

**A Critique of Canadian Multiculturalism as a State Policy and  
Its Effects on Canadian Subjects**

By

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**Abstract**

This thesis explores the implication of subject formation and individuality within the confines of multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada. I examine three particular books – Will Kymlicka’s *Politics in the Vernacular (2001)*, Richard Day’s *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity (2000)*, and Sunera Thobani’s *Exalted Subject (2007)* – in an effort to provide different perspectives and critiques of Canada’s multiculturalism. I also frame multiculturalism as Foucault’s biopolitics, which has not been extensively theorized in the context of multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada in relation to subjectivity or the effect on individual’s identities. While most studies focus on racial relations in the contemporary political sphere, and racialization in the health care system, I see multiculturalism as a form of biopower because of the way multiculturalism reasserts a national identity and calls for assimilation of subjects.

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## Introduction

The *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, passed in 1988, affirms the Canadian government's commitment to multiculturalism and details the official multiculturalism policy in Canada. The Act is consistent with the recognition of the multicultural heritage in Canada as outlined in section 27 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. In short, the multiculturalism policy in Canada aims to emphasize promotion and recognition of diversity in Canada, participation of individuals in Canadian society, and respect for, inclusivity, equal treatment, and appreciation of diverse cultures. It also ensures "the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage" and works to "promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins... and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation" (Canadian Multiculturalism Act [CMA] 3.1.a; 3.1.c). This means that accommodations for different cultural groups have to be made in accordance with the promotion of "full and equitable participation" and also to "[reflect] the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society" (CMA 3.1.a; 3.1.c).

There are multiple ways of understanding the term "multiculturalism," and the term easily yields to confusion. As Stuart Hall points out, "Over the years the term 'multiculturalism' has come to reference a diffuse, indeed maddeningly spongy and imprecise, discursive field: a train of false trails and misleading universals. Its references are a wild variety of political strategies" (as cited in Vertovec & Wessendorf, 2010, p. 2). Despite the broad sense of the term, more generally, 'multiculturalism' can point to a social phenomenon, in which there are a multiple

number of cultures present in a community or a nation-state. It is used in the description of the presence of diversity in a society. For example, in countries like Germany and Austria, there are guest workers, illegal immigrants, and metics who are instrumental to the multiculturalism of those countries. The guest workers and metics signal the physical presence of diversity in those countries, but they do not necessarily receive recognition from the state as full citizens and their sojourns in those countries are meant to be temporary.

The multiculturalism of countries like Germany and Austria mentioned above is greatly different from multiculturalism in Canada. Multiculturalism in Canada is supposed to be about more than the mere presence of diversity in society. With the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, the Canadian government actively attempts to integrate visible minority groups and new immigrants. The biggest differences between the two kinds of multiculturalisms is that in Canada, the government offers citizenship and the related benefits of citizenship, such as health care and social insurance. Moreover, the Canadian government also actively attempts to promote the integration of newcomers, ideally both institutionally and psychologically. Institutional integration warrants a better representation of Canada's diverse population in public institutions such as in the branches of government and the police force, although it does not necessarily precipitate psychological integration, which involves a sense of belonging and nationalism. Since psychological integration is practically intangible and therefore difficult to measure, the *Multiculturalism Act* perhaps can only help to affect policies that ensure institutional integration, in the hopes that institutional integration can promote psychological integration.

In his book *Multiculturalism and The History of Canadian Diversity*, political scientist Richard Day (2000) points out the inconsistencies of the term “multiculturalism” in the Canadian discourse by identifying its four meanings in his analysis of Canadian government publications on multiculturalism. Day (2000) distinguishes the four common usages of “multiculturalism,” which are

“to *describe* (construct) a sociological *fact* of Canadian diversity, to *prescribe* a social ideal; and to *describe and prescribe* a government policy or *act* as a response to the fact and an implementation of the ideal... a fourth meaning of multiculturalism [is] as an *already achieved ideal*.” (p. 6, emphasis in original)

Day holds that “multiculturalism” is, first, used to describe the sociological fact of diversity of the population, to factually describe the presence of diversity. This descriptive mode of “multiculturalism” is most often used to naturalize diversity within Canada, using a historical approach to connect diversity with the Aboriginal peoples of Canada, claiming that diversity has always existed in Canada for “Aboriginal society was multicultural as well as multilingual” (Day, 2000, p. 20). This way, “Canadian diversity appears as a natural-historical phenomenon that has always existed, and will continue to exist in the future” (Day, 2000, p. 20).

At the same time, “multiculturalism” defined as “the recognition of the cultural and racial diversity of Canadians and of the equality of Canadians of all origins” (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 6) prescribes multiculturalism as a social ideal to be achieved. It is a social ideal laden with liberal democratic values of freedom, equality, and humanitarianism. However, diversity is also seen as a problem that needs to be solved. For example, in discussing the social origins of Canadian multiculturalism, Raymond Breton argues that the changing demographics of

immigrants to Canada prompted multiculturalism to be put forth as a solution to the problem of growing ethnic diversity in the post World War II period. Day also quotes the *Multiculturalism: Being Canadian*, published by the Canadian government to promote multiculturalism to the general public, in constructing diversity of the population as a problem:

Analysis of current population trends suggests that the country will have to rely on immigration, if it intends to maintain or increase its population. Moreover, most future immigrants are expected to come from non-European roots. This will mean that the size of Canada's racial minority communities... will increase during the next several decades. (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 22)

And the solution to the problem of diversity is multiculturalism, in which “by following the principles and policies of multiculturalism, the government believes that Canada will always be a country where all groups can thrive and contribute” (Day, 2000, p. 22). This is also evident in the CMA when it states that “[multiculturalism] provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future” (3.1.b). It is in the conflation of the different meanings and usages of multiculturalism that Day locates the tautology of multiculturalism that the government presents to the public. Multiculturalism is concurrently seen as a historical fact, a problem, and a solution. Rhetorically, Day (2000) asks, “[i]f ‘aboriginal society was multicultural as well as multilingual,’ and if multiculturalism means both fact of problem and act of solution, does this not mean that the problem has also always been solved?” (p. 22)

Despite this disarray of the meanings of “Canadian multiculturalism,” I urge the reader to keep in mind that in the context of my work in the following chapters, I focus on multiculturalism specifically as a state policy, and not as a term descriptive

of a specific societal phenomenon in Canada nor as a term to refer to the general Canadian multicultural discourse. I focus on multiculturalism as a state policy because I wish to explore the relationships between multiculturalism (as a state policy), nation building and national identities, and theories of the individual. The relationship between multiculturalism and national identity is quite apparent when we consider the degree to which Canadians identify with multiculturalism, and also value it as a national characteristic. The CMA declares that “multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity” (CMA 3.1.b) Sunera Thobani (2007) speaks of the “master narrative of the nation” and Canada’s national character as being “responsible citizens, compassionate, caring, and committed to the values of diversity and multiculturalism” (p. 8). Political scientist Keith Banting (2010) argues that identification with multiculturalism has enabled Canada to sidestep the “progressive’s dilemma.” Banting (2010) defines the progressive’s dilemma as “a tension between diversity and solidarity,” the fear that there is “a trade-off between support for multiculturalism on one hand and support for redistribution on the other” (p. 797). He notes that identification with multiculturalism provides some cultural glue for Canada to bring the whole nation together and a higher public opinion of immigration. Turning to an institutional analysis, Banting (2010) argues that multiculturalism as a state policy effectively means state-led initiatives to reinforce a national identity that highly identifies with multiculturalism and that is more accepting of immigrants, allowing Canada to sidestep the progressive’s dilemma.

Canada has received 65,008 family class immigrants and 160,819 economic immigrants in 2012 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012), making citizenship education and the brewing of national citizenship quite apposite when welcoming newcomers. While theorists like Thobani (2007) argue that “[t]he creation of modern citizenship by [the Citizenship Act] reinforced and consolidated the white settler ideology and deepened the institutionalization of colonial ideology” (p. 89), liberal theorists like Will Kymlicka notes that, along Rawlsian lines, “the health and stability of a modern democracy depends, not only on the justice of its ‘basic structure’ but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens” (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 352). While the political theorists and philosophers I turn to below develop their theories of citizenships that focus on “the identity and conduct of individual citizens, including their responsibilities, loyalties, and roles” (Kymlicka & Norman, 1994, p. 353) in response to multiculturalism as a state policy, I question the lived experiences and the consequences of multiculturalism on individual identities of the subjects of multiculturalism. Instead of providing a theory of ideal citizens or healthy identity formation within the confines of multiculturalism, I wish to look at the implications of identity already embedded within Canadian multiculturalism through analyses of the work of Will Kymlicka, Richard Day, and Sunera Thobani. Thus, underlying my analyses is a key question which I suggest deserves much greater attention than found in existing literatures: namely, *What kinds of identities and theories of the subject emerge from within the Canadian multiculturalism discourse?*

While the theorists I discuss in the following chapters focus on the merits and critiques of Canadian multiculturalism and explications of a Canadian national identity and Canadian citizenship, I hope to tease out from their political theories any implications on subject formation and individual identities. An analysis of Canadian multiculturalism at the level of the individual is important because at stake is the subject formation of Canadians. In their study of Asian-American students at the clinical setting, David Eng and Shinhee Han (2003) show that perpetual unsuccessful assimilation into the melting pot of American identity can lead to racial melancholia.

Eng and Han (2003) take Sigmund Freud's theory of melancholia and expand it from a one-person psychology to an intergenerational and national phenomenon for Asian American students. Freud differentiates between mourning and melancholy as "successful and 'failed' resolutions to loss," respectively. In addition, Freud considers melancholia to be pathological and permanent because it is "mourning without end." He also characterizes melancholy as "a classic, one-person psychology," meaning that it is individually experienced (Eng and Han, 2003, p. 354). Eng and Han (2003) speak of melancholy in Asian Americans as resulting from "ideals of whiteness" that remain unattainable, no matter how hard Asian American students attempt to assimilate into the dominant culture (p. 345). While their dialogue focuses on racial melancholia in the United States, parallels can be drawn in a Canadian context. In Canada, the need to assimilate into the dominant culture, especially for second, third, and later generations of minorities parallels the "melting pot" policy in the United States (Day, 2000; Thobani, 2007). Despite the

official policy of multiculturalism, there is still a need for immigrants and Canadian-born people of colour to assimilate into the dominant culture. While diversity, bilingualism, and multiculturalism appear as ideals of Canadian identity, what exactly do they entail in terms of minority identity construction and the perception of minority identity from the dominant culture? While I may not be able to provide an answer to this question, it is the guiding question behind my analysis of multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada and its effects on the individual.

In chapter one, I will offer a history of multiculturalism in Canada and a critique of the prevailing liberal multiculturalist perspective as propounded by political philosopher Will Kymlicka. Kymlicka argues that multiculturalism is about the accommodations of rights to minority groups in order to promote integration of them into Canadian society. In the second chapter, I provide close readings of more critical interpretations of multiculturalism by theorists Richard Day and Sunera Thobani. Both Day and Thobani interpret Canadian multiculturalism as a reproduction of a white normative Canadian identity that is derived from Canada's colonial history. Based on their analyses and critiques of multiculturalism as a state policy, I will also discuss the implications on subjectivities and identities from their arguments. As Abu-Laban (2002) notes, the Canadian multicultural experience has mostly been theorized, analyzed, and "refracted through the widely read work of some political philosophers – particularly Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka – to thinking about all Western industrialized countries" (p. 460). The work of Richard Day on multiculturalism and Canadian diversity offers a divergent analysis of multiculturalism in the field of political science, employing a Foucaudian

genealogical methodology. By studying the history of Canadian diversity, Day (2000) writes that he employs genealogy in order to critique “the power relations present in the instituting acts of Canadian multiculturalism” (p. 17). Moreover, Thobani offers a critical race perspective that highlights race and racialization in Canada. Thobani’s book also foregrounds Aboriginal claims and the relationship between immigrants and Aboriginal peoples in the Canadian context. In chapter three, I turn to the theories of Michel Foucault in the hopes of providing a novel analysis of Canadian multiculturalism. I there focus on framing Canadian multiculturalism as a form of Michel Foucault’s biopower that attempts to regulate difference for the longevity of the nation-state. Biopower and biopolitics, however, has not been extensively theorized in the context of multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada in relation to subjectivity or the effect on individual’s identities. While most studies focus on racial relations in the contemporary political sphere, and racialization in the health care system (e.g. Osuri, 2011; Amin, 2010; Keil & Ali, 2006; Yue, 2008), I see multiculturalism as a form of biopower because of the way multiculturalism reasserts a national identity and calls for assimilation of subjects. Having established parallels between Canadian multiculturalism and biopolitics, I turn to Foucault’s analysis of *homo oeconomicus*, the economic man, in order to provide a theory of the subject under liberalism, late capitalism, and biopolitics and question what is made live and let die in Canadian multiculturalism.

## Chapter 1

### Social Origins of Multiculturalism

Canadian multiculturalism, as an official policy, began to emerge after World War II, and a string of social phenomena promulgated its inception. In this section I will first discuss four major events since World War II in Canada that helped give rise to the official multiculturalism policies in Canada. I will show that the multicultural policies put forward by the Trudeau government are reactions to social events and potential threats to the collective national identity, not necessarily out of the benevolence of the state. Then, I will discuss liberal multiculturalism as interpreted by Will Kymlicka, one of the leading political philosophers who actively promotes multiculturalism in Canada. I argue, through a critique of Kymlicka's *Politics in the Vernacular* (2001), that even in promoting multiculturalism, the policies and their implementation work to reinforce and rearticulate liberal humanist values of the state, and a liberal notion of the subject, with the implicit assumption that the normative Canadian is white.

In her book, *Colonial Proximities*, Renisa Mawani (2009) argues that starting from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the colonial state responded to perceived external and internal threats, namely the presence of Aboriginal peoples, Chinese and Japanese labourers, and a mixed-race population, with make-shift policies, statutes, and laws. These policies governed the mobility of the Aboriginal population, and restricted Chinese immigration opportunities. State instituted racism continued well throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, the Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 prohibited almost all Chinese immigrants from coming to Canada, and it was only

repealed in 1947<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, as authors Irving Abella and Harold Troper argue in their book *None is Too Many* (1983), anti-Semitism played a significant role in the limited admission of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany. Residential schools also continued to operate until the 1990s, with the last federally-run residential school closed in 1996<sup>2</sup>.

Just as Mawani argues that state-instituted laws and policies were responses to internal and external threats, sociologist Raymond Breton (2005) argues that multicultural policies arising in the 1960s and 70s can also be seen as reaction from the state in response to the national population and the changing demographics of the nation and also “collective expression of symbolic frustration” at the symbolic order (p. 257). I will note three social phenomena that Breton discusses and that I think are influential in instigating the Canadian multiculturalism policy. These are: 1) the significance of John George Diefenbaker as prime minister of Canada in the post-war period; 2) the changing demographic of immigration after WWII; and 3) the Canadian government’s response to the independence movement in Quebec.

John Diefenbaker was elected to office from 1957 to 1962 and, being of German and Scottish descent, was the first Prime Minister of Canada who was neither French nor English. Diefenbaker was clear on bringing together Canadians of all ethnic, cultural, and racial origins when he said:

I am the first prime minister of this country of neither altogether English or French origin. So I determined to bring about a Canadian citizenship that knew no hyphenated consideration... I’m very happy

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/multiculturalism/asian/85years.asp>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/services/indiresident/index-eng.php>

<sup>3</sup> For further discussions on Goldberg’s concept of the race and politics, see Lipzits, 2006; Bartov, 1998; Baran, 2000; Mervand, 1999; and Timmins, 1999.

to be able to say that in the House of Commons today in my party we have members of Italian, Dutch, German, Scandinavia, Chinese and Ukranian origin – and they are all Canadians. (First Among Equals, para. 1)

Diefenbaker also appointed James Gladstone, a member of the Blood tribe in Alberta, as the first First Nations Senate member in 1958 (Newman, 1963, p.101). Under Diefenbaker's administration, Aboriginal peoples of Canada were also enfranchised in 1960 ("Diefenbaker, John George," n.d.). Breton argues that Diefenbaker symbolically embodied the political presence of ethnocultural groups in Canada at that time "through his very person as prime minister, his appointments to the Cabinet, and the presence of elected members of his party who belonged to 'other' ethnic groups" (Breton, 2005, p. 260).

Breton (2005) argues that Diefenbaker's openness about not being purely French or English, a first in any of Canada's previous prime minister, signals the acceptance that Canadians can be someone other than French or English. Diefenbaker's presence as prime minister also signals a sense of "unity-in-diversity" in the post-war period. However, as I will discuss in the next chapter through Richard Day's work on the history of Canadian multiculturalism and diversity, this sense of unity in the face of diversity is mythical and unachievable as an identity for individuals. But it suffices for now to say that Diefenbaker's ethnic background played a role in normalizing the Canadian citizen as capable of being other than French or English in the public's eye. Moreover, Breton also notes the increase of immigrants coming from European countries other than Britain and France as another phenomenon that greatly affected Canadian diversity.

During the 1950s and '60s, the immigrant population of Canada was largely from across the Atlantic. In 1960 and 1968, the top ten source countries of immigrants to Canada include Italy, Britain, the United States, Germany, the Netherlands, Greece, Austria, France, Portugal, and Yugoslavia. Other than the United States and Hong Kong, the other countries are all located in what is geographically designated as Europe (Breton, 2005, p. 281). Breton argues that this shift in the immigration demographics coincided with the decline of the British Empire after World War I, which “was a new symbolic cultural opportunity” for Canada to create its own distinct nation. It was also during the 1960s that “Canadian intellectuals and federal politicians perceived a crisis in national unity” (Legare, 1995, p. 348). The need for Canada to shed its British colonial identity and to distinguish itself from the United States became increasingly strong. In 1965, Canada officially adopted the maple leaf design as its national flag (“Flag Etiquette,” n.d.). In addition to symbolically asserting its own nationhood in creating a distinctive nation, the “fact” of diversity could not be ignored either.

The rise in immigration led to a rise in the salience of ethnicity beginning in the 1950s, especially since “newcomers understandably attach great importance to their culture of origin” (Breton, 1986, p. 41). In part, the multiculturalist policies in development and changes to immigration policies were intended to address this heightened sense of diversity that accompanied increased immigration to Canada. The implementation of the multiculturalism policy primarily focused on cultural practices and “ethnocultural diversity” rather than on race. I argue that this is because the immigrants arriving in Canada were mostly from Europe, and there was

an identification with and gravitation towards whiteness at work. As I show below, this led the implementation of multiculturalism policies to turn into mostly a song and dance affair, focus on cultural practices rather than race as a marker of difference, and in which a discourse of race was continually evaded.

While acknowledging that there were and are racialization processes and racial discourses among European countries and that “whiteness” is an unstable category (Leonardo, 2002; Hartigan, 1999; Bonnett, 1999), I argue that the coalescence of whiteness was and is at work in Canada. I contend that even if some Europeans were not considered to be white or white enough *in* Europe, once European immigrants arrived in Canada as the preferred races, and were placed among the Aboriginal populations, immigrants and labourers from Asia and Africa, and a mixed-race population, there was a tendency for immigrants from Europe to gravitate towards whiteness (Ignatiev, 1995; Brodtkin, 1999). For example, in *How the Irish Became White*, Noel Ignatiev (1995) shows how the Irish ascended to be considered white in the Americas. Leonardo (2002) concludes that “Irish ascendancy also shows the wicked flexibility of whiteness to offer broader membership for newcomers in exchange for allegiance to the white nation state” (p. 42).

Immigrants from Europe were also mostly considered to be “the ‘preferred race’ settler and future national, exalted as worthy of citizenship *and* membership in the nation” (Thobani, 2007, p. 75). As John Hartigan Jr. (1999) contends, despite the tendency in research to homogenize whiteness as a group, this tendency actually “[stems] from what has rightfully been established as a key function of whiteness:

that it homogenizes whites from a range of ethnic and class positions in order to assert a normative social identity from which privileges can be secured and maintained” (p. 194). Moreover, as Thobani (2007) notes, in order to establish and maintain white supremacy in Canada, “[t]he politico-symbolic borders of the nation were thus in flux, changing and shifting to include European ethnicities... However, they did not shift so far as to include Asian and Black, or any other non-white migrant group” (p. 84). Eva Mackey’s (1999) study of Canadian identity is also based on the problematization of “a model of ‘normal’ Canadianness as white and unmarked” (p. 21) and works to question the Canadian nation-building project. Canada’s national identity, “as well as legal citizenship, thus became fused as white” (Thobani, 2007, p. 75).

Due to this gravitation towards and identification with whiteness, the non-British and non-French European ethnocultural groups had to be differentiated from the French and the British based on surnames, languages spoken, and cultural practices. This is one of the reasons why beginning in the 1960s, multicultural policies focused on preserving cultural practices, the songs and dances of cultures, and an emphasis on race and racial differences was evaded. Multiculturalism was being used to differentiate between whiteness and European cultures. Breton also contends that multiculturalism was also being used to ease immigrants from Europe feeling like second-class citizens to the British and the French, a result of the Quebec nationalist movement – the last sociopolitical event I take from Breton’s discussion on the sociopolitical origins of multiculturalism.

Breton (1986, 2005) posits that the independence movement incited questions surrounding not only the status of the French in Canada, but also the status of other ethnic minority groups in Canada in relation to the French. The independence movement in Quebec prompted the creation of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in 1963 and Breton (1986) argues that “the commission increased the level of ethnic consciousness among the non-British, non-French ethnic groups and led them to compare their situation with that of the French collectivity” (p. 44). Based on one of the recommendations of the commission, the *Official Languages Act* was passed in 1969. This Act aims to recognize equality of status of both English and French in all federal institutions, and as Breton (2005) explains, the Act’s objective was “institutional, not individual, bilingualism” (p. 263). Breton’s (2005) argument of the impact of the Quebec independence movement on the multiculturalism policy is as follows:

The policy was thus, in part, a response to the status anxieties voiced [by non-British and non-French ethnocultural groups] in relation to the themes of biculturalism, a two-nation society, charter groups, and founding peoples. One of its objectives was to affirm symbolically that Canadian society is open to all cultural identities, to indicate that it recognizes them all, and that it recognizes them all as equal. (p. 272)

It is still important to note, however, that the preamble to the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) highlights that, in accordance with the *Official Languages Act*, “that English and French are the official languages of Canada and neither abrogates nor derogates from any rights or privileges acquired or enjoyed with respect to any other language” (1). So while the government does consider multiculturalism as a possible solution to recognize the non-British and non-French ethnocultural groups, it is not simply a shift from biculturalism to multiculturalism,

instead, it is a multiculturalism that operates *within* a bicultural and bilingual framework.

Breton's (2005) major argument in his essay is that along with the *Official Languages Act* of 1969, the *Canadian Citizenship Bill* of 1946, the adoption of the Canadian flag in 1965, and *The Constitution Act* of 1982, the multiculturalism policy represents an intervention to the symbolic/cultural system in negotiating a collective Canadian identity (p. 284). He also argues that Canadian multiculturalism as a state policy was a reaction to the sociopolitical climate at that time, and it did not arise from a purely humanitarian and cosmopolitan perspective. Breton sees multiculturalism as an intervention from the state that promotes integration among ethnocultural groups into the symbolic order, defined by Breton (2005) as "an essential dimension of social and political reality... [that] individuals and groups [aspire] to recognize themselves in and be recognized by [it]" (p. 284).

Breton's argument, I suggest, rests on a liberalist interpretation of Canadian identity in which the normative Canadian is presumed to be white. Breton argues that the Canadian multiculturalism policy acted as a state intervention and a reaction to the social phenomena of the time, including the changing immigration demographics and the Quebec independence movement, working to sustain a collective Canadian identity. While Breton alludes to the fact that the multiculturalism policy arose as reaction to the population rather than the benevolence of the state, what is implied in Breton's argument is already the existence of a Canadian identity into which members of ethnocultural groups can integrate. While Breton (2005) recognizes "the Canadian collective identity

problem” in which there is “an absence of any consensus on the substance of Canadian identity or culture” (p.274), absent from Breton’s argument is an explication and a subsequent critique of the said collective Canadian identity. What kind of Canadian identity was being constructed and upheld? Furthermore, while Breton’s (2005) essay does address race relations in terms of the increased presence of immigrants of colour in Canada beginning from the 1960s and ‘70s, Breton eludes a substantial and engaged discussion on the effects of race and racialization in Canada. As Breton (2005) notes the change in the immigrant demographics as coming from European to non-European countries (p. 280), he writes that “[t]his change increased the salience of ethnic differentiation on the basis of colour rather than culture and/or language” (p. 282). The salience of ethnic diversity, Breton (2005) argues, led multiculturalism to be about “the full acceptance of visible minorities by society and the participation of these groups in its institutions” (p. 282). Breton (2005) had the opportunity to engage more critically with racial relations and maintenance of an unmarked White Canadian identity when he suggests that

being a white society is profoundly embedded in the Canadian collective identity, but the changing demographic composition of society and the political articulation of claims by visible minorities challenge the traditional collective self-image and the corresponding character of public institutions. (p. 282)

However, instead of critiquing the fact that “being a white society is profoundly embedded in the Canadian collective identity,” Breton (2005) claims that the solution to the changes to the composition of society and threat to the Canadian identity is “the integration of visible minorities requires accommodations at the

symbolic and instrumental level” (p. 283). His argument, rather, focuses on “ethnocultural groups,” “visible minorities” and their relationships to the “symbolic order” of Canada. Breton (2005) is more concerned with whether minority groups can be accommodated “at the symbolic and the instrumental level” such that they can recognize themselves in the symbolic order (p. 284). Breton’s argument, however, still lacks a critique of the symbolic order and the “Canadian collective identity,” similar to the way Will Kymlicka fails to critique or analyze his notion of a Canadian “societal culture” as I will address in the next section.

### **Critique of Liberal Multiculturalism**

Breton’s (1986, 2005) argument presented above is characteristic of liberal cultural theories in its evasion of race, emphasis on culture, and attention to public and social institutions and policies. A liberal cultural interpretation of Canadian multiculturalism is also seen in Will Kymlicka’s (2001) *Politics in the Vernacular*, whose work I turn to presently. By engaging with Will Kymlicka’s liberal culturalist interpretation of multiculturalism, I hope to show that multiculturalism, evolving from a policy to a discourse, plays a pivotal role in negotiating and renegotiating, articulating and rearticulating, a particular version of a collective Canadian identity that is white. The articulation of a white Canadian is also in line with a liberal humanist ethos pervading Canadian discourse and culture, allowing Canadians to imagine themselves as belonging to a tolerant, benevolent state that values equality, freedom, and democracy. (Mackey, 1999; Bannerji, 2000; Kymlicka, 2007)

Before delving into a critique of Will Kymlicka's articulation of liberal multiculturalism, I first provide a definition of liberalism and how I will use this term throughout the following chapters. David Theo Goldberg (1993) describes philosophical liberalism as having, despite wide ranging differences within it, "a core set of central ideas common in varying degrees... that identifies them as liberals and marks their modernity" (p. 5). Goldberg's summary of liberalism is very succinct and is worth quoting at length. His summary of liberalism has also been utilized by other theorists writing on multiculturalism and critiquing liberal multiculturalism (e.g. Mackey, 1999; Bannerji, 2000; O'Connell, 2010). For Goldberg, liberalism

is committed to *individualism* for it takes as basic the moral, political, and legal claims of the individual over and against those of the collective. It seeks *foundations* in *universal* principles applicable to all human beings or rational agents... [L]iberalism seeks to transcend particular historical, social, and cultural differences... The philosophical basis of this broad human identity, of an essentially human nature, is taken to lie in a common rational core within each individual, in the (potential) capacity to be moved by Reason... The mark of progress is measured for liberals by the extent to which institutional improvement serves to extend people's liberty, to open up or extend spaces for free expression. Finally... liberalism takes itself to be committed to *equality*. (p. 5, emphasis in original)

Goldberg highlights liberalism's commitment to individualism, universal principles, reason, progress, and equality. Individualism underscores agency and individual claims in a society; Goldberg (1993) also notes that the commitment to equality is "the egalitarian core on which all liberals agree consists in the recognition of a common moral standing, no matter individual difference" (p. 5). The relation between the values of equality and multiculturalism is apparent: no matter individual, ethnic, or cultural difference, everyone deserves to be equal. Goldberg (1993) links these notions of liberal values to the Enlightenment, arguing that these

principles “[underlie] popular moral conceptions while at once [furnish] idealized rational principles to guide individual behaviour and social relations” (p. 14). However, Taiaiake Alfred (2005) is concerned that liberalism privileges certain versions of individualism, equality, freedom, and reason that stems from the philosophical traditions of the Enlightenment as described by Goldberg (1993, p. 15-20)<sup>3</sup>.

Eva Mackey (1999) utilizes Goldberg’s reflection on liberalism in order to critique liberal multiculturalism and to argue that Canadian culture is seen as more progressive and superior to other cultures. She argues that the liberal concepts of equality, progress, rationality, universality, and tolerance “were mobilized to make the subordination of ‘other cultures’ to ‘Canadian culture’ rational, reasonable, and logical” (p. 158). Mackey also adds that while “liberal universal principles do not simply allow or ignore intolerance, [they] are the very language and conceptual framework through which intolerance and exclusion are enabled, reinforced, defined and defended” especially when the project of nation-building is threatened by the diversity of the population (p. 161). The “immensely flexible meanings” of liberal concepts of equality and tolerance, Mackey (1999) argues, allows for “[t]he celebration of (limited, managed, institutionalized) differences in Canadian multiculturalism... in a moment of crisis, such as the ‘crisis’ of Canadian identity... turn into its denial” (p. 162).

In her critique of liberal multiculturalism, Rita Dhamoon (2009) argues that liberal multiculturalism also stresses the importance of these values as described by

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<sup>3</sup> For further discussions on Goldberg’s concept of the race and politics, see Lipzits, 2006; Banton 1998; Bannerji, 2000; Miles and Torres, 1999.

Goldberg and specifically “claim that the equal treatment of ‘minorities’ requires public institutions to acknowledge, rather than ignore or downplay, cultural particularities” (p. 3). Dhamoon (2009) also notes that while “liberal multiculturalism continues to present itself as being a theory and policy of social change and construct[s] a self-image as non-cultural... liberal multiculturalists promot[e] only those versions of tolerance and accommodation that meet liberal standards” (p. 31), leaving liberal values unquestioned and continually accepted as tolerant, pursuing freedom and equality for all.

**Critique of Kymlicka on liberal multiculturalism.** Will Kymlicka is considered to be one of the biggest proponents of liberal multiculturalism in Canada. His works on liberal multiculturalism is widely cited and critiqued. Bhikhu Parekh (1997) observes, congruent with my critique of Kymlicka’s used of the term “societal culture” below, that Kymlicka’s liberal stronghold “leads him to impose a single and homogeneous identity on Western societies and to turn liberalism into their collective or national culture” (p. 58). Kymlicka’s insistence on culture Dhamoon (2009) is critical of Kymlicka’s neglect of the intersectionality of modes of identifications, in which Kymlicka’s espousal of liberal multiculturalism “underestimate the ways in which members of a culture are shaped through interactions between multiple modes of identification... beyond the scope of ethnicity, nationality, and linguistic difference” (p. 34). Given the limitations to Kymlicka’s work that Dhamoon (2009) identifies, she argues that liberal multiculturalism “can provide only limited insight into issues of power that are central to identity/difference politics” (p. 45), and this is also why I choose to offer

two other perspectives on multiculturalism from Richard Day and Sunera Thobani in the second chapter in order to highlight possible theories of identity and subjectivity.

Will Kymlicka's main aim in his book is to "develop a theory of minority rights that explicitly examines how current practices relate to liberal-democratic principles, and that identifies both the grounds and limitation of minority rights claim" (2001, p. 8). Kymlicka believes that minority rights, that is, claims for accommodations and equality coming from immigrant groups or national minorities are legitimate and necessary to a liberal state. Kymlicka's articulation of a liberal culturalist theory surrounds three main themes: The first theme is the dialectic of nation building and minority rights, the extent to which claims from minority groups can be seen as part of the nation building project. His second theme has to do with his optimism that liberal culturalism has been working well in modern societies. Finally, Kymlicka (2001) claims that since "[c]urrent practices in Western democracies have emerged in an *ad hoc* way without any clear models of explicit articulation of the underlying principles" (p. 4), he actively addresses the gap between the theory and practice of liberal democracies.

In response to Kymlicka's three major themes running throughout his book, I will provide four major objections, all of which are, I think, pointed towards the fundamentals of liberalism and liberal multiculturalism. First, I problematize Kymlicka's use of the term "societal culture" and its application to Canadian society. Second, I question Kymlicka's evasion of any racial/racialized discourse in his writing. Third, I examine the liberal values and criteria by which Kymlicka measures

the success of immigrant multiculturalism and the relation between these criteria and the nation-building project. Finally, I object to Kymlicka's viewpoint that there is a lack of clear alternatives to liberal multiculturalism.

Will Kymlicka's liberal culturalism and liberal multiculturalism rest heavily on liberal values of individual freedom, equality (between individuals and between groups of the population), economic prosperity, and democracy. He defines liberal culturalism as

the view that liberal states should not only uphold the familiar set of individual civil and political rights which are protected in all democracies, but should also adopt various group-specific rights and policies which are intended to recognize and accommodate the distinctive identities and needs of ethnocultural groups. (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 9)

As to liberal multiculturalism, and specifically in the Canadian context, Kymlicka (2001) argues that the Canadian multicultural policy urges for institutionalized integration of immigrant groups without promoting separatism or minority nationalism, and allows for "fairer terms of integration" (p. 161) into existing societal culture. Kymlicka's definition of a "societal culture" is the first point of contention – for the assumption is that there is already such a Canadian culture into which immigrant groups integrate and I argue that, in accordance to Kymlicka's definition of it, the Canadian societal culture is one that is derived from the country's colonial legacy and is therefore fundamentally unjust, and that it is equally unjust to expect immigrant groups to integrate into such a culture.

According to Kymlicka (2001), a societal culture is "a set of institutions, covering both public and private life, with a common language, which has historically developed over time on a given territory, which provides people with a

wide range of choices about how to live their lives” (p. 53). Brian Walker (1997) criticizes Kymlicka’s use of the term “societal culture” as one that is “confusing in the sense that they group together such a range of criteria that they offer us little guidance” when we attempt to define what a societal culture is” (p. 223). One of the reasons why Kymlicka argues that Canadians should not worry about immigrant separatism from, for example, the Chinese Canadian community is because it lacks a societal culture and the ability to reproduce a societal culture. In terms of having a common language, a Chinese Canadian societal culture would entail a society in which in which Chinese is taught in public schools, that it is the official working language of *all* government institutions, and that immigrants are to learn Chinese, not English, in order to gain citizenship status (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 160). In the Canadian context, what does the societal culture look like and where does it come from? The common language would be English with a side of French. The governing institutions historically developed mostly came from the British Empire – from the branches of the government down to the schooling systems. Most importantly, it is impossible to look at Canada’s history without seeing its colonial legacies – whether it is the governing institutions, the systematic erasure of Aboriginal cultures and peoples, or historical social injustices that posed insurmountable barriers for the “integration” of racialized Others.

By asking members of immigrant groups to integrate into and participate in mainstream institutions of the existing societal culture without questioning the societal culture itself, is the state not asking immigrants groups to become even more complicit in the colonial project? By integrating into such a societal culture

and eventual attainment of citizenship status, newcomers of Canada participate and “further the cultural and political elimination of Aboriginality” (Thobani, 2007, p. 98). Furthermore, if Kymlicka insists that the multicultural policy in Canada simply renegotiates terms of integration and not the thing into which immigrants are integrating, how are the resulting sentiments of nationalism and identification with societal culture that develop influenced by Canada’s colonial past<sup>4</sup>? How is the multiculturalism policy genuinely pluralizing society and not just dotting the cultural landscape with exotic cultural practices? While Kymlicka does discuss Aboriginal Peoples as part of the national minority, Short (2005) criticizes Kymlicka for inadequately addressing Aboriginal issues in his account of liberal multiculturalism and liberal citizenship. Short (2005) argues that Kymlicka ends up “exposes the colonial underpinnings of such liberalism by denying indigenous peoples full political autonomy” (p. 272)<sup>5</sup>.

The second objection I raise regarding liberal multiculturalism is Kymlicka’s categorization of the population and his evasion of race. Kymlicka (2001) broadly groups the population into four categories: the national majority, national minorities, immigrant groups, and the “‘in-between’ cases” (p. 31). Kymlicka does not explicitly define these groups, but from his writing and arguments one can make out the sector of the population to which he refers. Writing about Canadian multiculturalism, Kymlicka names the Quebecois and the Aboriginal peoples as

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<sup>4</sup> For debates around liberal multiculturalism and anticolonialism, see Johnson, 2008; Goh, 2008; Lawrence and Dua, 2005. Johnson writes in the New Zealand context while Goh writes about postcolonial multiculturalism in Singapore and Malaysia. Lawrence and Dua write in the Canadian context.

<sup>5</sup> See also Tully’s (1995) critique of both Charles Taylor and Will Kymlicka in their failure to address Aboriginal issues in Canada.

Canada's national minority groups, meaning that the Quebecois, for example, actively resist integration into mainstream societal culture by maintain their own within Canada. The French population has fought for rights to use their language in government institutions, and for French to be the language of the schools. Kymlicka also points out that the Quebecois have the ability to define their own criteria moderating immigration, favouring French speakers immigrating to Quebec (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 158). By relegating the Aboriginal groups to a single minority group, however, not only homogenizes Aboriginality but it also depoliticizes the Aboriginal struggles against colonialization and political demands for sovereignty.

On the other hand, immigrant groups "have accepted the expectation that they will integrate into the dominant societal culture" (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 156), rather than creating their own like the hypothetical Chinese Canadian community would as aforementioned. Immigrant groups, then, as Kymlicka uses the term, seem to encompass more than just first generation Canadians, if the term can be used to refer to the Chinese Canadian community as a whole, not all members of which are new immigrants. Kymlicka's usage seems to imply any section of the population that does not belong to the national majority or the national minority is an immigrant group. The danger here, then, is that "immigrant groups" comes to refer to any non-white "ethnocultural group" regardless of the fact that there are multi-generations of non-white Canadians. The reason why "immigrant group" may come to denote racialized Canadians is because of the coalescence of whiteness that allows for non-English, non-French white Canadians to more completely and more seamlessly assimilate into the Canadian societal culture, to use Kymlicka's language. A second

generation German Canadian may “pass off” as “just” Canadian, whereas there is an expectation of some sort of qualifier for a racialized Canadian in the form of being a “Chinese Canadian,” or a “Canadian of Chinese descent.”

Then comes Kymlicka’s (2001) “in-between cases,” which are “complicated cases that do not fit neatly into the ‘ethnoreligious sect’, ‘immigrant’ or ‘national minority’ patterns” (p. 31). Kymlicka does not give any Canadian examples, and offers instead the following as the “in-between cases” when considering the relationship between these groups’ claims for minority rights and liberal nationalism: African-Americans, the Roma, guest-workers in Germany, or Russian settlers in the Baltics (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 32). Surely, Kymlicka is not required to give examples in the Canadian context. However, between the absence of Canadian examples and his praise of Canadian multiculturalism as one that is “working quite well” (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 3), the implication is that Canada does not have these problematic “in-between cases” that require further analysis, and that the Canadian population *can* be categorized into groups of national majority, national minorities, and immigrants. Furthermore, through a process of elimination, one can now deduce who is the Canadian national majority. It is the part of the population that does not have to integrate into the dominant societal culture, the part of the population that does not have to fight for representation for it is already represented in the institutionalized structure of society. While I may argue that the Canadian national majority would be likely the white, Christian, English-speaking population, Kymlicka may contend that the fact that there are ethnocultural

differences among European immigrant population, who can also claim minority rights and immigrant group status.

Kymlicka's hesitance towards any mention of race may be explained by his insistence on cultural practices as markers of difference, in addition to liberal "colour-blindness" and the fact that race does not biologically exist. Some scholars put quotations around terms such as "race", "racism", and "racialization" in order to denote that race is socially constructed and does not empirically exist (Li, 2007, p. 52). Yasmin Jiwani (2006), for example, shows that just because race does not biologically exist, it does not mean that it has no impact on the lived realities of people defined by it (p. xviii). Kymlicka (2001) actually rejects "difference-blind rules... adopted in order to accommodate ethnocultural differences" (which I assume is the even more liberal version of the liberal "colour-blindness") that are against minority rights, and argues that "[i]f state institutions fail to recognize and respect people's culture and identity, the result can be serious damage to people's self-respect and sense of agency" (p. 32-33). And so, Kymlicka avoids mentioning race likely because he acknowledges its non-existence and so subsequently delegates markers of identity to cultural differences.

While Yasmin Jiwani (2006) and Sherene Razack (1998) do not directly react to Kymlicka's work, their works highlight the denial of race and the consequences of culturalizing racism in relation to the evasion of a racial discourse within multiculturalism. For example, Razack (1998) argues that as culture, instead of race, becomes the focal point of multicultural discourse, racism becomes only identifiable in its most overt forms, the denial of racism becomes more justified, and oppression

comes to be explained through cultural differences (p. 60-61). Building upon Razack's argument, Jiwani (2006) shows that the bracketing of race from the multicultural discourse also leads to coded signifiers such as "immigrant" (as evident in the present case of analysis), "refugee," "alien," or "terrorist" to refer to racialized bodies (p. 14). In effect, implicit racism becomes even more covert and difficult to articulate by those affected by it. Identifiable forms of racism also then become a relic of the past, a part of Canada's "shameful history" but not a part of the present. The focus on culture and the pluralistic nature of society continually feeds the image of Canada as tolerant, benevolent, humane, and fair, and Canada as the working model of multiculturalism living out liberal democratic values.

This brings me to my third objection to Kymlicka's liberal multiculturalism, in which Kymlicka argues that immigrant multiculturalism has been a success in the West, particularly in Canada, as measured by a criteria of values, namely peace, democracy, individual freedom, economic prosperity, and inter-group equality. He also argues that "Western democracies have learned how to deal with ethnic diversity in a peaceful and democratic way, with an almost complete absence of militancy, terrorism, violence, or state repression" (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 3). An absence of militancy, terrorism, violence, or state repression can, at most, mean that *overt* forms of racism or oppression do not operate in Western democracies. Kymlicka fails to expand the definition of violence to include forms of non-physical violence.

As witnessed in Geraldine Pratt's *Families Apart* (2012), Pratt discusses at length the trauma that results from the separation and the unification of families

through Canada's own Temporary Foreign Workers Program is a form of violence on the family. Through the Live-In Caregiver Program, "domestic workers come as individual workers under a temporary work-visa program and only later are admitted as immigrants" (Pratt, 2012, p. 44). Pratt's (2012) book focuses on nannies and caregivers that come from the Philippines and her book aims to "unsettle complacency around temporary labor migration" through an analysis of "the lived experiences of domestic workers and their families." (p. 163) Separated from their own children and caring for another family's children geographically and emotionally, Pratt (2012) posits that "transnational mothering cannot transcend distance" (p. 70), adding that "[s]eparation of mothers from children is profoundly disruptive, and it is just the beginning of a chain of dislocations that are genuinely traumatic" (p.70). The trauma is reflected in, for example, the marginalization of Filipino youths in Canada, disrupted familial relations, and difficulty in bonding with family members through the testimonies of Filipino mothers working in Canada (Pratt, 2012, p.73-98).

Moreover, Mona Oikawa's *Cartographies of Violence* (2012) illustrates potently not only the physical violence and overt racism related to the state imposed internment and "evacuation" of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s, her work also points to the intergenerational effect of the violence of trauma. Oikawa (2012) "concentrate[s] on some of [the Internment's] effects through an analysis of memories of women who were expelled from the coast and of their daughters... those subjected by the Internment and the non-interned generation that followed" (p. 5). Oikawa contends that "the effects of the Internment cannot be fully

acknowledged if we only attend to it as one event of the linear past” (p. 226), that it begins in a particular year and lasts until another. By analyzing the daughters’ descriptions of the internment in conjunction with “the notion of cross-generational transmission of historical trauma” (p. 227), Oikawa (2012) is able to “underline the importance of place and ongoing processes of racial exclusion in memory and knowledge production (p. 16). Oikawa shows that the violence sustained is not only physical, but also mental and intergenerational.

The examples provided by Pratt and Oikawa speak to the myths of benign multiculturalism, highlighting that violence on racialized bodies encompass more than physical violence and overt racism. Their works counter Kymlicka’s assumptions about the evidence of peace in Western democracies such as Canada under multiculturalism – namely the absence of war, violence, and state repression. Both analyses of the Temporary Foreign Workers Programme and of the Japanese Internment by Pratt and Oikawa underscore violence committed by the Canadian state, rendering Kymlicka’s claim that Western democracies know how to deal with ethnic diversity peacefully and democratically flawed.

Kymlicka (2001) also suggests that liberal cultural theories of multiculturalism “have been adopted as *ad hoc* compromises to particular problems, often for reason of stability rather than justice” (p. 5). Kymlicka identifies two alternatives to liberal multiculturalism, but does not think that they are viable. The first alternative Kymlicka identifies is a republican model that accommodates ethnocultural diversity. Kymlicka (2007) refers to a general conception of republican theory as one that is focused on unitary citizenship, a common identity,

and the common good that is built upon a neutral system. Kymlicka (2007) criticizes the pursuit of homogeneity within the nation-state in a republican model. He argues that while “[v]irtually every Western democracy has pursued this ideal of national homogeneity at one point or another,” the aim of this pursuit is

to centralize all political and legal power in forums dominated by the majority group; to privilege that group’s language and culture in all public institutions, which are then diffused throughout the territory of the state; and to make minority languages and cultures invisible in public space. (p. 63)

Here, I do agree with Kymlicka’s critique of the pretence of the neutrality of the state and the result of a nation-building project that neglects the presence of diversity – that neutrality of the state actually benefits the majority group, and that it is difficult to maintain neutrality and accommodate for differences at the same time. Specifically addressing the question of accommodations of religious groups, Tariq Madood (2013) agrees with Kymlicka that the republic model “cannot be implemented in relation to ethnocultural minorities” (p. 78). However, Madood (2013) questions what the implications would be for ethnoreligious groups, arguing that “all cultures contain elements that are no more necessary than religion, and some cultures are centred around religion (p. 79)<sup>6</sup>.

The second alternative to liberal multiculturalism Kymlicka (2001) discusses is one that “can be given a variety of labels: postliberal, postmodernist, postcolonial” and it offers “a more radical kind of pluralization of citizenship” (p. 44). Kymlicka

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<sup>6</sup> The debate over the proposed Quebec values charter also raises similar questions regarding the difference between ethnocultural and ethnoreligious minorities, and the relationship between multiculturalism as a state policy and the freedom of religion as outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. See <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/charter-of-quebec-values-on-collision-course-with-constitution-1.1699637>

(2001) claims that these political theories reject not only the republican unitary citizenship model, “but also the liberal insistence that group-specific rights be constrained by liberal principles of individual freedom, social equality and political democracy” (p. 44). Kymlicka (2001) generalizes these “postliberal, postmodernist, postcolonial” theories as championing for relativism and arguing that “liberal justice is itself just one amongst many cultural norms, none of which should be privileged, all of which must be politicized and contested in a multicultural society” (p.44). In addition to naming the difficulty of this approach as being that “it operates at a more abstract or metatheoretical level than liberal culturalism” (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 44), Kymlicka argues that these radical postmodernist approaches actually do not dramatically differ from liberal multiculturalism. Both sets of theories share a desire to avoid essentialization of identities and desire to avoid Eurocentric imperialist ideals (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 44). From there, he concludes that liberal culturalism becomes dominant by default because “the postmodern alternative is underdeveloped” and that one cannot properly assess the strengths and weaknesses of liberal culturalism until clear alternatives to liberal culturalism emerge (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 44-45).

My biggest objection is that even *if* the postmodern approaches to multiculturalism were underdeveloped, it would be precisely because they *were* underdeveloped that philosophers, political theorists, and scholars need to look into this alternative further, instead of tacitly accepting liberal culturalism. A similar objection to Kymlicka’s dismissal of “alternative approaches” to liberal multiculturalism has been offered by Brian Barry. Barry (2001) notes that Kymlicka

writes that “ ‘there is no clear alternative’ to the multiculturalist one espoused by himself and his itinerant band of like-minded theorists. He then immediately outlines one alternative” (p. 7), which is the republican model of unitary citizenship. Barry (2001) is concerned that “[t]here is nothing in the least ‘unclear’ about his position: what Kymlicka means is merely that he disagrees with [alternative approaches to liberal multiculturalism]” (p. 7)<sup>7</sup>.

Moreover, by conflating a variety of theoretical approaches within the “postliberal, postmodern, postcolonial” approach, Kymlicka in effect homogenizes these political and theoretical stances, rendering them as too abstract. However, I think that some of the most practical political theories for social action and for social justice lie within postcolonial theories and critical race studies. Moreover, I hope that through my critique of Kymlicka’s liberal multiculturalism, I have indicated and shown that there is an abundance of social and political theories that inform the postmodern, postliberal, postcolonial approaches, from which scholars can draw. In addition to the work of two contemporary Canadian theorists Richard Day and Sunera Thobani which I address in the next chapter on multiculturalism as a state policy, a multitude of books have been written on Canadian multiculturalism outside of the liberal culturalist tradition<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> Triadafilopoulos (1997) presents an argument for “deep recognition” offering another possible alternative to liberal multiculturalism. Bannerji (2000) argues that Kymlicka fails to account for concepts such as “civil society, community, hegemony or ideology” (p. 146).

<sup>8</sup> These include Mackey, 1999; Bannerji, 2000; Bissoondath, 1994; Ryan, 2010; Li, 2000. On the other hand, for defenders of liberal multiculturalism, see Kymlicka, 2007; Taylor, 1992; Spinner 1994.

In this Chapter, I have sought to demonstrate that the multiculturalism policy in Canada did not arise due to the benevolence of the state, as is commonly accepted presumption in much traditional Canadian policy and culture, but rather was a state intervention responding to the social demands of the time. Moreover, I have outlined four major critiques of Will Kymlicka's explication of liberal culturalism and liberal multiculturalism: namely, I questioned Kymlicka's use of the term "societal culture," his evasion of engaging with a racial discourse, his liberal criteria against which liberal multiculturalism is evaluated, and his objection that there are no clear alternatives to liberal culturalism. Admittedly, there is a degree of difficulty in rejecting Kymlicka's theories completely. There is significant value in his argument that social injustice should be minimized by according rights to minority groups, and that such accommodations should operate within the boundaries of certain fundamental human rights. However, I hope to have demonstrated that given the debate surrounding liberal multiculturalism and my critique of Kymlicka's interpretation of liberal multiculturalism, liberal multiculturalism should be accepted as the default winner dictating policies. In the next chapter, I will discuss the works of Richard Day and Sunera Thoban in order to provide examples of two alternative approaches and interpretations to liberal multiculturalism.

## Chapter 2

In the previous chapter, I discussed, analyzed, and critiqued an interpretation of multiculturalism that is rooted in liberalism through Will Kymlicka's work. I argued that Kymlicka's interpretation of liberal multiculturalism constitutes an evasion of a racial discourse within multiculturalism, his use of the term "societal culture" in denoting a dominant culture into which immigrant groups integrate is problematic, and that his claim that there are no substantial alternatives to liberal multiculturalism is erroneous. Building on my critique of Kymlicka's work, in this chapter, I offer two close readings of critical interpretations of multiculturalism as state policy in contrast to Kymlicka's liberal multicultural account discussed in the previous chapter. First, in the following section, I will look into an explication of Canadian multiculturalism as put forth by Richard Day (2000) in his book *Multiculturalism and The History of Canadian Diversity*, in which Day traces Canadian state multiculturalism back to the Ancient Greeks' solutions to their problem of diversity through his genealogical work. Then, I will discuss Sunera Thobani's account of multiculturalism and its effects on subjectivities of Canadians, in particular Canadians of colour in the next section.

### **Day on Multiculturalism as a Fantasy**

Drawing heavily on Michel Foucault, Richard Day (2000) provides a genealogy of solutions to the problem of diversity in order to show that "Canadian multiculturalism... is better seen as the most recent mode of *reproduction* and *proliferation* of that problem" (p. 3). He argues that Canadian multiculturalism as a

state policy is at once both a reproduction and a proliferation of the “problem” of diversity and actually does not work towards “solving” this “problem” at all. He uses informational pamphlets published by the government and Canadian multiculturalism as iterated in the state’s policy as his evidence throughout his book in order to locate contradictions within Canadian multiculturalism. As I will discuss in turn, Day argues that the Canadian multicultural discourse must first admit the impossibility of achieving full identity (p. 32); secondly, affirm the value of difference (p. 34); and thirdly, recognize the necessity of negotiation as part of the process (p.198). Finally, he argues that the fantasy of a Canadian unity must be dissipated such that diversity would not even appear problematic (p. 12).

As discussed in the introduction, Day analyzed the multiple meanings of “multiculturalism” as it is used in government publications on multiculturalism and found that the term is used to denote both the problem of diversity and the solution to diversity. Richard Day begins to problematize the Canadian multicultural discourse from this contradiction in the signification of multiculturalism, in which the diversity of the Canadian population is problematized and configured as a problem.

Having shown that Canadian multiculturalism is problematic, for it is both the solution and the problem of Canadian diversity, Day (2000) argues that “multiculturalist theory and practice must traverse the fantasy of fullness associated with the modern nation-state” (p. 12). Furthermore, diversity and the lack of unity should not be seen as problematic, and in fact, according to Day (2000), Canadian multiculturalist must:

(i) openly admit and orient to the impossibility of full identity; (ii) affirm the value of difference and the Others as such; and (iii) recognize the necessity of a negotiation of *all* universal horizons, including that of the nation-state. Only by *abandoning* the dream of unity, Canada may, after all... inadvertently come closer to its goal of mutual and equal recognition amongst all who have chanced to find themselves within its borders. (p. 12)

There are three major points in Day's argument I wish to look into more fully that are concerned with identity and the individual. First, I will discuss Day's Lacanian argument of why the achievement of full identity as a Canadian is impossible. I will then explicate his concept of "Unhappy Countriness," which he derives from Hegel's notion of "Unhappy Consciousness", to describe the split within the Canadian nation-state. Finally, I will speak to Day's critique of the concept of integration, and his argument that Canadian multiculturalism serves as what Day calls the "*constrained emergence theory of Canadian identity*," characterized in "its assumption that *a unity of higher types will emerge through the preservation and tolerance of limited forms of difference*" within the population. (Day, 2000, p. 149, emphasis in original) All of these contribute to Day's suggestion that the fantasy of Canadian unity in diversity must be abandoned, so that, despite liberalism's tendency to problematize society, the "problem" of diversity can dissipate completely. By drawing out sections of Day's argument that has to do with identity construction, I hope to underscore the importance of an analysis of multiculturalism as a state policy at the level of the individual. Through an explication and analysis of Day's arguments, I will also demonstrate that multiculturalism, being both the problem and solution to the diversity of the nation, at once splits the Canadian subject but acts as the fantasy of unity. Also, I will show such Canada's subjects are

split and unable to achieve a full Canadian identity despite the fantasy of unit provided by the ideal of multiculturalism.

**Identity.** In my quest to underscore an analysis of subjectivity within the Canadian multicultural discourse, an analysis of national identity is ineluctable. Day (2000) argues that the assumption that individuals can “have” stable ethnocultural identities is integral to multiculturalism. This is because “multiculturalism assumes that a proper, full, Canadian national identity is possible, but is being ‘blocked’ by a diversity of more ‘successful’ individual-ethnocultural identifications” (p. 21). Day (2000) employs psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s theory of identification in order to claim the impossibility of “actually *achieving* a full identity, of halting the search, of reaching the point of unproblematic ‘membership’” (p. 32). A Lacanian analysis of identity is fitting here because not only does it offer a bridge between the psychoanalytic and the social realms of personal identity, it is also applicable in an analysis of a citizen’s identification with the state. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, Breton stresses the importance of identification with the symbolic order in order for Canadians to recognize themselves in the symbolic order but also *be recognized by* it. Day’s use of a Lacanian theory of identity and identification with the state offers an alternative approach to Canadian national identity that differs from Breton’s focus on public institutions and the symbolic order of the state. Moreover, as I will show, the Lacanian split of the subject characterizes both the impossibility of the achievement of full identification as a Canadian subject and Day’s view that Canada *itself* is a split subject, characterized by his concept of “Unhappy Countriness.”

What Day is concerned with is that firstly, “there is no entity such as an ‘individual’ who can take on an ‘identity’” and that secondly, in the Social sphere, something is always othered and excluded. Lacan’s formulation of the mirror stage is crucial to both of Day’s concerns of the impossibility of full identities. In Lacanian theory, there is first the imaginary phase, “which is prior to the entry into language and the symbolic order, when the child still has no awareness of itself as separate and distinct from the mother” (Woodward, 1997, p. 44). This form of the subject is what Lacan termed the “Ideal-I” in the Imaginary and it “situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction” (Lacan, 1989, p. 123). It is only at the subsequent mirror stage that “[t]he beginning of identity formation takes place when the infant realizes it is separate from the mother” (Woodward, 1997, p. 44) through the recognition of a self-image outside of the infant itself. During the mirror stage, the infant identifies the self with the image he or she sees as he or she enters the realm of language.

However, as the infant separates from the mother and begins to form its own identity, the subject also becomes split. Here, a sense of “I” in the infant is only made possible “through finding the ‘I’ reflect back by something outside itself, by the other,” (Woodward, 1997, p. 44), that is, a reflection of the self reflected from the mirror. But at the same time, identity, a sense of a coherent self, is also experienced by the infant based on the fantasy of a unified identity. Stuart Hall (1996) notes that the mirror stage is “the *interruption* – the loss, the division – which initiates the process that ‘founds’ the sexually differentiated subject (and the unconscious) and this depends... on the dislocating rupture of the look from the place of the Other” (p.

9). The fantasy of a unified identity depends on having been a split subject and depends on being perceived by the other, but “the very image which places the child [in the world] divides its identity in two” (Hall, 1996, p. 9).

And so, once the subject enters the Symbolic and language is used to split and re-construct identity, identity is at once both constituted through difference and through differentiation with others, creating the subject of “*je*” and “*moi*.” Both *moi* and *je* are constructed through language and in language, which means that “there are no ‘aspects’ of one’s ‘self-image’ which are *not* social... [and] there is no ‘core’ of ‘individual identity’ that could be extracted or excluded” (Day, 2000, p. 33). The subject becomes alienated and the subject is characterized by a loss or a lack, for it is now subjected to the use of language and its rules that are out of the subject’s control.

Since subjectivity is actually split and not unified, the unconscious desire “for the unitary self and the oneness with the mother of the imaginary phase... produces the tendency to *identify* with power and significant figures outside itself” (Woodward, 1997, p. 45). While the lack that constitutes the subject results in the inability to “be remedied through identifications at any level” (Day, 2000, p. 33), subjects still attempt to “seek some unified sense of ourselves through symbolic systems and identity with the ways in which we are seen by others” (Woodward, 1997, p. 45). This process of Lacanian identification, I think, is also applicable in characterizing the need to identify with a nation-state as a Canadian citizen and subject in the Canadian multicultural discourse, as I will show in the next section through my discussion of Day’s concept of “Unhappy Countriness.”

Day (2000) also argues that, just as the subject is unable to achieve full identification because of a lack, the social itself fails to exist because “there will always be a constitutive outside, an exclusion, remainder, supplement, that cannot and *must not* be absorbed by the system” (p. 33). While the subject is constituted by a lack, the social is constituted by an excess that is not integrated, leaving something to always be excluded. This means that an element of exclusion is necessary and “in fact *required* to create a simulation of wholeness for the Self” (Day, 2000, p. 34). Therefore, in the Canadian context, Day contends that the “problem” of diversity (multiculturalism as fact of diversity) is what is needed to create the fantasy of unity as a nation (multiculturalism as an ideal): “[the] problem of diversity not only ‘prohibits’ multiculturalism as social ideal, it also provides its condition of possibility, through the very failure of its attempts at a hegemonic suture of the social space which would achieve ‘full’ inclusion” (Day, 2000, p. 34). Multiculturalism as the problem of diversity is seen as both what is blocking the achievement of Canadian unity and what is allowing the possibility or the fantasy that such diversity can be overcome.

***The split of the subject.*** Canadian multiculturalism operates similarly to W.E.B. Du Bois’ concept of “the veil,” which Du Bois uses to illustrate the division between Black and White Americans and how the veil aids in constructing the “double-consciousness” of African-Americans (Du Bois, 1903/2007, p. 8). Famously, Du Bois (1903/2007) writes of African Americans as being

born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world,—a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always

looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (p. 8)

The double-consciousness of African-Americans that Du Bois describes has come to signify racial dualism (Winant, 2004, p. 1). Winant (2004) also argues that Du Bois understood the veil dialectically, meaning that “[t]he veil not only divides the individual self; it also fissures the community, the nation, and society as a whole... [I]t not only splits self and world along the ‘color-line,’ but simultaneously founds the self and produces the social world” (p.2). The dialectic nature of the veil, its complex nature as a metaphor for race relations, shows how the veil at once “represents *both barrier and connection* between white and black” (Winant, 2004, p.2, emphasis mine). Multiculturalism can be understood in a similar vein, that it is at once the problem and solution to the diversity of the nation, that it at once splits the Canadian subject but acts as the fantasy of unity. Canada’s subjects are split and unable to achieve a full Canadian identity despite the fantasy of unity provided through multiculturalism. As I show in the next section, Richard Day argues that Canada *itself* is split and fractured according to his application of Hegel’s concept of Unhappy Consciousness..

**Unhappy consciousness.** After discussing the inability to achieve full identification with the state, Day invokes G. W. F. Hegel’s notion of the Unhappy Consciousness from the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to describe the way in which Canada seems to be split and is unable to achieve unity as a nation or a national

identity. Hegel (1967/1807) describes Unhappy Consciousness as “the Alienated Soul which is the consciousness of self as a divided nature, a doubled and merely contradictory being” (p. 251). The Unhappy Consciousness is both the master and the slave, both Self and Other, both universal and particular, concentrated into one consciousness. It “itself is both, and the unity of both is also its own essence; but objectively and consciously it is not yet this essence itself – is not yet the unity of both” (Hegel, 1967/1807, p. 251). The contradictory and even opposing nature of the master and the slave pushes this consciousness to think that the opposites must be brought together in some way, in order for itself to achieve unity. Split and unable to reconcile these opposites within itself and achieve its aim of unity, the Unhappy Consciousness suffers.

Taking the Hegelian concept of Unhappy Consciousness, Day applies it to Canada and its relationship to diversity and calls it “Unhappy Countriness.” Day shows, through his genealogical work tracing the evolution of solutions to the problem of diversity from the Ancient Greeks, to English and French colonial periods, and to the present, how “*Canada has always been split, not only in two, but in multiple fractures within fractures*” (Day, 2000, p. 178). Canada has been split not just between the French and the English, given the presence of Aboriginal Peoples before colonial contact. Perhaps the binary nature of the master/salve dialectic is unable to even capture its divisions within itself. But Day’s point here is that Canada and the Canadian multicultural discourse specifically, has been unable to reconcile these differences and divisions within itself, yet aspires to do so, much like the Lacanian subject.

Closely related to Day's Unhappy Countriness and the fantasy of unity is the concept of recognition. Day (2000) wants to show that "the search for identity and unity can be understood through a critical appropriation of the notion of *recognition*" (p. 34). Day (2000) is critical of the "highly loaded" (p. 197) nature of the term recognition used in Canadian multicultural discourse. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988 declares that the policy of the Government of Canada is to:

- (a) *recognize* and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society...
- (b) *recognize* and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage...
- (d) *recognize the existence of communities* whose members share a common origin... (3.1 emphasis added)

Day (2000) argues that in that instance, the Canadian state "merely recognizes their 'existence'" or the "understanding" of the value of multiculturalism to Canadian society and heritage. (p. 198) It is not a "reciprocal recognition" in the Hegelian sense, which Charles Taylor defines as "recognizing the *equal value* of different ways of being" (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 217). Recognition is "a certain sort of *response* to the cognition of the Other" (Day, 2000, p. 217). Day's understanding of "recognition" found in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act resonates with Hegel's "cognition," which only perceives the Other but not the *difference* in the Other. Such "recognition" denotes multiculturalism as a fact, merely recognizing the existence of diversity. More importantly, just as "multiculturalism" can signify multiple meanings at the convenience of the state, "recognition" is easily "conflated with

multiculturalism as act of reciprocal recognition, to achieve, once again, a very productive confusion” (Day, 2000, p. 198).

**Critique of integration.** The Canadian Multicultural policies have shifted from assimilation to integration of immigrant groups into the dominant societal structure. As discussed in Chapter 1, Will Kymlicka (2001) argues that by making accommodations for minority groups, the multiculturalism policy – along with other policies in health and safety, civil service employment, education, and naturalization – “encourage, pressure, even legally force immigrants to take steps towards integrating into society” (Kymlicka, 2001, p. 155). However, Richard Day (2000) argues by contrast that “integration within multiculturalism in a bilingual framework is best seen as a creative reproduction of the colonial method of strategic assimilation to the Other, and not as an overcoming or break with this past” (p. 197). Day argues that three conditions were necessary for the shift from bilingualism and biculturalism to multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. First, the concept of “ethnocultural origin” is deployed to replace race as a marker of differentiation, and more importantly, to describe *all* Canadians in order to promote a sense of equality within the liberal framework. Second, the dissociation between language and culture was necessary to maintain the status of English and French as Canada’s official languages without diminishing other cultures. Lastly, “a productive confusion of assimilation and integration” (Day, 2000, p. 185) aided towards the recovery of *strategic simulation of assimilation to the Other* as the basis of multiculturalism within the bilingual framework. After explicating Day’s arguments that culminate in his suggestion that integration is at best a “creative reproduction

of the colonial method of strategic assimilation to the Other” (Day, 2000, p. 197) and I will also discuss implications on the identity formations of Canadians.

***Ethnocultural origin.*** Richard Day points out “ethnocultural origin” as a confusing concept as defined in the government publication *Multiculturalism: Building the Canadian Mosaic (MCBMC)*. MCBMC defines “ethnocultural/ethnic origin” as the “[c]ultural, national, or racial origin of a person. Every Canadian has an ethnic origin” (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 189). Based on this definition, one can differentiate people based on their “cultural, national, or racial origin.” But Day (2000) asks, “what does this mean?” – he argues that

[n]either ‘cultural origin’ nor ‘national origin’ is seen as a key term in need of definition, and so we are left to assume that these origins would be detected, in the traditional Herodotan way, through such signs as skin colour, clothing, mode of government, and so on. Racial origin, however, *is* seen as worthy of a definition... (p. 189)

Day (2000) turns to MCBMC again for a definition of “race,” which states that “race” is a “working term to describe *ethnic origin of peoples* defined on the basis of certain common physical features” (p. 190, emphasis added). Here, Day is perturbed by the circularity of the definition of these terms – the definition of ethnocultural origin depends on race, along with culture and the nation, while the definition of race depends on the “ethnic origin of peoples.” Based on these definitions, then, ethnocultural origin does not replace the concept of race as a marker of difference – it only masks the reliance on race and adds to it cultural and national differences. Day (2000) argues that “[t]his continuation of the tradition of differentiation... suggests that multiculturalism as state policy represents a creative reproduction, rather than an overcoming, of the history of Canadian diversity with regard to this

crucial axis of the discourse” (p. 192). In effect, the concept of ‘ethnocultural origin’ masks discussion of race in the discourse of diversity, with the result that race, racism, and racialization becoming more covert in its operation (Razack, 1998).

***Dissociation between language and culture.*** Before multiculturalism was adopted, the link between language and culture was paramount during bilingualism and biculturalism and it helped establish French as one of the official languages of Canada. The Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and the subsequent report argued that since “language is the most evident expression of a culture” and that “[c]ulture and the language that serves as its vehicle cannot be dissociated,” granting French official language status in Canada means the preservation of French culture and also recognition of French Canadians as equal to English Canadians, perpetuating the national narrative of the two “founding nations”<sup>9</sup> (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 193). In the adoption of the multiculturalism policy, however, it meant that the government might also have to give official language status to all other minority cultural groups – if the government is set on preserving all cultures, just as it preserved the French, and language and culture cannot be disassociated, shouldn’t Japanese, Hindi, Swedish, all Aboriginal languages, and all languages spoken by Canadians be granted official statuses as well?

The Canadian government, in making the transition from biculturalism and multiculturalism, needed to justify why not just make all languages official

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<sup>9</sup> For an in-depth analysis of the transition from bilingualism and biculturalism to multiculturalism in a bilingual framework focusing on the Royal Commission on B&B and language, please see Eve Haque’s book: *Multiculturalism within a bilingual framework: language, race, and belonging in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, 2012.

languages in Canada in order to represent them in Canada. Day quotes Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in providing a solution to the government's dilemma, and the solution was the dissociation of language and culture:

It was the view of the Royal Commission, shared by the government, and I am sure, by all Canadians, that there cannot be one cultural policy for Canadians of British and French origin, another for the original peoples, and yet a third for all others. For although there are two official languages, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other. (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 193)

Therefore, despite the fact that there are two official languages in Canada, there is neither an official culture nor a culture that the state prefers or ought to prefer. The dissociation between language and culture allowed "the claim that even though two *languages* were officially Canadian, this did not grant a superior position to the *cultures* associated with them" (Day, 2000, p. 196). Day contends (2000) that "the dissociation of language and culture allowed the Other Ethnic Groups [not English, French, or Aboriginal] to be granted a form of limited state articulation through *simple recognition of their existence*" (p. 194 emphasis in original). Day (2000) further explains that "even though a given language might *not* possess an official state connection, the culture associated with it could still be considered as one of many which were 'Canadian,' through its official *recognition*" (p. 196).<sup>10</sup>

Day's critique of recognition was iterated in the previous section in the discussion of Unhappy Uncountriness above. I described how recognition of the

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<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Eve Haque (2010) writes that multiculturalism within a bilingual framework "regardless of the range of integrative and inclusionary expectations projected onto it, remains limited by policy definition in its ability to do more than reinscribe racialized groups as cultural communities who are peripheral to the two founding nations" (p. 82), only recognized for their existence in diversity without official status. See also Haque (2012) on multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. See Taylor (1997) on the politics of recognition in the Canadian context.

existence of diversity as manifested in the Multiculturalism Act of 1988 is *mere recognition of the existence* of diversity. I also noted how recognition of existence differs from Charles Taylor's Hegelian notion of reciprocal recognition, which goes beyond mere perception and recognition of existence, but instead "recognize[es] the *equal value* of different ways of being" (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 217) – the kind of deep recognition that Day contends to be missing in the Multiculturalism Act of 1988.

***Confusion between assimilation and integration.*** Lastly, Day (2000) discusses the "productive" confusion between integration and assimilation that results in "a creative reproduction of the colonial method of strategic simulation of assimilation to the Other, and not as an overcoming or break with this past" (p. 197). The following are the two definitions of assimilation and integration given in *Multiculturalism: Building the Canadian Mosaic* (MCBCM):

ASSIMILATION: a process, clearly distinct from integration, of eliminating distinctive group characteristics; this may be encouraged as a formal policy (e.g. American 'melting pot').

INTEGRATION: A process, clearly distinct from assimilation, by which groups and/or individuals become able to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country. (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 195)

There are a few points of interest in these definitions. First of all, these two terms are "presented as a binary oppositional pair, each defined as not the other" (Day, 2000, p. 195). Moreover, Day (2000) points out that in both cases, "a separation between Self and Other groups is assumed" (p. 195). In the process of assimilation, presumably groups and individuals with distinctive characteristics are assimilating into *something*, while their distinctive characteristics are eliminated and erased.

Moreover, based on the premise that, by the above definitions from the MCBCM, assimilation and integration are “clearly distinct” and polar opposites, one can infer from these definitions that under a policy of assimilation, groups and individuals with “distinctive characteristics” are unable “to participate fully in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of the country.”

Despite their oppositional definitions proposed in MCBCM, the process of integration is actually quite similar to that of assimilation. As in assimilation, there is something into which Others integrate. On philosopher Will Kymlicka’s account, minority and immigrant groups integrate into the dominant societal culture in order to participate in mainstream institutions of the state. In Chapter 1, I critiqued Kymlicka’s argument about the need for immigrant groups to integrate into the societal culture. Just as Day contends, in the processes of integration and assimilation, the separation between Self and Other groups is still assumed – “[e]ach method is thus based upon the transformation of a problematic Other into a non-problematic – ‘eliminated’ or ‘participating’ – Self,” respectively via assimilation and integration (Day, 2000, p. 195).

Day (2000) argues that “multiculturalism as a state policy is an implementation of... a *constrained emergence theory of identity*” (p. 196), that multiculturalism as a policy has a direct effect on the identities of Canadian citizens. Day (2000) describes this theory of identity as characterized by the “orientation to *improvement of the lot of a sorry, inferior Other*... The Immigrant was to be lifted out of the muck, polished up, and cemented into a place of honour on the magnificent Canadian Mosaic” (p. 153, emphasis in original). The image of the Canadian Mosaic

represents, as a national symbol, “abstract notions of equality, diversity, and unity in diversity” and Day (2000) argues that the aim of multiculturalism as a state policy is clear: “first, know the Other; then render him useful; later, use him to put a layer of attractive ornamentation on your creation.” (p. 152) Therefore, through multicultural celebrations and exposure, the internal Others become known precisely and only through those venues, forming part of the constraint in the emergence of identities. They are then “rendered useful” because these acceptable diverse cultural practices illuminate Canada’s commitment to equality and diversity, “ornament” the Canadian mosaic, and contribute positively to a “the realization of the Canadian National Dream” (Day, 2000, p. 152).

Another constraint on the emergence of identities is that multiculturalism operates within the bilingual framework, as clearly stated in the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988. In order for immigrants to become Canadian citizens, they must be proficient in either one of the official languages. “[T]he strategy [of integration] emphasizes language training and helping immigrants learn about Canadian values” (as cited in Day, 2000, p. 196) in order for them to integrate and become Canadians. However, as discussed above, Pierre Trudeau’s theory was that language and culture had to be disassociated in order to provide official recognition to diverse cultures without making all languages spoken by Canadians official languages. So Day (2000) asks why it is that immigrants must learn English or French in order to learn about Canadian values. “And, if there is ‘no official culture,’ what could possibly be considered a ‘Canadian value’” (p. 197)?

Day (2000) comments that his concept of “constrained emergence theory” of identity is an inherently contradictory theory, and its reproduction of identity leads Canadian multiculturalism as a discourse to be problematic. On the one hand, immigrant groups and “minorities” are encouraged to “maintain certain aspects of their own identities, and to ‘contribute’ these to the Canadian ‘mix’” (p. 197). On the other hand, ‘integration’ of the Others “into one of the two dominant systems of striation – whether they are called ‘cultures,’ ‘nation,’ ‘races,’ or ‘societies’ –” is expected through the learning of at least one of the official languages and the citizenship rites and rituals they are to go through” (Day, 2000, p. 197). Day (2000) likens this kind of “integration” within multiculturalism to “the colonial method of strategic simulation of assimilation” (p. 197). He describes the colonial method as a set of strategies that “[*appears*] to give in the short term to win in the long term” (Day, 2000, p. 88), which was used first by the French colonizers in New France with the Algonquins, Aboriginal Peoples living in New France, and then by the British in an attempt to assimilate the French in Lower Canada (Day, 2000, p. 88-91). In contemporary Canada, the long-term goal of the multiculturalism policy is still the assimilation of the Others, but to “give in” in the short term is to provide minority groups with rights and accommodations in the short term. For example, while Kymlicka (2001) recognizes that psychological integration of minority groups is impossible to prescribe, just because “immigrants have accepted... *institutional* integration does not necessarily mean that they have ‘integrated’ in a more purely psychological sense” (p. 167). Kymlicka’s (2001) hope is that “institutional integration is likely to generate over time a sense of psychological identification” (p.

167), that by allowing minority groups to physically integrate into the dominant societal culture, psychological integration, nationalism, and belongingness will follow.

For Day, then, the *mechanisms* of the production and reproduction of Canadian identities have not changed dramatically since colonial times. However, Day's argument that integration within the multicultural bilingual framework is akin to colonial assimilation says little as to what are the real and lived consequences of such a constrained emergence theory of identity for Canadians. Granted, as a political scientist, Day (2000) has clearly stated that his object of analysis is the history of diversity of Canada and Canada as a nation-state, arguing that "multiculturalism as a state policy does not represent a break with the history of Canadian diversity... [I]t simply marks a shift from the modern nation-state, which simulated a unity and dissimulated its multiplicity, to the postmodern nations-state, which dissimulates its unity and simulates a multiplicity" (p. 209).

However, given Day's positing of a theory of identity, I cannot help but wonder about the implications of the constrained emergence theory of identity on Canadian identity at the level of the individual: that is, how does the individual relate to the nation-state? How do individuals relate to each other? Can individuals resist this model of identity emergence? Elke Winter (2007) utilizes Day's work in conjunction with an analysis of newspaper articles to argue that "Franco-Quebecois – although White and European – are neither an unambiguous part of the dominant majority... nor were they the first (or second, after Aboriginal Peoples) to have been assimilated and rendered" into the national majority, leaving the Franco-Quebecois'

“position within constructions of the Canadian multicultural nation remains highly complex and controversial” (p. 491)<sup>11</sup>. But Day’s work still fails to address the *lived* consequences of multiculturalism in his proposal of the constrained emergence theory of identity on Canadian citizens, especially for Canadians belonging to immigrant groups. Moreover, in an attempt to theorize the inability for Canada and Canadian subjects to maintain a unified identity, Day fails to foreground Aboriginal land claims, rights, and issues in his work. In the next section, I will present an articulation and critique of multiculturalism by Sunera Thobani. Thobani not only deals with Aboriginal Peoples’ claims to the land in her work<sup>12</sup>, she also extends her analysis of multiculturalism as a state policy to include the subjectivity and identity formation of immigrant groups and people of colour.

### **Thobani on Multiculturalism as Assimilation of Immigrant Subjects**

The works of Sunera Thobani offers a critical race perspective on Canadian nation building, nationhood, and on the Canadian subject. In her book *Exalted Subjects*, Thobani’s (2007) major argument is that “underneath the sanitized garb of a postmodern, multiracial, multiethnic ‘tolerant’ Canada, beats the heart of a stubbornly colonial national-formation, sharing a common imaginary with other white settler societies” (p. 29)<sup>13</sup>. Her argument in *Exalted Subjects* is actually quite

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<sup>11</sup> See Taylor (1993, 1997) for Canadian nationalism in relation to Quebec separatism and Quebec sovereignty. Parekh (2002) also specifically refers to the Canadian debate on Quebec sovereignty in *Rethinking Multiculturalism*.

<sup>12</sup> See Lawrence (2003) and Lawrence and Dua (2005) for discussion of Aboriginal identities and decolonialism in the Canadian context.

<sup>13</sup> Ghassen Hage’s (1998) *White Nation* carries a similar argument to Thobani’s, but is set in the Australian context.

similar to Richard Day's argument discussed in the previous section, namely, that multiculturalism as a state policy is the "creative reproduction of the colonial method of strategic assimilation to the Other" (Day, 2000, p. 197). However, unlike Day, Thobani (2007) foregrounds race, racism, and Aboriginal issues in her book, "examin[ing] how certain human beings have come to be constituted as Canadian nationals" (p. 4) through the technique of what she terms "exaltation."

Thobani (2007) defines exaltation as "the embodiment of particular qualities said to characterize nationality," and as a technique of power through which "certain human beings have come to be constituted as Canadian nationals" (p. 4-5). By analyzing state practices such as the law and other governing policies, Thobani (2007) examines the ways in which governance of the population produces a ranking of citizens that results in "certain subjects as exalted (nationals), others as marked for physical and cultural extinction or utter marginalization (Indians), and yet others for perpetual estrangement or conditional inclusion as supplicants (immigrants, migrants, and refugees)" (p. 6). Thobani (2007) articulates a triangulated construct of Canadian national identities, she writes,

"The racial configurations of subject formation within settler societies are thus triangulated: the national remains at the centre of the state's (stated) commitment to enhance national well being; the immigrant receives a tenuous and conditional inclusion; and the Aboriginal continues to be marked for loss of sovereignty" (p. 18).

Throughout her book, Thobani (2007) is concerned with the relationships between the three categories of subjects and how "power is exercised, appropriated, contested, and reproduced... through the state apparatus certainly, but also through

the intimate and interpersonal interactions among the state's subjects/objects of power" (p. 24).

In this section, I will focus on Thobani's explication of Canadian multiculturalism as a state policy and the effects of the adoption of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework on nation building and on the identity construction of immigrants and people of colour. I hope to continue to demonstrate that race and racism cannot be evaded in the discourse of Canadian multiculturalism, despite the conflation between race and culture mentioned throughout this thesis and in contrast to the liberal multiculturalist account discussed in the first chapter.

In the first chapter, I discussed Raymond Breton's argument that the adoption of multiculturalism was a political response to the changing immigration demographic and that it did not come from humanitarian commitment of the state. Similarly, Thobani (2007) argues that liberalization of immigration policies "was a pragmatic response to changing global economic conditions that had less to do with idealistic commitments to a cultural utopia and more with the country's growing need for labour" (p. 146). While Breton did not continue to critique the motivations for the adoption of multiculturalism, Thobani (2007) adds to her argument that "the adoption of multiculturalism helped stabilize white supremacy by transforming its mode of articulation in a decolonizing era" (p. 146). Secondly, in a similar vein as Day's critique of integration and assimilation, Thobani (2007) argues that "[a]lthough multiculturalism has been popularly defined as being antithetical to an assimilationist politics, it has actually resulted in a deeper assimilation of people of colour under white supervision" (p. 172). In the following sub-sections, I will

discuss these two points in order and implications on the identity of Canadian subjects and especially immigrants and people of colour.

**Liberalization of policies and white supremacy.** In the previous chapter, I discussed Raymond Breton's (2005) argument that the adoption of the multicultural policy was "in part, a response to the status anxiety voiced [by non-British and non-French ethnocultural groups]" (p. 272). The aim of Canadian Multiculturalism as a state policy was as a reaction to the sociopolitical climate of the time; it also aimed to assuage any injustice or unfairness perceived by the non-English and non-French ethnocultural groups because the French language was being exalted to official status. While multiculturalism did not come about *purely* due to the humanitarian goodness of the Canadian policy makers at the time, undoubtedly, Breton (1986) still viewed Canadian multiculturalism as an intervention by the state that promoted integration such that everyone can "aspire to recognize themselves in and be recognized by public institutions" (p. 60). Concerned with the liberalization<sup>14</sup> and elimination of overt racism in immigration and citizenship policies, Thobani (2007) argues that the liberalization of these policies had to do with the global economic conditions at the time, and "had less to do with idealistic commitments to a cultural utopia and more with the country's growing need for labour" (p. 146). Moreover, she argues that "the adoption of multiculturalism helped stabilize white supremacy by transforming its mode of articulation in a decolonizing era" (Thobani, 2007, p. 146)

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<sup>14</sup> "Liberalization" in this context is understood to mean the elimination of overt racism in policies and the adoption of liberal values of equality and individual rights in the creation of policies.

Thobani traces the beginning of the liberalization of citizenship and immigration policies in the post WWII period. First, in light of the Civil Rights and Anti-Vietnam War movements in North America, “the previous immigration policies that had distinguished immigrants on the basis of their race became scandalous” (Thobani, 2007, p. 146). Moreover, Canada, along with other European countries, needed to improve racial relations with the post colonial states in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, in order to expand economic opportunities in the global market. Thobani quotes Ambalavaner Sivanandan in describing the momentousness of new relationships that need to be formed in the global capitalist market during the post war period:

Improving race relations was a way of improving business opportunities in newly-dependent countries which would no longer accept British overlordship. So if you were going to work with the comprador classes in the newly-independent countries, you had to stop saying that they were inferior to you, that their cultures were inferior to yours and declare that we were all brothers under the same capitalist skin. (as cited in Thobani, 2007, p. 147)

Other theorists have also noted the interest of economic expansion as the propelling reason for the liberalization of immigration and citizenship policies and multiculturalism as state policy<sup>15</sup>. Abu-Laban and Gabriel (2002) specifically refers to the labour and economic benefits of immigrants as the selling of multiculturalism, “whereby the skill, talents, and ethnic backgrounds of men and women are commodified, marketed, and billed” (p. 169). But Thobani’s (2007) addition to the critique of multiculturalism and the *consequences* of multiculturalism on nation and subject formation is that

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<sup>15</sup> See Stasiulis & Jhappan, 1995; Breton, 1986 and 2005; Sivanadan, 1990

multiculturalism has been critical also in the *reconstitution* of whiteness in its distinct (and historically new) version as a culturally 'tolerant' cosmopolitan whiteness. This has facilitated a more fashionable and politically acceptable form of white supremacy, which has had greater currency within a neocolonial, neoliberal global order. (p. 148)

Thobani (2007) describes three factors that intensified the rise of "a crisis of whiteness" in which "the previously secure sense of whiteness became deeply destabilized, haunted by its associations with colonial genocides and Nazi policies of extermination" (p. 148). The three factors are the defeat of Nazism, the growing Aboriginal movement in countries like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and the reality of racial proximity in daily life since the liberalization of immigration policies. All of these factors that contribute to "a crisis of whiteness" destabilized a notion of white Canadian identity and brought out anxieties surrounding race and racial relations.

Firstly, as already mentioned briefly, assertion of whiteness was destabilized due to the use of racist science by Nazi Germany to inform state policies. Nazi Germany infamously attempted to justify the extermination of threats to the Aryan race, believed to be superior, using scientific racism and claiming scientific legitimacy in the supposed racial and social hierarchy. However, the racial scientific theories employed by the Nazis were similarly employed in Canada to inform state policies. Canada's systematic erasure of Aboriginal communities, language, and culture across the country serves as the infamous example of racial science, which deemed Aboriginal cultures as inferior, informing policy. In light of the defeat of Nazi Germany, "every western nation-state, including Canada, was thereafter

compelled to distance itself from the use of such racist science to determine state policy” (Thobani, 2007, p. 151).

Secondly, Thobani (2007) notes that “western assumptions of racial and cultural superiority had become suspect as international public opinion condemned the scale of violence used against Aboriginal peoples and their communities” (p. 151). As international scrutiny came upon the treatment of Aboriginal Peoples in the Americas, Australia, and New Zealand, “the destructiveness of colonial policies could no longer be cloaked as effectively by platitudes of civilizational and moral superiority as had once been the case” (Thobani, 2007, p. 151). Howard Winant (2004) similarly names “anticolonialism, antiapartheid, worldwide revulsion at fascism, the U.S. civil rights movement, and U.S.-USSR competition” as challenges that confronted racial hierarchy in the post WWII period. (p. xiii) He also points out that “[t]he rise of a worldwide, antiracist, democratizing tendency, from the late 1940s on, was but the first phase, the initiation of the shift or ‘break’ in the old world racial system” and the destabilization of white supremacy. (Winant, 2004, p. xiii)

The final factor Thobani identifies that intensified the crisis of whiteness in the post WWII period is the presence of immigrants of colour. With the liberalization of immigration and citizenship policies, “[t]he increased (demographic and political) presence of those previously designated non-preferred races meant that racial proximity became a feature of daily life” (Thobani, 2007, p. 152). Thobani argues that immigrants, especially immigrants of colour, became more prominent and visible as they began to achieve socio-economic mobility and began to occupy

the same spaces, such as schools, churches, workplaces, hospitals, and other sites, that “nationals had previously claimed for their own” (Thobani, 2007, p. 152). Through the success and socio-economic mobility of people of colour, Thobani argues that “[t]he proximity of people of colour within these sites challenged white entitlement and privilege, implicitly, if not explicitly” (Thobani, 2007, p. 152). Canadian nationals also started to question whether “they” are really unlike “us” if they can succeed and even surpass us – rhetorically Thobani (2007) asks, “Who are we if they can become us?” (p. 152)

This crisis of whiteness not only brought up anxieties around race, Canadian nationals also had to confront the fact that “the very basis of the master narratives of nationhood and their myths of benign and innocent origins were being shaken to the core, as in the rest of the western world” (Thobani, 2007, p. 151). However, Thobani (2007) argues that the emergence of Canadian multiculturalism in the postwar period provided to be “a timely and effective response” to this crisis of whiteness, and it also actually proved to be the solution to rescue whiteness (p. 153). Thobani (2007) brings up studies of Australian and British multiculturalism to show that multiculturalism in Canada helped and continues to stabilize the construction of a national identity during the crisis of whiteness for “it opened up the possibility of recasting national identity in a manner that maintained its uniqueness” (p. 153) especially when compared to the assimilationist policies in the United States. Moreover, multiculturalism presented the Canadian national identity as “more fluid, open-ended, and embracing” (Thobani, 2007, p. 153), allowing “Canadians to resolve the crisis of whiteness through its reorganization as tolerant,

pluralist, and racially innocent, uncontaminated by its previous racists history” (p. 154).

For example, Prime Minister Stephen Harper (2006) issued “a full apology to Chinese Canadians for the head tax and express [on behalf of all Canadians and the Government of Canada] our deepest sorrow for the subsequent exclusion of Chinese immigrants.” Chinese-Canadian immigrants were forced to pay the Chinese Head Tax in the early 1900s, which at its highest amounted to \$500 in 1903. Monetary reparations were also paid to any surviving immigrants or their spouses from the 1900s. In Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s (2006) apology to Chinese Canadians regarding the Chinese Head Tax, he specifically refers to the duration of the racist policy as “an unfortunate period in Canada’s *past*” (emphasis added). This adds to Thobani’s (2007) point that “[t]he old nationalist minority, cast now as incorrigibly and shamelessly racist, could be made responsible for the racist sins of the past,” (p. 143) contrasted with differentiated from “[t]he Canada we know today” and “Canadians... [who] are a good and just people, acting when we’ve committed wrong” (Harper, 2006). Similarly, Winant (2004) argues that this new racial politics is “a reformed variety that... could still maintain a strong continuity with the legacies of imperial rule, conquest, enslavement, and so on... [while] repackaging itself as ‘color-blind,’ nonracist, and meritocratic” (p. xiii).

Thobani (2007) argues that by displacing the responsibility of racism and discrimination to a small group of incorrigible racist national minority in the present and past generations, exalted nationals (p. 6) are able to continue to construct Canadian society as one that is tolerant and cosmopolitan and distance

themselves from Canada's racist past (p. 154)<sup>16</sup>. By holding onto multiculturalism as one of the nation's defining character, Canadians can claim to be morally superior compared to "a small minority of recalcitrant whites who refused or were unable to mask their racisms" (Thobani, 2007, p. 154). Thobani (2007) also asserts that multiculturalism and its association with moral superiority allows for "heightened focus on the cultures of third world peoples" and the projection "of the anxieties of an intolerant and racist whiteness onto immigrants." (p. 155) As Canadian nationals claim moral superiority due to their faith in multiculturalism and display of tolerance, they point to other cultures with accusations of backwardness, of "their corruptions, misogyny, cronyism and violence." (Thobani, 2007, p. 155) Thobani (2007) continues to write that "[w]ith whiteness coming to signify tolerance, a willingness to change and a cosmopolitan sensibility, people of colour could be tied all the more readily to cultural parochialism, authoritarianism, essentialism, and intolerance" (p. 155).

One recent example in Canada is the case of the Shafia murders in Kingston, Ontario in 2009. Mohammad Shafia, his wife Tooba Yahya, and their son Hamed were found guilty of first-degree murder of four women in 2012 – 3 of Mohammad Shafia's daughters and his first wife. The case was dubbed as an act of "honour

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<sup>16</sup> O'Connell (2010) adds to the discussion about the racist national minority by arguing that the assumption of a urban/rural dyad in Canada in which multiculturalism as a fact of diversity is more salient in urban parts of Canada, "rural spaces [are] viewed as *more* white and *less* tolerant" (p. 537). She argues that the construction of an urban/rural comparison and "[t]hese competing yet complimentary multicultural and anticultural narratives together constitute a contemporary politics which is unable to address past colonial crimes and contemporary racial violence" (p.537).

killing,” since the Crown prosecution had argued that the motivation to kill the four women was because they had “dishonoured” their family by “bringing shame on the family by dating, shunning traditional religious garb and skipping school” (“Shafia trial verdict reaction,” 2012). This case brought up not only debates over religious freedom in Canada, but also the contrast between traditional values of immigrant communities and Canadian values of human rights. The Muslim community spoke out against honour killing and contended that “[i]t’s not taught in any religion, nor is it part of the Holy Qur’an”<sup>17</sup> (“Windsor Muslim women react”, 2012). Additionally, a statement issued by the Embassy of Afghanistan in Ottawa read that “This kind of crime is neither part of Afghan culture nor Islamic culture, and it is not acceptable in any ways. There is nothing honorable, about violence against anyone especially against innocent women” (as cited in “Hamed Shafia appeals,” 2012).

The media’s particular focus on Islam, patriarchy and the violence committed against the four women as honour killings not only exoticized the murders but also paints racialized Canadians as stubborn and traditional. Toronto Star columnist Rosie DiManno (2012) questioned why Canadian morals had little effect on Hamed Shafia, the son also convicted guilty in the murders of the women. She writes,

It’s depressing that Hamed, who speaks fluent English and was a sophisticated world traveller, who left Afghanistan as a baby, who was well-exposed to Canadian values after his clan settled in Montreal, should have been so regressive of mind. Why did Canadian societal morals have no traction with him? He went to school here, was being groomed as the entrepreneurial heir. Yet he limply submitted to — embraced — the all-controlling “honour” dogma that rendered his two oldest sisters “whores” and the other victims blithely expendable. (para. 14)

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DiManno assumes that Canadian values are superior to values Hamed Shafia would have been exposed to at home, such that if Hamed had been more assimilated into “Canadian values,” he would not have participated in violence against his family members. DiManno’s lament that Canadian values left no “traction” on Hamed Shafia precisely illustrates Thobani’s (2007) point that people of colour are perceived by the public as “stubbornly traditional despite the nation’s offer to modernize them, despite its hospitality and generosity towards them, and despite its respect for their cultures” (p. 155).

The notion of Canadian moral superiority is also asserted in Justice Minister Rob Nicholson’s reaction to the “so-called honour killings.” Nicholson said that “so-called honour killings are barbaric and unacceptable and have no place in Canada” and that “our government has always focused primarily on the rights of victims and not on the twisted rationale offered by convicted murderers” (“Shafia political reaction,” 2012). The CBC news website also reports that Jason Kenney, the Immigration Minister of Canada, also tweeted a quote from the government’s new citizenship guide which reads, “Canada’s openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, ‘honour killings’... or gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada’s criminal laws” (“Shafia political reaction,” 2012). In effect, Thobani (2007) claims that

[m]ulticulturalism as a specific policy and socio-political racial ideology has thus come to attest to the enduring superiority of whiteness... It became a framework that assumed a certain rigidity in the cultures of racial others, of their enduring inferiority, immaturity, and the need for their reformulation under the tutelage of progressive – always modernizing – western superiority. (p. 155)

By labeling the murders as “honour killing,” associations between the murders and Islam are raised, even though some scholars have noted that “there is nothing in the Koran, the book of basic Islamic teachings, that permits or sanctions honor killings” (Mayell, 2002, p. 1). Would the case have been called “honour killing” if the accused and the victims were not Islamic or racialized Canadians? If racialized Canadians are perceived as in need of Canadian values and morals, assimilation into Canadian culture then, must be at work.

**Assimilation and integration.** The notion of Canadian moral superiority and association with the superiority of whiteness and western civilization is also compounded by the mimicry of whiteness by people of colour, which Homi Bhabha (1994) poignantly describes in “Of Mimicry and Men.” While Bhabha (1994) focuses on a colonial discourse of mimicry, I think that his analysis of mimicry also applies to modern day Canada, given his description of and reference to “that conflictual economy of colonial discourse which Edward Said describes as the tension between the synchronic panoptical vision of domination – the demand for identity, stasis – and the counter-pressure of the diachrony of history – change, difference” (p. 122). The tension described within the colonial discourse also aptly describes, I think, the tension between a desire for stasis of the Canadian nation on the one hand and the inevitability of constant change on the other, as discussed in for example, *House of Difference* by Eva Mackey (1999).

Therefore, colonial mimicry is also fitting when discussing mimicry within multicultural Canada. Bhabha (1994) defines colonial mimicry as “the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, *as a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but*

*not quite*" (p. 122). Mimicry is also "constructed around an *ambivalence*... the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 122). He also describes mimicry as "the repetition of *partial* presence... articulat[ing] those disturbances of cultural, racial and historical difference that menace the narcissistic demand of colonial authority" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 126). After a discussion on Thobani's critique of assimilation, the link between mimicry and assimilation should become clearer. But it suffices to say for now that Thobani's critique of assimilation in multicultural Canada can be read with Bhabha's (1994) description of colonial mimicry, which not only "disclos[es] the ambivalence of colonial discourse" and "also disrupts its authority" (p. 126). Similarly, the assimilation of people of colour that results from multiculturalism as a state policy reveals the ambivalence of the multicultural discourse while disrupting its authority. Just as in colonial mimicry, the ambivalence of subjectivities also becomes more apparent in the discussion of assimilation under multiculturalism.

This brings me to explicate Thobani's (2007) argument of how multiculturalism actually results in "a deeper assimilation of people of colour under white supervision" (p. 172). Thobani (2007), along side other critics of multiculturalism and liberalism (Bannerji 2000; Winant 2004), argues that "official multiculturalism diverted attention from the power relations that reproduce hierarchies, reframing these instead as conflicts arising from ignorance and cultural intolerance" (p. 162). Thobani (2007) concludes that immigrants, then, come to see themselves in culturalist terms and that they "[come] to see themselves through the eyes of the nation" (p. 162), for they are mediated through the Canadian

multicultural discourse. Thobani (2007) writes that the multiculturalism policy “sought to define not only who the nation’s Others were but also what they were” (p. 163). With the Canadian Multiculturalism Act [CMA] of 1988, Canada is committed to “encourage the preservation, enhancement, sharing, and evolving expression of the multicultural heritage of Canada” (5.1.e). Combined with the politics of state funding, the state is able to “preserve, enhance, and share cultural heritage” (CMA 3.1.a) that are in line with its “commitment to the national project and [that which] would help enrich the lives of nationals” (Thobani, 2007, p. 163). Given the impossibility of funding *all* multicultural groups and their events, selective state support and financial funding for multicultural events and activities end up determining “which practices were to be rightly considered part of the traditional culture of immigrants, worthy of being given visibility and promotion” (Thobani, 2007, p. 163). The events that do end up being funded and promoted, then, are the ones worthy of “preservation” and are important elements of “cultural heritage.”

The implication of time past and history in vocabularies such as “preserve” and “heritage” links cultural practices and the celebration and promotion of ethnic heritage to the past and “presented as connected to tradition, not modernity” (Thobani, 2007, p. 163). Thobani (2007) concludes that “the adoption of the multicultural policy fossilized immigrants as living remnants of the past” (p. 164). This affects the subjectivities of immigrants and people of colour greatly for instead of being defined by hybrid forms of subjectivities as theorized by both Paul Gilroy (1993) and Homi Bhabha (1994), immigrants and people of colour become defined

by their cultural practices and ethnic heritage that are seen as tradition and conservative (Thobani, 2007, p. 164).

Thobani (2007) argues that people of colour in Canada “learn to see themselves through the nation’s eyes” (p. 166), effectively reproducing the Western gaze onto themselves. This effect is intensified by the multiculturalist discourse that emphasizes culture as the marker of difference and encourages immigrant communities “to express and experience ‘their’ cultures through multiculturalism’s conceptual language and assumptions” (Thobani, 2007, p. 167). Thobani (2007) discusses the way in which gendered inequalities, especially racialized gender constructs, are seen as “oppressive, ill-informed, and unhealthy, if not deadly” (p. 167). The Shafia murders again work as an apt example to illustrate Thobani’s point. The daughters of Mohammed Shafia, growing up in Canada, are portrayed by the media as given “the opportunity to escape from their inherently and deeply oppressive communities and enforced traditional feminine roles” (Thobani, 2007, p. 167). The tragedy of the violence committed against the women are intensified by the alleged imposition of more traditional gender roles and the threat to gender equality.

Moreover, the women’s liberalization and modernization, “signaled by the level of their assimilation into Canadian society and its values, upholds such exaltations of nationhood” (Thobani, 2007, p. 168), i.e. that Canadian society is modern and egalitarian. The three daughters’ assimilation into Canadian society is manifested not just in the way they dressed, that they dated as teenagers or that they skipped school, but also in Mohammed Shafia’s supposed detest of such

behaviours – the contrast set up between modern and traditional values. What created such an outcry in response to the murders was not only because of abhorrence of violence committed against the four women, but also because, through the reduction of the crime as a cultural practice and specifically as “honour killings,” the murders brought out the negative aspects of another culture that destabilizes the amount of tolerance permitted within multiculturalism. Thobani (2007) writes that the national community is perhaps more fascinated by the negative aspects of other cultures than the more benign aspects of them,

for it is in the disavowal and disdain for these practices that the national subject is able to experience most fully his/her cultural superiority, his/her higher civilization status. In disparaging the deviant, dictatorial, and ultrapatriarchal practices..., the national subject can experience him/herself as enjoying the freedoms, liberties, individual rights, and forms of demeanor that immigrants are considered incapable of exhibiting and appreciating. (p. 170)

In order to be accepted, the immigrant subject “is perpetually required to prove her/his divestment of the negative elements of her/his cultural self” (Thobani, 2007, p. 171). And the parallel between mimicry and assimilation is also illuminated here, for Homi Bhabha (1994) writes that mimicry is “the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal” (p. 122). This makes the processes of detest and denial, and the assertion of difference, paramount in the construction of immigrant subjectivities.

For immigrants to be accepted as the nation’s multicultural subjects, they have to become what Sara Ahmed calls “acceptable strangers,” “strangers whose appearance of difference can be claimed by the nations,” whereas strangers who are unassimilable are those “who may yet be expelled, whose difference may be

dangerous to the well-being of even the most heterogeneous of nations.” (as cited in Thobani, 2007, p. 170) Immigrant subjects have to deploy their difference strategically and effectively “so that it is reassuring and not alarming,” to the national subjects. Thobani (2007) continues,

Therefore, the immigrant subject’s cultural Otherness is more likely to be accepted if it reconfirms the national subject’s sense of her/his own exaltation... The immigrant subject can thus safely exhibit her/his cultural strangeness or foreign-ness in public to the extent that it reconfirms national superiority by attesting to its tolerance. A measured and cautious display guarantees the immigrant’s access to recognition and acceptance, but her/his otherness must be kept under strict control to avoid eliciting disgust, revulsion, or a sense of threat. (p. 170-171)

The immigrant subject who desires to be accepted must not only contain his or her own difference in tolerable doses, and similarly in colonial mimicry, the “‘partial’ representation [of the colonial object] rearticulates the whole notion of *identity* and alienates it from essence” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 127). Recalling Richard Day’s formulation of the constrained emergence theory of identity discussed above, the multiculturalist discourse also works to allow for a limited representation and expression of cultures of immigrants and people of colour in Canada. Thobani (2007) writes that the immigrant subject also “absorbs the dominant society’s disdain and projects it onto other immigrants, contributing more scorn and derision, ever distancing him/herself as modern, assimilated, hyphenated, and no less urbane or cosmopolitan than the nation” (p. 171), in order to be differentiated from “the illegal migrants, the ‘boat people,’ the ‘economic’ migrants, and the undocumented” (p. 172).

However, no matter how desperately the immigrant subject attempts to distance him/herself from the unassimilated migrants, Thobani (2007) draws of Frantz Fanon and writes that this act of distancing is ultimately a fool's errand, because

the racialized marking of the body cannot be overcome, no matter the sophistication of one's deportment, the undetectability of one's accent, the depth of one's longing to belong. Even a young white child had the power to reduce the adult Black man to little more than his 'epidermal schema.' (p. 172)

In Fanon's (1952/1967) encounter with a white boy on the street, the boy called out Fanon's blackness, saying "Look, a Negro! ... Mama, see the Negro! I'm frightened!" (p. 111-2). The encounter made Fanon (1952/1967) nauseous and felt that he was made an object, "an object in the midst of other objects" (p. 111). Fanon's encounter with the white boy is more fully examined by Sara Ahmed (2004) in her analysis of fear. Ahmed writes that the white boy misreads Fanon's own fears, manifested by his shivering, as rage, which in turns brings out the boy's fear of the black body. Ahmed (2004) notes the fear "does something; it re-establishes distance between bodies whose difference is read off the surface" (p. 63). Distance is inserted between the black body and the white boy through fear, and perhaps Thobani would similarly argue that fears of the threat to national identity is what causes distance between the racialized multicultural subject, the unassimilable subject, and the national subject.

## **Summary**

In this chapter, I drew out two different theories of identity from the works of Richard Day's and Sunera Thobani's work on multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada. Richard Day proposes that multiculturalism in Canada acts as a reproduction of a colonial method of assimilation of immigrant subjects, rather than as a promotion of integration. Similarly, Thobani also argues that Canadian multiculturalism actually deepens assimilation of immigrant subjects and stabilizes white supremacy instead of dismantling it. While Day failed to address the consequences of multiculturalism on individuality and subjectivity, Thobani's (2007) critique of multiculturalism address some of the consequences of deepened assimilation of the immigrant subject, namely that "the immigrant who longs for acceptance... absorbs the dominant society's disdain and projects it onto other immigrants, contributing more scorn and derision" (p. 171). However, Thobani does not account for the relationship between the political subject and market relations in her analysis, which is why in the following chapter, I will employ Foucault's analysis of *homo oeconomicus* in order to demonstrate a model of identity that accounts for the intersection between the political and the economical.

### Chapter 3

In the previous chapter, I analyzed two interpretations of multiculturalism as a state policy by theorists Richard Day and Sunera Thobani. I also discussed implications of those two accounts of multiculturalism on the subjectivities and identity formations of Canadians. In this chapter, building on the on-going critique of liberal multiculturalism, I attempt to situate Canada's multicultural policy in relation to Michel Foucault's conception of biopower and biopolitics in order to open an alternative approach to analyzing multicultural discourse. Biopower and biopolitics has primarily been theorized in conjunction with settler colonialism. For example, in Renisa Mawani's (2009) *Colonial Proximities*, she argues that the biopolitical imperative of the British Empire in its governance of Canada as a colony at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was "aimed at enhancing the biological life of the 'species'" (p. 17), and in the colonial context it is the white settler population. Mawani (2009) argues that the result of these biopolitical imperatives was state instituted racism, in which Aboriginal Peoples, Chinese and Japanese labourers, and the Mixed-Blood population were discriminated against and heavily regulated through the reinforcement of laws and policies<sup>18</sup>. Morgensen (2011) explicates theories of biopower presented by Foucault and Giorgio Agamben in relation to settler colonialism and the Western law. Biopower and biopolitics, however, has not been extensively theorized in the context of multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada in relation to subjectivity or the effect on individual's identities. Most studies

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<sup>18</sup> See Stoler, 1995 for a colonial reading of Foucault's *History of Sexuality*, while also drawing upon state instituted racism found in biopolitics. Stoler adds a racial discourse to the history of 19<sup>th</sup> century European sexuality.

focus on racial relations in the contemporary political sphere, and racialization in the health care system (e.g. Osuri, 2011; Amin, 2010; Keil & Ali, 2006; Yue, 2008).

I see multiculturalism as a form of biopower because of the way multiculturalism reasserts a national identity and calls for assimilation of subjects as discussed through Day's and Thobani's works. While neither Day nor Thobani explicitly call for an analysis of multiculturalism as a form of power, both of their works gesture towards the massifying character of multiculturalism on Canadian citizens through the process of assimilation. In the reassertion of a national identity, the population is "massified" into becoming more "Canadian"; meanwhile, differences are erased and "let die" through the process of assimilation.

Given two primary questions of this thesis—how we may best account for the question of the individual who is subjected to multicultural discourses and policies, and secondly what philosophical and theoretical approaches may help forward debates about multiculturalism, liberalism, and critical race theory, Foucault's analyses provide promising directions. For example, his concept of *homo oeconomicus* as an economic subject (among other concepts from his work I address in this chapter) is pertinent to the discussion of multiculturalism and biopolitics. Firstly, economic relations should not be neglected in any analysis of society, particularly if we take seriously the increasingly globalized economy and its inevitable and complex relations to implications of (neo) liberalism addressed throughout this thesis; and secondly, the relation of *homo oeconomicus* pushes existing debates to a more robust understanding of how liberalism is inextricably bound with multiculturalism (Stoler, 1995).

While this paper is unable to present definitive research on an analysis of multiculturalism as biopolitics, I hope that this chapter will serve to open up discussions that investigate parallels between Canadian multiculturalism and biopolitics, between Foucault's analysis of *homo œconomicus* and the Canadian subject, and also between the concept of civil society and Canadian society. First, I provide an overview of Foucault's concept of governmentality as a backdrop to understanding biopolitics as a technology of governance. I will then discuss the ways in which multiculturalism as Canada's state policy can be understood as a modality of Foucault's biopower—specifically, a technology of governance. Finally, I turn to Foucault's analysis of the model of *homo œconomicus* that functions as the subject of liberalism and biopolitics.

Michel Foucault (1979/2004) defines biopolitics as “the attempt, starting from the eighteenth century, to rationalize the problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birthrate, life expectancy, race...” (p. 317). Canadian multiculturalism can be understood as such a form of governance for it concerns itself not only with the race or culture of the population, but as discussed in the first chapter through Breton's work, Canadian multiculturalism also began as a reaction to the rate of immigration and changing demographics of the Canadian population and economic needs of society. Moreover, as Thobani (2007) asserts, the maintenance of white supremacy within the Canadian multicultural framework also has to do with ensuring the longevity of the white settler population. By framing Canadian multiculturalism as biopolitics, I attempt to examine the massifying effects

of biopolitical power on the population and question what kinds of Canadian identities emerge by understanding multiculturalism within a biopolitical framework.

An analysis of Canadian multiculturalism as a form of biopower is apt given the relation between biopower and liberalism, and liberalism's pervasiveness in the contemporary political sphere. Foucault (1979/2004) understands liberalism as "an art of government which emerges in the eighteenth century" (p. 60). Foucault also indicates three features of liberalism and they are: "veridiction of the market, limitation by the calculation of governmental utility, and... the position of Europe as a region of unlimited economic development in relation to a world market" (p. 61). While these three features of liberalism seem to differ significantly from the definition of philosophical liberalism Goldberg (1993) outlined in my first chapter, Foucault (1979/2004) insists that "we can employ the word liberalism inasmuch as freedom really is at the heart of this practice or of the problems it confronts" (p. 62). Even though Foucault (1979/2004) focuses on liberalism as a governmentality rather than as a set of philosophical concepts, freedom, the need for freedom, the production, organization, and consumption of it is fundamentally congruent (p. 65) with Goldberg's (1993) explication of philosophical reflections of "the political and moral conditions under which self-protection, self-expression, and freedom would be maximized for all" (p. 17). For Foucault (1979/2004), liberalism is "to be analyzed as a principle and method of rationalization of the exercise of government, a rationalization which obeys – and this is what is specific about it – the internal rule of maximum economy" (p. 318). Foucault's (1979/2004) analysis of liberalism

stems from his belief that “only when we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what biopolitics is” (p. 22).

### **Governmentality**

In Michel Foucault’s political philosophy and theory, he documents what he called “governmentality” or “governmental rationality” throughout Western political history and thought. The developments and shifts of these political rationalities play an important role in Foucault’s analysis of the shift from the repressive hypothesis as a disciplinary regime to the new political rationality of biopower and biopolitics. In this section, I will give an overview of Foucault’s political thought related to the emergence of biopower as a form of governmentality. One of Foucault’s aims in his plethora of work is to show historically how reason, rationality, and certain forms of rationalization have operated in Western society. He believes that “we must limit the sense of the word ‘rationalisation’ to an instrumental and relative use... and to see how forms of rationalisation become embodied in practices, or systems of practices” (as cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 133). The emergence of the governmentality of biopower hinges upon the development of three political rationalities that preceded or were contemporary with it.

The first political rationality “was concerned with the just and good life... based on larger metaphysical understanding of the ordered cosmos” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 136). In this way of political thinking, there was an external goal or aim associated with political life, and “[p]olitical thinking was that art which, in an imperfect world, led men toward the good life, an art which imitated God’s

government of nature” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 135). Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) associate this political rationality to the Classical Greek era, especially that of Aristotle’s political thought, and “Christian versions, like those of Saint Thomas [that] were in line with Aristotle” (p. 136).

The second type of political rationality is usually associated with the emergence of Machiavellian thought, with the publication of *The Prince*, during the Renaissance. Foucault (1978/1991) conceptualized the political rationality in Machiavelli’s *The Prince* as a departure from “the art of government which, once shorn of its theological foundation and religious justification” to one that “took the sole interest of the prince as its object and principle of rationality” (p. 89). *The Prince* “is essentially a treatise about the prince’s ability to keep his principality,” with principality understood to be “the prince’s relation with what he owns, with the territory he has inherited or acquired, and with his subjects” (Foucault, 1978/1991, p. 90). Moreover, “the objective of the exercise of power is to reinforce, strengthen and protect the principality” (Foucault, 1978/1991, p. 90). In this type of governmental rationality, the maintenance of power and the solidarity of power is paramount, “not the freedom or virtue of the citizens, nor even their peace and tranquility” (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982, p. 136).

The third type of political rationality is the theory of *raison d’état*, the theory of the reason of state, which was contemporary to the ideas and political thinking that grew out of both agreement and disagreement with Machiavelli’s *The Prince*. Foucault (1978/1991) writes that this theme of *raison d’état* should be understood

in a full and positive sense: the state is governed according to rational principles which are intrinsic to it and which cannot be derived solely

from natural or divine laws or the principles of wisdom and prudence; the state, like nature, has its own proper form of rationality, albeit of a different sort. Conversely, the art of government... must find the principles of its rationality in that which constitutes the specific reality of the state. (p. 97)

This form of governmentality then, is concerned with finding the state's own rationality, and "the principles of the state are immanent, precisely, in the state itself" (Gordon, 1991, p. 9). The theory of *raison d'état* contends that the state is an end to itself, and as Dreyfus and Rabinow (1982) explain,

For [the tacticians of the *raison d'état*], political rationality no longer sought to achieve the good life nor merely to aid the prince, but to increase the scope of power for its own sake by bringing the bodies of the state's subjects under tighter discipline. (p. 137)

The state, then, needs to know itself. And it is also this principle that the state is its own end of the governmentality of *raison d'état* that espouses the shift from politics to bio-politics, from *raison d'état* to liberalism as the dominant governmentality, and from the repressive hypothesis to biopower.

### **Biopower and Biopolitics**

Quite laconically, biopower is "the right to make live and let die" (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 241). Foucault contrasts the emergence of biopower as a governmental rationality with at least two concepts that concern the present discussion: the theme of *raison d'état* as discussed above, and the right of sovereignty over life and death. Before the nineteenth century, "the lives and deaths of subjects become rights only as a result of the will of the sovereign," and "[t]he very essence of the right of life and death is actually the right to kill: it is at the moment when the sovereign can kill that he exercises his right over life" (Foucault,

1976/2003, p. 240). In short, the right of the sovereign was the power to take life by killing, and to let live by *not* killing. Foucault (1976/2003) argues that in the nineteenth century, that right “came to be complemented by a new right which... is the power to ‘make’ live and ‘let’ die” (p. 241).

While the governmentality of sovereignty relied on disciplinary technologies that “were essentially centered on the body, on the individual body,” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 242) biopower utilizes new forms of technologies, in combination with disciplinary technologies, that are “applied not to man-as-body but to the living man, to man-as-living-being; ultimately, if you like, to man-as-species” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 242). Disciplinary power is applied to humans as individuals “that can be kept under surveillance, trained, used, and, if need be, punished” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 242). However, biopower is applied to a multiplicity of humans, “to the extent that they form... a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness, and so on” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 242-3). This means that biopower is “massifying” rather than “individualizing.” Before delving into biopower and biopolitics, I will first briefly expound disciplinary power and technology in order to provide the contrast between them and biopower and biopolitics.

**Disciplinary power and technology.** Foucault (1976/2003) sums up disciplinary technology of the body concisely as one that “centers on the body, produces individualizing effects, and manipulates the body as a source of forces that have to be rendered both useful and docile” (p. 249). In *Discipline and Punish* (1975/1979), Foucault presents a history of the penal system and analyzes

punishment and the ways in which shifts in power relations affected punishment and discipline. By looking at the way the prison developed, Foucault also looked at discipline as a way of creating bodies and individuals that can be controlled and that are docile. He argued that in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, discipline became the presiding mode of subjugation. Discipline “was directed not only at the growth of [a body’s] skills, nor at the intensification of its subjection, but at the formation of a relation that in the mechanism itself makes [the body] more obedient as it becomes more useful, and conversely” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 137-8). Discipline produces “subjected and practised bodies, ‘docile’ bodies” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 138), which “may be subjected, used, transformed and improved” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 136). Discipline creates docile bodies using “four great techniques: it draws up tables; it prescribes movements; it imposes exercises; lastly, in order to obtain the combination of forces, it arranges ‘tactics’” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 167). By organizing bodies spatially, following a timetable, and creating divisions and subdivisions of society, individuality and individuals are actually the results of the group, the social body, and the way in which power is applied.

Therefore, “[d]iscipline ‘makes’ individuals; it is the specific technique of power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 170). Disciplinary power achieves its success of individualization through three mechanisms, and they are hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment, and the combination of them that is the examination. Institutions such as the army, hospitals, and schools, “functioned like a microscope

of conduct” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 172), seeing everything and casting a gaze of surveillance onto the bodies they are disciplining. Surveillance and supervision also induces the effects of discipline without invoking force or violence; disciplinary power operates everywhere and always in silence. (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 177) Punishment within the disciplinary regime also compares individuals to one another, differentiates and hierarchizes them in its measures, homogenizes individuals by imposing norms, and excludes them through the idea of the normal and the abnormal – “[i]n short, [disciplinary power] normalizes” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 183). Foucault (1975/1979) continues, “In a sense, the power of normalization imposes homogeneity; but it individualizes by making it possible to measure gaps, to determine levels, to fix specialties and to render the differences useful by fitting them one to another” (p. 184).

The combination of observation and normalization as techniques of power culminate into the examination, which Foucault (1975/1979) describes as “a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (p. 184). In the exercise of disciplinary power through examination, subjects are made visible; “[t]heir visibility assures the hold of the power that is exercised over them” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 187). Subjects on whom disciplinary power is exercised are thoroughly documented and made objects through examination. At the same time, they are also constituted as individuals, as cases to be analyzed, qualified, and classified.

Foucault (1975/1979) also argues that disciplinary power “mark[s] the moment when the reversal of the political axis of individualization... takes place” (p.

192). Foucault (1975/1979) argues that in, for example, feudal societies, “individualization is greatest where sovereignty is exercised and in the higher echelons of power. The more one possess power or privilege, the more one is marked as an individual, by rituals, written accounts of visual reproductions” (p. 192). Foucault calls this a procedure of “ascending” individualization, in which a ruler is ceremonialized and becomes more individualized by his/her possession of power. However, in disciplinary regimes, individualization is “descending”:

[A]s power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized; it is exercised by surveillance rather than ceremonies, by observation rather than commemorative accounts, by comparative measures that have the ‘norm’ as reference rather than genealogies giving ancestors as points of reference; by ‘gaps’ rather than by deeds. (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 193)

Therefore, through disciplinary technologies of examination, surveillance, and normalization, the child, the patient, the madman, and the delinquent are more individualized than the adult, the healthy, and the normal and non-delinquent. Individuality, then, is an effect of power: “In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production” (Foucault, 1975/1979, p. 194). Within the disciplinary regime, then, power is individualizing and makes subjects individuals. In my discussion of the model of *homo oeconomicus* in the last section of this chapter, I will call into question the effects of biopolitics on subject formation, given the contrast between biopolitics and the disciplinary regime.

**Situating multiculturalism within biopolitics.** Biopolitics deals with phenomena and processes of life that affect the population as a whole. For example, Foucault names public hygiene, problems of reproduction, and mortality rates and birth rates as phenomena under the realm of biopolitics. He also describes “the urban problem” as “biopolitics’ last domain [which] is... control over relations between the human race... and their environment, the milieu in which they live.” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 244-245) Foucault defines three characteristics of biopolitics that illustrate the ways in which multiculturalism and the “problem” of diversity of the population referred to throughout the chapters fit within biopolitics, an emerging field of governmentality and its associated technologies of power.

Firstly, biopolitics is posed in contrast to “the theory of right [which] basically knew only the individual and society: the contracting individual and the social body constituted by the voluntary or implicit contract among individuals” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 245). As mentioned above, disciplinary technologies, its practices, and the theory of right are individualizing and “dealt with individual and their bodies in practical terms” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 245). On the other hand, biopolitics is concerned with the population – “a body with so many heads that, while they might not be an infinite number, cannot necessarily be counted” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 245). Foucault (1976/2003) writes more succinctly that “[b]iopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power’s problem” (p. 245).

The multicultural discourse is obviously concerned with a population, and as discussed earlier, it problematizes the diversity of the population as a political problem. Multiculturalism as a state policy, moreover, is enacted upon the nation as a whole, upon the population as a political problem. While the Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988), by its nature as a piece of policy, is something that is established between “the contracting individual and the social body,” it does not target “man-as-individual”; The Canadian Multiculturalism Act does not ask for individual actions, nor does it promise individual Canadian citizens anything in return. For example, the Canadian Multiculturalism Act broadly states that multiculturalism is reflective of Canadian society (3.1.a) and is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage (3.1.b). The fact that the cultural and racial diversity of the population has been problematized (as argued through Breton’s, Day’s, and Thobani’s works) and that there are specific policies in Canadian society addressing it, show that the population, not just the “diverse” aspects of it, are already characterized as a “political problem..., as a biological problems and as power’s problem” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 245).

Secondly, Foucault (1976/2003) describes the phenomena addressed by biopolitics as “aleatory events that occur within a population that exists over a period of time” (p. 246). These events are random, unpredictable, and dependent on chance when considered individually, but Foucault (1976/2003) writes that they, “at the collective level, display constants that are easy, or at least possible to establish” (p. 246). Moreover, these are phenomena that occur over time, meaning that while they are unpredictable, one can study their historical patterns of

occurrence. Immigration rates, birth rates, and mortality rates are collective phenomena that “have their economic and political effects, and that they *become pertinent only at the mass level*” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 246, emphasis added). Within the multicultural discourse, immigration rates, birth rates, and the percentages of the population of certain ethnocultural origins, these are all phenomena that are individually unpredictable but only make sense at the level of the population, at the level of Canada as a whole.

Lastly, Foucault (1976/2003) writes that biopolitics, as a technology of power, “will introduce mechanisms with a certain number of functions that are very different from the functions of disciplinary mechanisms” (p. 246). By now, Foucault has already established that biopolitics is massifying rather than individualizing, and that it is targeted towards a population and towards man-as-species rather than man-as-individuals. Here, he speaks specifically about the function and purpose of these mechanisms of power, which include “forecasts, statistical estimates, and overall measures” (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 246):

[T]heir purpose is not to modify any given phenomenon as such, or to modify a given individual insofar as he is an individual, but, essentially, to intervene at the level at which these general phenomena are determined, to intervene at the level of their generality... And most important of all, regulatory mechanisms must be established to establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis, and compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field. (Foucault, 1976/2003, p. 246)

Throughout the chapters, I have made references to the fact that Canada’s want for immigration had to do with the low birth rate in Canada at the time and that Canada’s subsequent liberalization of immigration policy had to do with low

immigration rates from the “preferred races” coupled with an economic need of labour. Multiculturalism in Canada was introduced, as argued by Breton and Thobani, partly in response to low birth rates and immigration rates, and partly in response to a growing capitalist economy. Just as Foucault theorizes, these all have to do with the maintenance of the certain rate of growth for the country, whether biological or economical.

### ***Homo Œconomicus* as the Subject of Liberalism and Biopolitics**

In the last two lectures of The Birth of Biopolitics series at the College de France, Michel Foucault espouses the model of the *homo Œconomicus* in order to provide a theory of the subject that Foucault argues is the subject of liberalism and biopolitical governance. By analyzing Foucault’s discussion of *homo Œconomicus*, I hope to bring forth any parallels between *homo Œconomicus* and Canadian identity emerging from the Canadian multicultural discourse. An analysis of *homo Œconomicus* leads Foucault to describe the emergence of a new type of governmentality that is biopolitics. *Homo Œconomicus*, the economic man, is a model of a subject that is used by economists in order to analyze human behaviours. In a previous lecture, Foucault (1979/2004) has “tried to show how American neo-liberals apply, or at any rate try to apply economic analysis to a series of objects, to domains of behavior or conduct which were not market forms of behavior or conduct” (p. 268). Foucault’s analysis of *homo Œconomicus* as an economic subject is pertinent to the discussion of multiculturalism and biopolitics because economic relations should not be neglected in any analysis of society. As discussed in the

second chapter, Sunera Thobani (2007) stresses the economic benefits of liberalization of Canadian immigration policies for the expanding global capitalist market (p. 146). Considerations of economic relations are important to the analysis of multiculturalism as a state policy, and Foucault's insistence on an analysis of the economic subject contrasted with the legal subject is beneficial to an analysis of the subject of Canadian multiculturalism.

For Foucault (1979/2004), what is at stake is the generalization of the economic object of analysis to all or any conduct outside of the market, "to domains that are not immediately and directly economic" (p. 268). Foucault (1979/2004) is worried that "we reach the point at which maybe the object of economic analysis should be identified with any purposeful conduct... in short, the identification of the object of economic analysis with any rational conduct" (p. 268-9). The extreme application of economic analysis to all domains of behaviour is exemplified by G. Becker, who Foucault (1979/2004) calls "the most radical of the American neo-liberals" (p. 269). Foucault (1979/2004) paraphrases Becker in saying that "any conduct which responds systematically to modifications in the variable of the environment..., which 'accepts reality,' must be susceptible to economic analysis" (p. 269).

While Foucault recognizes that Becker's definition of the application of economic analysis may not even be recognized by most economists, Foucault (1979/2004) contends that "Becker's definition... enables us to highlight a paradox, because *homo oeconomicus* as he appears in the eighteenth century... basically functions as what could be called an intangible element with regard to the exercise

of power” (p. 270). As an economic subject, “*homo œconomicus* is someone who pursues his own interest, and whose interest is such that it converges spontaneously with the interests of others” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 270). Foucault argues that this economic subject must be let alone in order to maximize interests. Moreover, Foucault (1979/2004) argues that *homo œconomicus* should be let alone because economic processes are invisible to the sovereign and the government, such that “the sovereign is, can, and must be ignorant” (p. 281) of the economic relations of society. At the same time, however, “[h]omo œconomicus is someone who is eminently governable” precisely because *homo œconomicus* is subject to economic analysis and is “the person who accept reality or who responds systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment.” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 270). Therefore, *homo œconomicus* is manageable, predictable, and governable.

For Foucault, this paradox of the *homo œconomicus* being both “eminently governable” and “the intangible partner of *laissez-faire*” brings out the question of the nature of the relationship between such a subject and the state. In his analysis of *homo œconomicus*, Foucault (1979/2004) hopes to show “*homo œconomicus* as the partner, the vis-à-vis, and the basic element of the new governmental reason formulated in the eighteenth century” (p. 271), that is, *homo œconomicus* as the subject of liberalism and biopolitics. At the same time, Foucault also contrasts *homo œconomicus*, the economic subject, with the subject of right, the legal subject. By showing how these two subjects are heterogeneous and fundamentally different, Foucault (1976/2004) can argue that they have “an essentially different

relationship with political power” (276) and from there Foucault can tease out elements of this new governmentality that is biopolitics.

On the one hand, the legal subject, the subject of right and contracts, is “characterized by the division of the subject” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 275). It is because by agreeing to a social contract of rights, the legal subject has already agreed to cede some of his rights. Foucault (1979/2004) describes the legal subject in more detail as

a subject who accepts negativity, who agrees to a self-renunciation and splits himself, as it were, to be, at one level, the possessor of a number of natural and immediate rights, and, at another level, someone who agrees to the principle of relinquishing them and who is thereby constituted as a different subject of right superimposed on the first. (p. 275)

The subject of right is characterized by negativity and the splitting of the subject, reminiscent of Jacques Lacan’s split subjectivity discussed in the second chapter and Day’s conclusion that it is impossible of ever achieving a full Canadian identity.

On the other hand, as an economic subject, *homo œconomicus* is driven by interest and is “a sort of non-substitutable and irreducible atom of interest” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 291). *Homo œconomicus* is characterized “by a dialectic of spontaneous multiplication” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 277) in which within the market, he is not required to relinquish his interests at all. Instead, this subject of interest is encouraged to pursue his own interest as much as possible for it is by pursuing his own interest that other economic subjects benefit. Due to this multiplication of interest, Foucault (1979/2004) theorizes that *homo œconomicus* functions by “an egoistic mechanism, a directly multiplying mechanism... in which the will of each harmonizes spontaneously and as it were involuntarily with the will

and interest of others” (p. 275-6). Moreover, Foucault (1979/2004) further argues that not only should the government not interfere with the pursuit of economic interest according to the principle of the Invisible Hand, but that “it is impossible for the sovereign to have a point of view on the economic mechanism” (p. 280), for “economic rationality is not surrounded by, but founded on the knowability of the totality of the [economic] process” (p. 282).

Therefore, *homo œconomicus* “reveals an essential, fundamental, and major incapacity of the sovereign, that is to say, an inability to master the totality of the economic field” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 292). Given the “absolutely heterogeneous” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 276) natures of the subject of right and the subject of interest, “[j]uridical theory is unable to take on and resolve the question of how to govern in a space of sovereignty inhabited by economic subjects” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 294). And so, the governance of economic subjects “can only be assured... by the emergence of a new object, a new domain or field... and this new field of reference is civil society” (Foucault, 1979/2004, p. 295). Foucault (1979/2004) sees civil society along side *homo œconomicus* as “belong[ing] to the same ensemble of the technology of liberal governmentality” (p. 296). Foucault (1979/2004) characterizes the liberal government as

an omnipresent government, a government which nothing escapes, a government which conforms to the rules of right, and a government which nevertheless respects the specificity of the economy, will be a government that manages civil society, the national, society, the social.  
(p. 296)

An “omnipresent government” from which “nothing escapes” pertains to Canada’s multiculturalism for, as Kymlicka (2001) argues, Canada’s multiculturalism policies,

specifically the Canadian Multiculturalism Act of 1988, “is not – or even the primary – government policy that affects the place of immigrant ethnic groups” in promoting integration (p. 155). Rather, Kymlicka (2001) argues that “policies relating to naturalization, education, job training and professional accreditation, human rights and anti-discrimination law, civil service employment, health and safety, even national defence... which are the major engines of integration. They all encourage, pressure, even legally force immigrants to take steps towards integrating into society” (p. 155). By working together with other policies of public institutions, multiculturalism as a policy is able to permeate all aspects of the lives of Canadians. Moreover, as Day (2000) argues, multiculturalism as a state policy actually encompasses all of society through its attempt to regulate the generality of being Canadian but also the specificity of diversity at the same time. He argues that multiculturalism “simulates a [Canadian] unity” as a social ideal and at the same time “simulates a multiplicity” by naming multiculturalism as a fact of diversity (p. 205).

Most certainly, more research is necessary in showing the parallels between Canadian multiculturalism and biopolitics, between *homo oeconomicus* and the Canadian subject, and also between Foucault’s concept of civil society and Canadian society. While this paper is unable to answer all of these questions, by explicating Foucault’s analysis of *homo oeconomicus* and biopolitics, I hope to have opened up discussions and possible future research on the subjectivities and identity formation of Canadians under the operations of liberalism and biopower.

## Conclusion

In this project, I first provided a history of the rise of multiculturalism in the Canadian context and critiqued the prevailing liberal multiculturalist account as propounded by Will Kymlicka. I objected to Kymlicka's account of liberal multiculturalism on the grounds that, while accommodation of rights to minority groups is an important part of Canadian society, his theory lacks an account of the individual and the ways in which Canadians' identity formations are affected by the effects of the multicultural discourse that conflates race and culture. Moreover, Kymlicka fails to see other possible interpretations of multiculturalism and I hope to have accosted Kymlicka's criticism of critical theory by presenting Richard Day's and Sunera Thobani's accounts of multiculturalism as state policy in Canada.

In presenting Richard Day's argument that the fantasy of Canadian unity must be dissipated in order to de-problematize the diversity of the Canadian population, I focused on showing his arguments regarding the impossibility of achieving full identity, the split present in Canada as a nation and in Canadian citizens, his constrained emergence theory of identity, and his contention that multiculturalism actually reproduces the colonial method of strategic assimilation rather than providing a true solution to the "problem" of diversity. In the second chapter, I also explicated Sunera Thobani's argument on the liberalization of immigration and citizenship policies in the post war period that gave rise to multiculturalism. She argues that multiculturalism helps to stabilize white supremacy rather than eliminating it. I discussed the implications of her argument

on nation building and on the identity construction of immigrants and people of colour within the Canadian multicultural discourse.

In the final chapter, I articulated Foucault's analysis of biopower and biopolitics, framing Canadian multiculturalism within it. Biopower and biopolitics has not been extensively theorized in the context of multiculturalism as a state policy in Canada in relation to subjectivity or the effect on individual's identities. While most studies focus on racial relations in the contemporary political sphere, and racialization in the health care system, I see multiculturalism as a form of biopower because of the way multiculturalism reasserts a national identity and calls for assimilation of subjects. I hope to have shown another way of analyzing multiculturalism and open up potential research avenues. While Foucault's concerns in these lectures are seemingly with the modes and rationalities of government, he has written elsewhere that the aim of his work "has not been to analyze the phenomena of power" (Foucault, 1982, p. 777). His objective, rather, is to understand the ways in which "human beings are made subjects" (Foucault, 1982, p. 777). In a similar way, my objective has not been to understand the rationalities of multiculturalism, but to point out disjunctures within the Canadian multicultural discourse and to highlight the construction of identities and subjectivities given the currently prevalent liberal multicultural discourse. Regarding the model of *homo oeconomicus*, while unable to provide answers to my own questions, I wonder what are possible parallels between *homo oeconomicus* and Canadian identity emerging from multiculturalism.

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