasn’t just also about race but it was also on homophobia, sexism so there was a whole bunch of things that it was on. And there were pieces that I got out of it for me, but the readings particularly on race weren’t geared to me, they were geared to white audiences. And I don’t think I really need to read, personally, on unpacking the white knapsack by Peggy McIntosh (laughter). I mean it’s a classic...but also didn’t facilitate my learning as well (laughter) in any sort of way. But we spent weeks on that! And it was always *the* article.

As a woman of colour. Let’s unpack my invisible knapsack. Because let me tell you it’s quite invisible (laughter)! As I am showing you, *I am* carrying an invisible knapsack – Peggy got to unload hers (huge laughter) and everybody came together to carry it around, but nobody asked me what’s in my knapsack (sarcastic laughter)...and they *still don’t!!* (very loud laughter) ...instead it just becomes more and more invisible until somebody sees that I am carrying a honking camper on my back! (uncontrollable laughter). Ohhh....we laugh but it’s true!

This moment between Seema and I marked in many respects the heart of the thesis. Her humored description of the McIntosh article points to the central concerns around the ways in which the racial organization of the profession normalizes white domination and works to minimize and make invisible the weight of racialized discourses and racism for social workers of colour. I don’t believe that the value of the McIntosh article itself was being mocked here, but instead, her narrative brings attention to the ways in which whiteness reclaims the centre, even within critical practice approaches; and she suggests that people of colour carry a heavy burden as a result of not being supported to discuss the effects of racism within the profession.

Contemporary critical social work practices towards critical reflexivity (although an important intervention), can create an adverse effect in which (white) innocence is reinscribed at the very moment in which ‘bad practices’ or the naming of privilege takes place (Ahmed, 2005). Many of the workers in this research describe team meetings as settings in which some clinical

consultation takes place, or engagement with critically reflexive processes. However, the particular culture and organization of the meetings dictate how (and if) racism will be addressed. Discussions about racist encounters in clinical practice, as illustrated by the narratives of this research, are risky business whether the worker is employed in a more progressive, grassroots setting or in a bureaucratic setting such as a hospital. Although many workers express that it is important to formally discuss racist encounters with their teams, for Seema, there is some risk involved:

You know what, I'm really not sure that I would do that (have conversations), like honestly, I am being really honest with you. I don't think that there is anything they could do (chuckle) that would really invite me to have those conversations. Um...I've just been around the block too many times to know that that's probably really dangerous...I don't know, I'm not really hopeful about that. And perhaps I will be at some point, but right now I'm not. I'm not sure what they could do. It's just like....I think it's a lot better talking to my friends and maybe not so much people in the agency, but maybe they need to hire outside people.

I would have to see a lot work done by the agency and colleagues before I would even think about doing that. You could share some stuff...I would share stuff that wouldn't get exploited or held up as *the* story that would make them all cry and feel shameful. Because I can see how stories can also get manipulated and used in a way that is very exploitive you know. So I wouldn't want to share one of those stories. I might share what I would consider a safer story, but certainly not one....I guess I don't trust that they are going to respect the story or me, or really hear it. So, I'm not sure that I would disclose that.

For Seema, there is a very real worry present about how racism is denied or may be exploited as education for white subjects. She identifies the complexities that shape how different people will hear each other's stories, to stress that the production and telling of stories is never outside of relations of power (Boler, 1999; Razack, 1998). When workers of colour bring these issues to their organization can they ever really control how they will tell the story? Can they choose to omit discussions about the effects of racism and solely focus on the skills required to address the client when they see them again? How will co-workers consume the stories of racialized workers? Razack (1998) draws on the work of Massaro (1989), who states that the processes

through which subjects hear each other's stories is largely "dependent on the moral code with which we function" (as cited in Razack, 1998, p. 41). In other words, how are discourses of what is considered good or bad constructed within various fields of study? White peoples' identities are tightly woven into being seen as good and tolerant and the desire to maintain this identity requires engaging in practices that reinscribe innocence (Ahmed, 2004b; Heron, 1999). Being charged with racism pulls white people outside of an identity that is dependent upon being seen as good and moral. Seema's cautionary notes illuminate the risks involved when white peoples' sense of self as good subjects is threatened or challenged. Their attachments and desires to be virtuous and good will shape the "interpretive structures" (Razack, 1998) of how racialized subjects are heard and if their experiences of racial violence will count as sites of violence.

Critical reflexivity might open up the space to discuss a diversity of issues and subject positions; however, the reflexive process is at risk of becoming a project in and of itself (Ahmed, 2004b) to silence various experiences that workers of colour encounter in the workplace. The narratives in this chapter illustrate that there are particular rules governing how workers engage in practices of reflexivity with teams. If reflection about practice entails the supervision of bad practice in which the worker uses the space to process feelings of guilt or shame, then how can a worker of colour ever be seen as a good worker when she is naming experiences of anger, frustration or disconnection from clients as a result of racist encounters? How then do workers of colour engage in critical reflexivity with teams to discuss race? In her critique of the practice of storytelling for social change, Razack (1998) echoes these concerns:

The problems of voice and identity are packed with internal dilemmas not only for the listeners but also the tellers of the tale. Often women of colour are asked to tell their stories while others will do the theorizing and writing up. Yet the chance to speak, to enter your reality on the record, as it were, is as irresistible as it is problematic. What kind of tale will I choose to tell and in what voice? (p. 52)

In telling our stories, processing our work as social workers, reflecting critically on our practice, I ask the following question: what do people of colour have to deny, silence or make invisible to engage in the reflexive process? There is a double bind present for workers of colour in their commitments to critical reflexivity: on the one hand, social work education centralizes reflexive practices as a tool towards anti-oppressive practice, and on the other hand the issues that workers

can or cannot discuss or reflect upon are determined by their organizations, as was the case for Ishar, Seema and Lila. If good practice depends up on critical reflection about ‘bad practice,’ can social workers of colour ever be good workers when they attempt to reflect upon racist encounters in practice moments?

As an alternative to team consultation, many workers suggested that organizations hire an external consultant who may meet with workers to discuss difficult practice concerns. Additionally, workers stressed the importance of finding allies with shared commitments, and perhaps even a network for social workers of colour. Deepi would like to see upfront, transparent and clearly defined evidence of commitments from organizations to anti-racism. Alternatively, Seema would prefer to negotiate these tensions outside of the organization within a network or with an external consultant who is paid for by the organization:

I don't know if other cities have this support, if across agencies there would be a central place that workers of colour could go to talk about these issues – not a support group, but you know like processing sessions for therapists and you could have groups where we could all get together – not everybody from your agency – I am *supporting outside agency stuff more so*. I think that would have been helpful to sit with other people who were having these dilemmas and share. And then this is budgeted time within your workload at these places at these agencies, it is allotted time. I mean a lot has to go into place before that would happen, but I think that would be ideal. But it might have been helpful for me not to feel so alone right in the work

Having someone outside the agency allows the workers to be supported in a reflexive space as opposed to a site of possible surveillance from team members and managers. In addition, Seema makes a distinction between a network and a support group to avoid treating the network as a therapeutic space, but rather as a more political space. And third, the organization must support this time and treat it as a part of the workload of the social worker. However, David cautions against assumptions that all racialized workers will have similar experiences, and he worries about reinscribing stories of victimhood:

There is a danger as well in assuming that just because I am non-white having an entourage, a circle of support that is non-white, is the answer, because it is not. That can turn out to be a disempowering session of poor me the victim and how bad the system is.

I don't want that. I am not a victim. Ultimately the incident is the victim. It is not even the perpetrator who is the victimizer. There is a larger system, and I appreciate that, and that helps me with empathy.

Being able to step back and examine the larger macro systems of oppression assists him with his practice as an empathetic worker (he reinstalls empathy as good practice), and he cautions against reproducing discourses of victimhood. But I am left curious about how this particular understanding of collective organizing has been shaped for him. I cannot read his comment outside of discourses of dominance, in which racialized people are continually evaluating how they might be read by dominant groups. For David, to speak about oppression automatically produces worries about being seen as a victim. Is there another word or signifier that can describe the experiences of oppression without reinscribing the binaries of perpetrator/victim or strength/weakness? Can collective spaces construct multiple meanings that shape varied responses to racism or dilemmas in our work places? Many of the workers, who shared their desire for a network, explain that they do not assume sameness amongst members, "It's not the assumption that we're all going to be the same there" (Seema). Instead, the network might reduce the isolation experienced at work, or workers could explore different ways to respond and share information.

The need for a network speaks to the lack of support provided by schools of social work, and an inherent flaw in how social work education theorizes about power and difference. Workers consistently seek support outside of the organization by speaking to friends or other social workers of colour in different organizations. Informally the networks are already formed. The possibility of formalizing these connections raises interesting questions about possibilities for connection, support, and collective organizing.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented worker narratives describing the micro-processes of racism in everyday practice. I have illustrated how racial neoliberalism operates through the individualization of racism (born again racism) and through discourses of civility (helping, goodness, professionalism) to conceal the operation of white dominance. There are a number of

different technologies that are employed by institutions to disguise the operation of racism. Key within the institutional responses are the ways in which racism is denied and negated to preserve civility (whiteness) “as a matter of state self-definition” (Goldberg, 2009, p. 50). My analysis has also highlighted the ways in which social work ideals and practices converge with neoliberalism to regulate racialized workers. Consequently, whiteness in social work (as a discursive and material organizing of identity and practice) is intensified within racial neoliberal work place settings. The merger between social work values and neoliberalism reinstalls whiteness, colonial continuities and racialized violence at many different sites.

First, worker narratives illustrate that racism in social work practice is a regular occurrence. Second, there are many effects that workers experience as a result of micro-aggressions of racism, such as pain, confusion and shock. Third, sites of racial violence in everyday practice create confusion for workers regarding how to respond to the crisis within the practice moment, and legitimate concerns about how social work education organizes our practice about worker/client relations. Race-based aggression interrupts worker commitments to hegemonic scripts about social work practice (empathy, client-centred, and critically reflexive practices). However, I illustrate that the very ideals that shape good practice are the same commitments that work to reinstall whiteness. Whiteness is intensified through the racial organization of neoliberalism through which racism is privatized and situated as a problem between individuals (worker/client). I have illustrated within this chapter how social work values and ideals, although they may be in tension with neoliberalism at times, they can conspire with neoliberalism to secure white dominance. At times it is difficult to track when social work values are producing racism and when it is the influence of neoliberalism. I think this difficulty is created by the erasure of the colour-line (Alcoff, 2002) and neoliberal influences within social work. In social work, whiteness is erased through directives to be good and the production of goodness has always been constructed through the regulation of difference (Heron, 1999; Jeffery, 2002). Similarly, neoliberalism’s production of a free, autonomous and competent individual is historically constituted through practices of colonial violence, discourses of civility and individual reform (Goldberg, 1993; 2009). The civilized moral subject remains at the centre of their production (Heron, 2007).

This chapter demonstrates the challenges faced by racialized workers who cannot be seen as liberal, moral subjects when racism is named, as the very naming of racism disrupts both the

ideals of the profession and the neoliberal underpinnings of the state. Being seen as moral subjects requires an erasure of race, which is impossible for racialized people. This chapter has illustrated the moments in which race cannot be ignored by racialized workers, regardless of their investments in the ideals and practices of the profession. The production of civility is kept intact through colonial continuities (Heron, 1999) in which innocence and whiteness secure themselves at the very moments in which difference is denied. Workers of colour cannot be perceived as effective, empathetic or social justice oriented because racism pulls them outside of their skills to be empathetic, critically reflexive and client-centred. In other words, they cannot be good. The narratives presented in this chapter point to the trespasses, erasures and individualizing discourses that secure whiteness at the exact moment when race is made invisible. I believe that these incidents are key sites of concern for social work, as they reveal the ways in which social work values and ideals collude with racial neoliberalism (Goldberg, 2009) to perpetuate racialized violence in everyday practice on the job.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

Young (1997) notes that “Cultural imperialism consists in a group being made invisible at the same time that it is marked out and stereotyped” (as cited in Santoro and Kamler, 2001, p. 192). This thesis has presented complex examples of the ways in which racialized social workers are marked by difference while, at the same time, they are expected to perform a professional identity that is constituted through whiteness. My intention has been to examine how social workers of colour negotiate the terrain of goodness (whiteness) that has come to define the profession. My concerns about these issues are sparked by the contradictions that exist between the social justice-oriented values to which social work professes a commitment, and racist encounters that remain invisible and unacknowledged in the field of practice. The disjuncture between these two terrains has led to questions about how commitments towards social change are historically produced through the forgetting of the profession’s colonial past (Heron, 1999; Hesse, 2004) and by elevating an identity that needs to know itself through the construction of goodness and innocence.

The accounts provided by racialized social workers in this study have offered different ways to think about power and the subject-positions of workers and clients. The narratives reveal the ways in which whiteness remains concealed through scripts about goodness, and racism remains intact in social justice-oriented discourses of the profession. The moments when whiteness is most evident occurs when racist encounters take place with clients and co-workers. It is during these encounters that racialized social workers (despite their efforts) cannot be perceived, nor do they have an experience of themselves, as good workers. My intention within this thesis has not been to denounce the importance of client-centred, empathetic or critically reflexive practices, but to discuss how critical practices obscure whiteness, and arguably more so than is the case with less critical approaches. The critical social worker is able to deny his or her participation in hegemonic practices largely through the practice of client-centred care, empathy and critical self-reflection. As a social work educator, I believe that critical and self-reflexive practice enables us

to consider the complex ways in which power operates between workers and clients. However, as this thesis has illustrated, critical practices need attention to reveal their complicity in reinscribing innocence, whiteness and racial violence.

The research reveals a central and organizing paradox: the discursive arrangements within social work that constitute good, social justice based practice, are the very same discourses that disavow the operation of racism. The consequences of this paradox are exposed across three specific sites of analysis. These include social work as a site of analysis (values and practices), the institutions in which social workers practice, and finally, everyday sites of micro-based practices between social workers and clients.

My analysis begins from the position that social work is a profession that is constructed through complex scripts of whiteness (Bailey, 1998; Jeffery, 2002). I have drawn upon scholarship that critically examines the historical and social production of white normativity in helping professions (Heron, 1999; Schick, 2000; 2002). I argue that today's social workers closely mirror their historical counterparts. Investments in helping and goodness continue to frame their identity and practices (Heron, 1999; Margolin, 1997). In essence, social justice talk in social work remains 'helping' talk. Whereas historically a social worker gained social status through an unmarked identity, one that was simply accepted as the normative figure of humanity (Dyer, 1997), today's social worker achieves goodness by marking their identity as one that is in a power-over relationship to their clients. The good social worker is self-critical and conscious of relations of oppression. Notably, the practices of empathy, client-centred care and critical reflexivity appear in the narratives as road maps towards social justice-oriented practices. The discursive production of these practices contributes to the construction of desire (to be a critical worker) and innocence. Paradoxically, these discourses reinscribe imperial notions of helping (desire and innocence) and operate as technologies of white governance to dictate the conduct of social workers. However, whiteness remains concealed through the production of desires to help others and be critical, anti-oppressive practitioners. Racialized social workers cannot escape these scripts of whiteness; their narratives suggest that these directives are normalized within their own practices. However, theirs is not a straightforward investment, and racialized social workers' accounts, in particular Aboriginal workers, describe alternative practices towards helping that are linked to addressing histories of racism, colonialism and resistance.

Within the second site of analysis, diversity emerged as a major theme within institutions. Racialized social workers come to represent the literal embodiment of diversity (Ahmed, 2012). I examined the ways in which racialized workers are streamlined into certain practices (diversity consultants, cultural experts) over other roles, such as administrators or managers. I utilized scholarship that examines the relationship between space and bodies (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004) to argue that whiteness in institutions is secured through its proximity to difference. The narratives of the social workers interviewed here show that racialized workers are continually negotiating their practices through expectations to be the same as, that is to be white and, simultaneously, to be Other, a negotiation that is inescapable in the white world (Fanon, 1967). Social workers of colour experience great costs to themselves when they attempt to perform as both same and Other. Any challenges that racialized workers make to an institution's commitment to diversity (naming racism) are met with great consequences, such as surveillance of their work, ongoing assessment of their skills and competencies, and in some cases, termination from the organization.

In Chapter Five, I directed attention to the most destabilizing and illuminating narratives about the operation of racial violence in social work. The discussion shifted to the third site of analysis and relayed accounts that described micro-aggressions of racism within practice encounters with clients and colleagues. In this chapter, I showed that when racist micro-aggressions are expressed from clients, social workers of colour cannot be perceived as effective workers because the very act of naming racism pulls them outside of their skills to be critical workers; in other words, they cannot be good. The narratives presented in this chapter pointed to the trespasses, erasures and individualizing discourses that secure whiteness at the exact moments in which race is made invisible and racism is denied. I linked social work ideals with the practices of racial neoliberalism (S. Giroux, 2010; Goldberg, 2009) to demonstrate how workers are governed and regulated by discourses of civility. Social work's ideals and practices (being empathetic, client-centred, reflexive) conspire with neoliberalism's intensified individualism and focus on competences to regulate racialized workers' practices, and facilitate what Goldberg (2009) conceptualizes as a raceless racism, born again through the belief that racism is a problem of the past. I illustrated how racial violence and injury remain unchallenged through the very discourses in social work that construct the profession as a site of social justice. Empathy, critical reflexivity and client-centred practices are situated as markers of social workers' skills

and competencies. The paradox is unsettling and places social workers of colour within terribly perilous work environments. The cumulative effects of everyday racial violence (Essed, 1991; Goldberg, 2009) are of great consequence to social workers of colour.

6.2 Implications and Future Possibilities

Social work education has not developed a vocabulary to explore the ways in which workers may embody multiple subject-positions, as having power over the client but, simultaneously, as belonging to a marginalized group. Although post-structural perspectives in social work offer some possibilities for challenging the modernist, liberal foundations of the profession (Healy, 2000; Pease & Fook, 1999), the historical production of goodness and its racial formation have remained largely neglected within social work education. As described by participants in this study, schools of social work primarily instruct students to critically reflect upon their own sites of privilege, and the client's marginality. However, the narratives provided by racialized workers present significant discontinuities (Foucault, 1991b) to the ways in which worker/client relationships have been theorized. The research showed that social workers of colour experience serious dilemmas when racism occurs, which included racialized violence, in addition to a complicated suspension of their commitments to critical practices. Furthermore, attempts to challenge or educate clients about oppression cannot be held for very long by workers because professional discourses remind workers that the clients 'did not come here for this.'

Within these codified scripts, such as empathy, client-centred practice, and critical reflexivity, unspoken assumptions circulate to suggest that clients cannot engage in practices of violence, and conversely, social workers cannot experience vulnerability. How then can we explore sites of injustice that operate in multiple directions between workers and clients? What are the implications of this study for social work? This research illustrates the micro-processes through which racialized workers negotiate white dominance on the ground. Very few studies within the social work literature have examined the discursive and material production of whiteness and racism, as examined by racialized people. Second, this research offers a significant critique to social work education about the ways in which colonialism and imperialism continues to inform critical, social justice ideals and practices in contemporary social work, to reveal the ways in which the profession itself is produced through racialized discourses. Third, racial violence is an

inevitable and major consequence of the racially organized constitution of the profession. Social work must recognize and attend to the ways in which its colonial foundation shapes the identity and practices of social workers. This thesis provides a possible starting point for these conversations to take place.

Two key themes within the study could not be addressed within the scope of this thesis and require more attention in future research projects. The first deals with the ways in which whiteness is centred in social work education. Many workers shared experiences of marginalization and racism during their social work education. They describe significant gaps in the curriculum, racist expressions in the classroom and teachers not adequately responding to racism. More centrally, issues of race and racism are discussed within anti-oppression frameworks, in which whiteness remains concealed through the production of difference. Social work education often imagines a social work student who is white and who has to be taught how to think about diversity from a white standpoint and how to develop cultural sensitivity. Social work classrooms need to be critically examined as sites of imperialism. Future research needs to examine the production and effects of the imperial classroom.

Second, I was struck by the multiple effects of racialized violence described by workers. These are shared through stories about doubt, fear and anger. In addition, an unexpected and overwhelming effect that was described by many participants was an account about shame. I realized very early on that a complex analysis of the effects of violence was needed, but was out of the scope of this research. Too often, feelings of doubt, fear, anger and shame are personalized and located within the individual, as opposed to examining their social, political and relational production within complex practices of power. This thesis begins to explore the social and relational production of racial injuries at micro sites of social interaction, but I wish to expand upon this opening to explore how we might politicize the *micro effects* of racism. My concern is shaped by a need to challenge the ways in which the effects of racial violence are individualized. Additional scholarship and attention is required to deepen our understanding about the historical and social production of racialized violence and its effects at micro sites of subject-formation (Ahmed, 2004a). This area of research requires attention to develop and support an integrated analysis of the discursive, material and psychosocial effects of violence.

6.3 Concluding Thoughts

I have argued throughout the thesis that the workers' narratives rupture hegemonic practices of whiteness that run in and through social work discourses about good practice. In this sense, their stories are sites of resistance and directly challenge the ways in which whiteness is centred in social work. The accounts serve as counter-narratives that challenge the ways in which social work education has constructed knowledge about the profession's ideals and practices. Each of the workers interviewed for this study share experiences in which contestation, resistance and discontinuities invite new possibilities for social work education. Foster (1994) argues that counter-narratives can challenge dominant scripts within various sites of social inquiry and offer "new if not disturbing insights, alternative and disquieting ways of thinking, [they] can be a means for creating new paradigms and expanding existing ones" (p. 145). My focus on practice dilemmas and racism brings a new dimension to the existing literature on critical practices. I assert that the narratives described by the workers in this thesis are sites of *critical practice*. The stories shared by the participants in this study demand that attention be given to the ways in which social work's colonial roots shape present day commitments to social justice and critical practice approaches. It is my hope that this research pushes the boundaries of what can be recognized as critical social work, and raise questions about how the profession's values are lived on the ground during every day moments of social work practice.

Appendix A Invitation Letter

**Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – University of Toronto
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies
252 Bloor St. West, 12th Floor
Toronto, ON M5S 1V6**

Invitation to participate in a study exploring the effects of and responses to racism experienced by social workers of colour in the field.

My name is Harjeet Badwall. I am a doctoral candidate in the Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) – University of Toronto. I have been a practicing social worker for over ten years and my research concerns the ways in which issues of race and racism impact social workers of colour on the job.

Very little research has explored the effects of and responses to racism by workers of colour. When racism emerges institutionally and within direct clinical practice with clients, how are workers of colour responding to such moments? Do the social justice foundations of social work offer support to workers racism takes place in sites of practice? I am concerned with the ways in which workers of colour *respond* to such incidents, as I am curious about the ways in which such responses may aid in the expansion of critical social work education and practice.

I hope to speak to social workers of colour who have practiced or are presently practicing in the field. All information will be kept confidential within the research in relation to your identity, your practice sites and any discussions related to your clinical work with clients.

If you wish to participate in this research project, I can be reached at:

Harjeet Badwall
416-455-1223
hbadwall@oise.utoronto.ca

Please review the consent process as outlined on page two of this document.

Thank you for your interest.

Appendix B Consent to Participate

Letter of Consent to Participate in Research

I agree to be interviewed on audiotape for Harjeet Badwall's doctoral thesis as described above.

I understand that I will receive a summary of the findings and have access to the dissertation once it is published. I may request a typed transcript of my interview.

I understand that the interview tapes and transcripts will be kept in a locked file cabinet and will not be available to anyone except Harjeet Badwall and her thesis supervisor, Dr. Sherene Razack. I also understand that the tapes and transcripts will be destroyed after the research is completed.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that if I withdraw from the study, any contributions that I may have made to the study will be destroyed by the researcher.

I acknowledge that the interview which I provide is open to the researcher's interpretation and that she may, in fact, produce interpretations with which I may disagree.

I understand that my anonymity and the anonymity of the agency/agencies or clinical work I speak about will be protected. I understand that I am expected to maintain client confidentiality when speaking about my clinical practice. No identifying information about the agency, colleagues or clients will be revealed by the study.

Research Participant

Date

Harjeet Badwall
Researcher

Date

Thesis Supervisor:

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Office of Research Ethics

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Appendix C

Interview Guide

1. What interested you in becoming a social worker? (listen for values)
2. What values inform the foundations of the profession?
3. What does good social work practice mean to you?
4. What are the demographics of your team in your practice setting?
5. What services are provided?
6. Please describe your own practice?
7. How did you learn these practices?
8. In your experience, what gets in the way of practicing good social work?
9. What challenges do you experience in your practice with clients?
10. Do you ever experience racism at work? Please describe.
11. Do you ever encounter racism from clients? Please describe.
12. How have you responded to such moments?
13. What supports have members of your team offered when racism emerges in your practice with clients?
14. How have these experiences affected your practice as a social worker?

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