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Abstract

This thesis clarifies some issues at the forefront of Multicultural education from an anti-racist perspective. The researcher is concerned that, while school boards across the country allegedly promote an education wherein the perspectives of all Canadian cultural groups are included—a goal that reflects promises of both the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the policy of Multiculturalism—differences persist between what is intended by policy makers and what perspectives are actually included in the curriculum. These contradictions between intentions and conduct are explored by examining the effects of Multicultural ideology on the discursive borders of Canadian education. These ideas are then related to the specific example of African Canadian history. Past and present contradictions between Canadian policies and practices toward African Canadians are scrutinized. The issue of African Canadian exclusion from the Canadian Literary Canon is emphasized and this problem is related through a discussion of the Canadian publishing industry.

The writer argues that different kinds of opportunities are required that help learners explore the subject of racism on an emotional level, develop in-depth understandings about African Canadian history and cultures, and give learners opportunities to listen to African Canadian perspectives. The idea that African Canadian literature could be utilised by educators is suggested as a way to start establishing a basis for education where African Canadian perspectives are represented on equal terms.

Pedagogical problems that might arise with the introduction of these stories into the curriculum are addressed. The writer argues that Canadian education developed out of a context of oppression. Postmodern research paradigms are suggested as a way to explore
these issues. Following on the diverse writing styles that are used in postmodern inquiries, an excerpt from a play by the writer is included. Both the play and the discussion intentionally disrupt the suggestion of a self-Other dichotomy that is sometimes present in education and research. The writer explores this territory and ultimately suggests the possibility of negotiating relationships that are not defined by oppression, but that acknowledge the pain that oppression causes.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The problem

In February 1999, what was ironically Black History Month, was a reminder of what happens on the borders of Multiculturalism where the constructions of race and cultures collide. Yale Secondary School in Abbotsford, British Columbia put on a school production of the musical Show Boat. A controversy ensued because the school staff involved in the production decided to "black-up" the faces of some students in order to authenticate the characters of African descent. African Canadian community groups and individuals were outraged that the school was going ahead with this production, finding the blacking up of faces to be a "poignant and painful reminder of the minstrel show" (Odhiambo, David Nandi, 1999, 20). The principal, however, in defending the merits of the production, was unable to see a problem in choosing to have students in what he termed a "multicultural cast" wear "ethnic make-up" (ibid). The blacking up of students in the cast—which incidentally included only two or three people of colour—would continue, he decried, on the grounds that the play was not racist.

This scene invites the question of what is meant by the term Multiculturalism, suggesting that the term, however it is entreated, is problematic. If the term is meant to describe, as the 1978 Minister of Multiculturalism Norman Cafik (1978 in Alexander and Glaze, 1996) said, a situation wherein multiple cultures co-exist peacefully in Canada and wherein "every policy of government takes into account the cultural diversity of our country" (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 229-30), then problems are not with the sentiments behind this term or policy, but may be related to the Canadian context wherein Multicultural policy is put into practice. The Abbotsford example clarifies some issues that
persist in Canadian educational environments. In my research I was concerned that differences between various individuals’ intentions and their actual conduct may have resulted, in part, from the way that Multicultural policy has maintained “an imaginative hold on its citizens” (Srivastiva, 1997). I explored my concerns by relating the ideas to real circumstances where power is shared and negotiated. I realized that these contradictions between intention and actual conduct might be best understood by examining the effects of Multicultural ideology on the discursive borders of Canadian education—a context that allegedly promotes Multiculturalism. In pursuit of a deeper understanding, I explored the idea that African Canadian literature and stories could be referenced by educators to further anti-racist dialogue and to help establish what could be deemed a truly Multicultural education, an education wherein the perspectives of various Canadian communities are represented on equal terms. The need for such an examination was underscored by the extant problem that these perspectives are currently excluded from Canadian curricula.

A challenge for Canadian educators is to establish a truly Multicultural education. That is, an education wherein all students are “given the opportunity to learn about the histories and cultures of races other than their own in formal academic settings” (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 236) and where students are also helped “to bring down the walls of ignorance and fear through meaningful contact” (ibid). This challenge persists despite the fact that school boards throughout the country widely recognize that the “perspectives of all cultural groups must be included to enable all students to develop pride in their own heritage and appreciation for the cultural heritage(s) of others” (Vancouver School Board, 1995, 5). The challenge is made even more clear when
examining the difficulties that surround the inclusion of African Canadian literature in the curriculum. It may seem confusing, for instance, within a context that presupposes racial equality, that African Canadian literature is not regularly included in Language Arts education. The significance of this curricular exclusion is made more notable by the fact that African Canadians have lived in Canada much longer than many white Canadians and also have written a significant body of literature in both French and English that dates back to 1785 (see Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b).

Within Canadian educational practice, African Canadian history and perspectives are generally either excluded or are represented at the backdrop of a Eurocentric curriculum. Over time, educators were challenged by African Canadian activists to include some of these “missing pages” and initiatives were made to include African Canadian history in the curriculum. Education modules are sometimes developed by local groups and these are put into effect during black history month. Alternately, anti-racism units (e.g., Browning, 1993a; Canadian Heritage, 1993; Lee, 1990; Roger and Butt, 1988) are sometimes presented around specific celebrations such as the International Day for the Elimination of

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1 The first known African Canadian author was John Marrant who, in 1785 published his *Narrative of Lord’s Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black (Now Going to Preach the Gospel in Nova Scotia)*, an account of his captivity amongst the Cherokee.

2 African Canadian stories, histories and perspectives represent only one example of curricular exclusion in Canadian education. While the focus of this discussion is centred upon African Canadian history and perspectives, the issues parallel the circumstances of various other communities whose identities are fixed by the discourses of race and racism in Canada. The current focus upon African Canadian history is in no way meant to undermine the many contributions, struggles, and coalitions that have been formed with or by other people of colour or by people of First Nations ancestry.

3 The “missing pages” of African Canadian history is a reference to the 1993 demand from African Quebecois students for a more inclusive curriculum that included African Canadian history and culture. The result of this agitation was the development of a resource document entitled *Some Missing Pages*, put together by the Quebec Ministry of Education and the Quebec Board of Black Educators. Launched in early 1996, this document details 400 years of African Canadian history and is currently used as a resource in Quebec high schools.

4 As the setting of educational priorities is a provincial jurisdiction in Canada this process has been entirely localized. The implementation of these programs has generally occurred in urban centres upon pressure from
Racism. While these initiatives are appreciated by many African Canadian activists, they remain aware that the inclusion of curricular insertions is not enough to establish a truly Multicultural educational practice. Not only do these enterprises often remain entirely localized, largely volunteer driven and under-funded, but the representation of African Canadian history also needs to be felt beyond a "celebration of difference" during special holidays.

An exploration of these problems demonstrates how African Canadian literature and stories could be an asset to Canadian anti-racist educators. Fundamental changes to a Eurocentric curriculum may also be required in Canada, but the curriculum has proven slow to alter. The centuries-old practice of curricular exclusion is rooted in a perspective that African Canadian communities and histories somehow exist "outside" of what is deemed to be Canadian. In addition, the fact that African Canadian history as a subject area has not been adequately attended to in Canadian educational practice contributes to various pedagogical problems. Solutions of a far-reaching nature will take considerable time and effort to implement. While these solutions need to be pursued, the inclusion of African Canadian stories in Language Arts presents an immediate, if partial, solution to the problem.

1.2 The African Canadian Focus: A Unique View of Canadian Racism

A discussion about African Canadian history is a profound way of illustrating what is "missing" in the ideology of Multiculturalism. Racism toward African Canadians is unique because it was most explicitly racism and not "cultural misunderstanding" that was
inflicted on African Canadians. Up to and including the early 1970's racism in Canada was most often “justified” on the basis of people’s foreign cultural identity and language, religious beliefs and customs. African Canadians placed a considerable challenge to this “justification”. While indigenous North Americans and immigrants from Asia spoke foreign languages and practiced different customs, African Canadians customs and culture did not provide such a significant contrast to those of white Canadians. On the contrary, African Canadians were early explorers and pioneers of Canada. Many African Canadian families had resided in Canada longer than most white Canadian families, practiced similar customs to white Canadians, did not speak a foreign language or owe allegiance to a foreign state and, like white Canadians, practiced Christianity. In addition, many African Canadians had also fought in wars “on behalf of king and empire” since the American Revolution.

Effectively “(t)he only significant distinguishing characteristic [between African Canadians and white Canadians] was colour” (Walker, 1997, 122). In spite of this, African Canadians were set apart, kept down, and marginalized as neighbours, as employees, and as citizens. Whereas African Canadians were promised equality under the law, equality was not always granted. With only a few exceptions the law did not impose segregation and inequality on African Canadians; at the same time, however, the law upheld the right of white Canadian individuals, organizations and institutions to discriminate on the grounds of ‘race’ (ibid., 122). In 1940, for instance, Canadian racism was thinly disguised beneath a proprietor’s “polite refusal of service”. The Canadian justice system found the proprietor not guilty in that he was said to have asserted his “right to discriminate” 5. This

5 See Walker (1997) for a full discussion of this incident.
climate of Canadian racism only began to change in the latter 20th Century. After the Nazi Holocaust, signs in Canadian restaurants and shops that read “No Niggers, No Jews”, a subject of African Canadian protest which had fallen on deaf ears prior to World War II, now both embarrassed and horrified the white population. African Canadians took advantage of this new wave of social conscience and the period after World War II is marked by an increase in political activism and coalition-building.

African Canadian history will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 3, but what is important here is that the grounds of Victorian-modernist discourse that provided the basis of proprietors’ “polite refusal of service” slowly lost its legitimacy. As a result, blatant acts of discrimination became more difficult to legally “justify.” This does not, however, mean that racism no longer figured as a problem in Canada. Echoes of the same bells that sounded when the judge asserted the proprietor’s right to discriminate in 1940 have been heard in more recent years. While the context and issues have changed, wearers of the “ideological badge” (Karrer, 1993) of Multiculturalism now essentially ignore the way that material relations of racism place light skinned Canadians in a privileged position in relation to Canadians with darker complexions. These badge-wearers have tended to suggest that the issues of access and inclusion based on race are thought to be taken care of in the Canadian Policy of Multiculturalism and in Sections 15 (1) and 15 (2), Subsection (1) of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms that ensure equality for all citizens before and under the law. Recent discussions about inclusion and access have centred around the subjects of “ethnicity”, “language” or “culture.” While these discussions may be important in their own right, as Lutz’s (1996) survey proved, concern over these issues can also detract significantly from the attention that is given to the issue of access and
inclusion based on “race.” Tator and Henry described how this focus also diverts energy away from anti-racist educational objectives. They suggested that “the response of the educational institutions to cultural and racial diversity” in Canada “clearly indicates that this system reflects the emphasis on ethnicity and cultural orientations of new immigrants to Canada while ignoring the very important dimension of race” (Tator and Henry, 1991, in Sivak, 1998, 36).

The predominant view of Canadian citizens as promoting the values of “tolerance,” “diversity,” and “equality” may be turned upside down through an examination of African Canadian history. An exposure of past and present racism toward African Canadians provides a view of the long duration and changing faces of Canadian racism. An expose of how African Canadian literature is presently excluded from the Canadian literary canon also pokes holes in Canadian arguments that “hide” racism by not drawing sufficient attention to the issue of race. A view of Canadian Multiculturalism as an ideology that curtains the discursive borders of Canadian education should raise concerns in the minds of all Canadians who value racial equality. The point is that some Canadians believe that racism is already taken care of in Canada by a policy that guarantees racial equality and these individuals (e.g., survey in Lutz, 1996; survey in Walker, 1997) insist there is no further need for systems that promote access and inclusion based on race. This uniquely Canadian problem suggests the need for provocative research that looks at the discrepancies between Canadian Multicultural policy and how it is conceptualized in a Canadian context.

6 This idea of a Canadian literary canon is slightly nebulous as I am uncertain whether a precise list exists to constitute a Canadian canon. The idea is not unfounded, however, and is derived from research into anti-racist perspectives on Canadian literature as well as an examination of perspectives that are included in major anthologies.
1.3 An Example of the Problem: The African Canadian Struggle against Erasure

Multiculturalism as Canadian policy and practice marks a point on the continuum of a long tradition that upholds Canadian “innocence” around issues of racism. Paradoxically, in spite of the implied benefits, Multiculturalism may have adverse effects on the political project of addressing a lack of representation of writers of colour and First Nations writers in the Canadian literary canon (see Lutz, 1996, Clarke, George Elliott, 1996, 1997a, 1997b). When Multiculturalism is presented as an “ethnic” issue this can divert attention away from problems that are rooted in historical and material relations of racism.

“African-Canadian history and literature, feared as potential spoilers of white Canadian ‘innocence,’ are, then, necessarily repressed” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xvi). Clarke also proposed that conditions of racism and colonialism have meant that “exiles and refugees” are noted as the primary source for African Canadian literature—a literature that “has been, from its origins, the work of political exiles and native dissidents” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1996, 1997b). Walcott (1997), expanding upon Clarke’s (1996) thesis, reflected upon how African Canadian writing evolved within and is still influenced by a context that practices violence toward people of African descent. That context is bordered by “dominant discourses of race and blackness structured by North American white supremacy… and emanating out of slavery” (Walcott, 1997, 39).

African Canadian literature is not presently included within the Canadian literary canon, nor is that literature generally thought of as “Canadian”. This can be seen, in part, as the effect of an ideology of Multiculturalism. While Multiculturalism directly suggests an ideal of cultural inclusion, the reality is that certain literary themes and historical subjects are favoured as “mainstream” whereas others are considered as “marginal".
Walcott (1997) noted that African Canadian literature radically "disrupt(s) Canadian literary practices" (Walcott, 1997, 46) and actively re-makes Canadian literary language and practice by announcing the presence of both immigrant and indigenous African Canadians. In contrast, predominant "Canadian" literary themes about white settlers' "survival in a barren wilderness" (Walcott, 1997, 46) deny the historical impact and presence of African Canadian and other communities of colour who were Canadian pioneers. Walcott's perspective is further verified by interdisciplinary artist Kelley (1994) who described this as a tendency of white Canadians to reflect an "incomplete" picture of Canada. Kelley wrote of how historical themes about white settlers' survival against the harsh opposition of nature have by now replaced the reality of what actually occurred. As Kelley noted, the active presence of people of colour and of First Nations communities are made known only as they are confined to specific territories: in urban ghettos or on reserves. The exploration of nature was linked with whiteness. Mastery over the wilderness was linked with heterosexual maleness. The fantasy so successfully replaced the real stories that today it is surprising to learn that settlers who established a sawmill at Indian River in 1890 were Japanese-Canadian. It is surprising, too, that in 1867, people of Chinese origin made up almost 40 per cent of the non-indigenous mainland population of BC (Kelley, 1994, 31).

As George Elliott Clarke (1997a) and others (e.g., Alexander and Glaze 1996; Walker, 1997) noted, racism is, however, more easily cast as an American problem. Multiculturalism, while valuable as Canadian policy and practice, may, at times, confuse and hinder the development of a more realistic self-perception among Canadians who need to understand that racism continues to impose major challenges for people of colour and

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7 'Indigenous' African Canadian is a term used by Rinaldo Walcott (1997) to differentiate 'indigenous' African Canadians, who have lived in Canada over several generations, from 'immigrant' African Canadians. The latter is
people of First Nations ancestry in Canada. Multiculturalism, according to Lutz’s (1996) survey, was upheld by some white Canadians as proof of Canadian “innocence” of racism. The view among white Canadian academics who were interviewed by Lutz about whether Canadians needed to work to create a more inclusive Canadian canon, was that “no special privilege was needed for people of colour” (Lutz, 1996, 57). This view has likely been shaped—as Lutz concluded—by the “ideological badge” of Multiculturalism that can give Canadians a license to wear “cultural diversity as a value” (Karrer, 1993; also quoted in Lutz, 1996). The perspective that no special privileges were needed for people of colour, however, “stands in contrast to the reactions by First Nations authors and other authors and critics of colour consulted” (Lutz, 1996, 57). Various scholars likewise noted problems with representing a Canadian literary canon that features only white authors (e.g., Kamboureli, 1992; Lecker, 1991; Padolsky, 1991). This research, along with Lutz’s survey of Canadian academics, adds weight to George Elliott Clarke’s position that “race, per se, is not everything for African Canadians. No, it is the struggle against erasure that is everything” (Clarke, 1997a, xviii, his italics). What is particularly interesting about Lutz’s research is that he sought specifically to find clues about what he determined to be a “remarkable contrast” (1996, 54) between the Canadian and the American literary canons. He remarked how in the United States the prominence of African American literature has “led to a substantial deconstruction of the American Literary Canon” (ibid., 54) and that this has been evidenced in an exciting restructuring of leading anthologies that now demonstrate this inclusion. The American canon began to implement such changes in

a descriptor for those African Canadians who immigrated from the West Indies and the African continent after the instatement of the 1970’s “open door policy".
the 1960s and currently features various writers of colour. The Canadian canon, however, still contains many conspicuous omissions and features no writers of colour. Lutz eyed Canada's policy of Multiculturalism and the associated "ideological badge" as a major distinguishing difference between Canada and the United States and one probable source for the difference between these two literary canons. He found the supposition of Canadian innocence, articulated through a persistent reference to the term "multicultural", to fuel and inform "Canadian perceptions of 'majority' and 'minority writers' and their attitudes towards each other" (Padolski, 1991, paraphrased in Lutz, 1996, 56). What is essentially advanced by Lutz is that the easy reference to Multiculturalism as Canadian policy may sometimes serve to deflect an unfortunate truth that exists within Canadian borders. That is, the existence of an exclusionary literary canon is but one example of how racism continues to prevail in Canada. Canadians who choose not to regard racism as a problem need to look at discrepancies that exist between the policy of Multiculturalism and whether racial equality actually exists. In terms of the literary canon, Canadians can be prevailed upon to uphold the value of cultural diversity through the accordance of a truly multi-ethnic representation in the Canadian canon. As yet, racism, embedded in the historical, structural and material relations of power that shape the Canadian canon, places African Canadian writers, writers of colour and First Nations writers at a disadvantage to "white ethnics".

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8 As George Elliott Clarke (1997a) noted, Lutz tendered an uneducated opinion that part of the reason for this exclusion was that African Canadians are only now awakening to the politics that were part of the 1960's Civil Rights Movement in the United States. This opinion is, of course, rejected by Clarke and also by myself.
1.4 Results of Excluding African Canadian Texts: Ideological and Discursive Borders

The need for representation of stories by and about African Canadians in the curriculum is further verified—if further verification is needed—by the exclusion of these texts in Language Arts education. African Canadian curriculum worker Brown (1997) identified an urgent need for texts “that represent Black people as agents and people of courage—people who have shown the world what it means to fight for freedom” (Brown, 1997, 14). The exigency of this need is magnified by the fact that, “(b)ecause African Canadian history is ignored in Canada, African-Canadian writers are forced to act as historians” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, page xx). In spite of many past and current efforts made by African Canadian community groups, activists and scholars to change the curriculum, the 1992 Report on Race Relations in Ontario noted that students could graduate from Ontario high schools “without once having a book by a black author on the curriculum” (Lewis, 1992). The author of the report, Lewis, called the situation “absurd in a world which has a positive cornucopia of magnificent literature by black authors” (Lewis, 1992).

A quick glance might suggest that the Language Arts curriculum could be easily amended to include these authors. Learning programs need only be developed to accompany the inclusion of these authors, many of whom have documented African Canadian cultural and community histories. These learning programs could then be applied as a means to fill the curricular gap. No solution is simple, however, and pedagogical problems arise with the introduction of stories by and about African Canadians into the curriculum. The subject area exists within the borders of a complicated arena of identity politics. Concerns arise about how to represent African Canadian stories without
simplifying the historical issues or without somehow re-perpetuating the hurts of racism.

As discussed, Multicultural learning environments are largely conditioned by a lack of awareness about racism and African Canadian history. Therefore, any dialogue about these topics needs to account for the problem that teaching, analysis, and interpretation take place “at the backdrop of the white Anglo experience” (Maart, 1997, 21). The Canadian curriculum has excluded African Canadian history in favour of what Cooper called a “Canadian obsession with the Two Solitudes—the French and the English, and their conflicts and their love-hate relationship” (Cooper, 1995, 303). This exclusion of African Canadian history from the curriculum has had an impact upon formal education.

Commenting on her experiences with attempting to implement curricular changes in Toronto, Cooper described some of the obstacles faced by educational activists, even in a city which boasts a sizable African Canadian population.

Look at the history courses being taught in the institutions. It’s still white British-oriented or white American or white Canadian. When you raise the issue of inclusion, you either face being stonewalled or you meet a wall of silence and hostility. We face a lot of obstacles within the universities. The racism...appears on every front. It appears in subtle ways, it appears in overt ways, but it’s there. The Canadian history profession and the university are two of the last bastions of white supremacy (Cooper, 1995, 305).

Partly the result of the simultaneous exclusion of African Canadian history and literature, teachers are likely to be ill-equipped to handle the dialogue that ensues—a dialogue that is rife with what Esonwanne (1992) called “a sense not only of past and
ongoing grievances, but also of present investments" (Esonwanne, 1992, 565). The denial of racism in Canada through the reference to Canadian “innocence”, the context of racism and colonialism, the roots of that oppression in scientific discourse of and about biological essentialism, and the “common knowledge” suggestion that a self-Other binary is a biological or social fact. All of these issues are invested in conversations about racism and African Canadian history. In order to introduce African Canadian stories effectively, teachers need to do more than participate in formal literary discussions that are centred on thematic structure, language or plot. This is not to say that discussions about literary merit and structure are not important. African Canadian stories can and should be taught alongside the literature of other Canadian writers, not solely in terms of their educational value for anti-racism. But literature also provides an excellent stepping stone from which teachers can move outside of what Sumara termed “the schooled pedagogical relation” (Sumara, 1995, 103), a relation characterized elsewhere by Miller and Sellar (1990) as the “transmission” of knowledge from teacher to student. In literature students are given opportunities to explore the way that a literary text might take them to “unexpected places,.... (p)laces of transgression, of outlaw emotion and desire—forbidden, tantalizing, frightening, and often impossible places” (Sumara, 1995, 103). Stories by and about African Canadians provide such opportunities, but this dialogue is also rife with problems.

1.5 The Problems of how to Examine Ideology

Hermeneutics is the method I used to inquire about the effects of Multicultural ideology upon the discursive borders of Canadian education and to examine how this policy is conceptualized in the Canadian context. I used the method of hermeneutics partly because I value that this method contains a possibility of developing new ideas. That is,
the development and expansion of ideas is not limited by the blinders that can sometimes be imposed through the argumentative form of presenting data wherein one is propelled toward a particular focus and destination. While the argumentative form is useful in regards to certain subjects, in the context of the current discussion I needed to remain open to discover insights and to allow for shifts to occur in my outlook and perspective. In a hermeneutic inquiry, rather than regarding the research subject as something to be analyzed at an objective distance from the researcher, the focus explicitly resides in the act of interpretation and in the significance of the interpretation.

The overreaching topic of the investigation, anti-racism education in Canada, essentially revealed the manner in which it ought to be investigated. In hermeneutics, as in anti-racist theory, the relationships between the investigator and the topic to be investigated move away from scientific paradigms where dichotomous relationships are believed to exist. No real separation is seen to exist between the researcher and the research subject. Implications of a self-Other binary are discarded in favour of an exploration of that location between self and Other, a changing place that is negotiated and explored, where the relationships between ontology and epistemology are entwined. My decision to use hermeneutics was also influenced by Esonwanne’s (1992) expansion of Appiah’s (1986) arguments. Esonwanne discussed how the current view of race as representative of “communities of meaning” makes an implicit reference to a larger paradigm shift within theoretical discourse “from the science of race to the hermeneutics of the implications of race in culture” (Esonwanne, 1992, 566). Esonwanne contested biological determinist and essentialist notions of ‘race’ as obsolete. He referenced Appiah’s (1986) expansion of Dubois’ (1897, 1911, 1940 in Appiah, 1986) “uncompleted
argument”. Although Dubois never completely discarded notions of essentialism as being connected to race and his argument thus remains “uncompleted”, his developmental theories about race and racism were acknowledged by Appiah as the historical precursor for Appiah’s own assertion that “there are no races…” and that “where race works…it is a metonym for culture; and it does so at the price of biologizing what is culture, or ideology…” (Appiah, 1986, 36). The paradigm shift from the “science” of race to the hermeneutics of race and culture is seen by both Appiah and Esonwanne to be indicated in how ideas about truth and knowledge have changed in recent years so that the focus of theorists needs to shift toward understanding the sometimes false basis for and the changing meaning of these terms. This topic will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter 2, but essentially what is meant by Esonwanne and Appiah is that in earlier times, an ontologically given “truth” was thought to be that the Other existed as both a primitive human being and as an original human essence. Now that these notions once held as “truth” have been ruptured, instead of a biological designation of “races” there exist “communities of meaning, shading variously into each other in the rich structure of the social world [which] is the province not of biology but of hermeneutic understanding” (Appiah, 1986, 36).

What has been acknowledged by both Esonwanne (1992) and Appiah (1986) is that, while the basis for racism is that “race” exists as a biological designation, in fact, there are

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9 Appiah (1986) undertook a critical expansion of Dubois’ theories about race and racism in “The Conservation of Races” (1897), “Races” (1911), and Dusk of Dawn: An essay toward an Autobiography of a Race Concept (1940). Appiah viewed W.E.B. Dubois’ theories about race and racism as the intellectual precursor to his own theories on the subject. He also described Dubois’ argument as “uncompleted” in the sense that he never completely discarded notions of biological essentialism. Dubois is seen to have begun questioning this notion, but is assumed by Appiah to have been limited by the historical era in which he lived and theorized. Appiah suggested that Dubois’ theories are easily expanded to incorporate a refutation of the notion of biological essentialism and provide the historical pre-cursor for theories that refute such a notion.
no "races" as such. In spite of this false basis of racism, the power relationships invested in racism have created a need for theorists to position themselves explicitly against racism and, in so doing, draw attention to damages caused by racist behaviour, attitudes, institutions, or policies. In sum, hermeneutics is an appropriate method through which to expand anti-racist theory because this method facilitates a study of the changing meaning of race and racism and how these definitions are rooted in an epistemology that reflects specific power relations and contexts. In hermeneutics there is also an explicit acknowledgment that truth and knowledge are changed by different temporal rhythms or cultural contexts and that different values of truth and knowledge exist within distinct communities of meaning.

1.6 The Problems with the Terms Other, African Canadian, People of Colour, First Nations, and White

The terms and discourse about race and racism require constant re-evaluation, specifically as these terms are conceptualised in the context of Canadian Multicultural policy and practice. Following the liberal government’s stated commitment to Multiculturalism, terms such as “visible minority” and “ethnic minority” gained currency in Canada. Critics such as Donald K. Gordon, however, maintained that such terms should be eliminated on the basis that “(t)hey are presumptuous paternalistic descriptions meant to preserve the hegemony of white superiority while psychologically instilling a sense of inferiority in others” (Gordon, 1993 in Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 230). Other critics resisted these terms because they suggested that people of colour and people of First Nations ancestry are a minority in Canada. The proliferation of terms like “visible-minority” were also criticised as reflecting an underlying sentiment that suggested white “Canadians were at odds about the ‘darkening complexion’ of their society” (ibid., 230).
More current terms such as “people of colour” and “people of First Nations ancestry”, in contrast to terms like visible minority or colonial terms such as “Native Indian”, are thought to evoke the reality that so-called “minorities” were a majority in Canada. Presently, these terms are also used within political circles to “demonstrate ways in which people from different racial and cultural backgrounds are engaged in similar struggles against racial…oppression” (Browning, 1992, 22). Likewise, the terms African Canadian or Indo-Canadian are some currently acceptable terms that can be employed with similar purposes.

I use these terms in this thesis with an explicit purpose; that is, to draw attention to racism. At the same time I recognize these terms are problematic and perhaps contradictory to the purposes of my research. My purposes are, in part, to enhance theoretical perspectives and knowledge that is complex and de-centred. The deployment of raced-based terms can be interpreted as a suggestion that a simplistic, oppositional polarity exists—a reference point that has come to be known as a self-Other binary in the social sciences. Or the idea that “race” is based upon a biological designation could be suggested by the use of these terms. The term white can be problematic also in that it can suggest the existence of an overly-simplistic polarity.

Race-based terms are inadequate, but I still believe that the existence of racism in Canada necessitates the use of such terms in order to help facilitate our reflection upon the existence of racism through language. This is particularly evident in the context of Canadian “innocence”. In further defence of my decision to use these terms, I reference American anti-racist theorists Omi and Winant (1993) who argued that the main task concerning anti-racist theorists “is no longer to problematize a seemingly ‘natural’ or ‘common sense’ concept of race—although that effort has not been entirely completed by any means. Rather, the central work has become
to focus attention the *continuing significance and changing meaning of race*" (Omi and Winant, 1993, 3, their italics). I use race-based terms, therefore, to draw attention to the continuing significance and changing meaning of race and racism in Canada. This does not, however, mean that I support the idea of a false self-Other binary. On the contrary, the self-Other binary in social science is disrupted and questioned in other ways throughout the thesis and the more current post-colonial idea, that we now need to “work the hyphen” (Fine, 1995) by exploring and travelling the distances *in-between* the false self-Other binary is an idea that is central to this thesis.

The use of the term African Canadian throughout this discussion should not, however, negate the reality that African Canadians represent a “multiplicity of voices” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xxvii), voices that fissure along the lines of social, cultural, linguistic and class background, sexual orientation as well as within regional and political variations. My use of the term African Canadian references a specific context and history. The term is meant to draw attention to the continuing significance and changing meaning of racism in Canada. As will be evidenced throughout Chapter 3, the centres of political power in Canada did not always make explicit reference to “race”, but racism definitely played its part in the social development of Canada. Racism was part of the Canadian consciousness, a factor that is reflected by the fact that African Canadians, while guaranteed equality under the law, were not always granted equal status. In reality, the situation may have been much worse for African Canadians than for African Americans. While in the United States racism was written into the law and thus early protests sometimes resulted in challenging the American constitution to change American laws, the Canadian constitutional promise of equality before the law meant that the challenges that existed for African Canadians could not be as easily identified. These
issues were fought in the courts, through individual case-by-case struggles. The end result was that African Canadians had more difficulty implementing concrete and lasting changes than their African American counterparts. Ontario’s Deputy Attorney General outlined just to what extent equality before the law was extended to African Canadians in a 1929 letter to Stephen Leacock.

Coloured people have exactly the same rights as others in the matter of public places of entertainment, but as the obligation of a proprietor to sell seats in his theatre or meals in his restaurant does not ordinarily exist, he can refuse to sell to Negroes if he pleases, just as he could refuse to sell to any other person or class of people, as long as the refusal is not accompanied by insult or violence (quoted in Walker, 1997, 132).

As mentioned earlier, the colonial Victorian-modernist discourse behind statements of this sort slowly lost its legitimacy. Racism within Canadian borders did not disappear, but it became more difficult to “justify” in the courts. The currency of theories and academic terms and constructs is dependent upon the historical era, current fashions and political trends. It follows, therefore, that the issues facing anti-racist theorists became more and more complicated as the simplistic binaries that are suggested by statements of this sort lost their currency. In keeping with this point, Omi and Winant suggested that now is the time to work against “the supposed contemporary transcendence of race; against the widely reported death of the concept of race; and against the replacement of the category of race by other, supposedly more objective categories like ethnicity, nationality, or class” (Omi and Winant, 1993, 3). The centralization of political power is now complex in both Canada and the United States. Affirmative action and other programs have at least helped to instigate some minor changes and certain fields are beginning to reflect the diversity that is present within Canada. However, as old problems are solved new problems also present themselves.
As mentioned, Canadian anti-racists now need to work against the problem of a suggestion that the struggle to eradicate racism in Canada has been fought and won. In this sense, political protests and theories need to increasingly reflect the need for awareness and refusal of colonial discourse in its subtler, modern forms. African Canadian activists have responded in kind, adapting their strategies to an awareness of the increased complexity in Canadian society. More recently this has been reflected in the push for representation of African Canadian literature in the curriculum. This push reflects an awareness of a need for Canadians to understand and know the dissonance that exists between “Canadian history” and what is thought of as African Canadian history.

1.7 How I Allowed the Research ‘Subject’ to Determine the Method of Discovery

As discussed, African Canadian history has hitherto been silenced in Canada. In seeking to disrupt that silence, I worked outside what have been termed “culturally privileged” (Davis, 1996) methods of research. As mentioned, hermeneutics provided the means through which the research question “occurred to me.” I also explored postmodern writing methods as a means through which to develop insights. Unlike conventional modernist discourse wherein the researcher was thought to search for the identity of a hitherto unidentified Other—a “wild being” who exists outside of the textual representations, and comes into containment only under duress” (Denzin, 1992, 27)—

10 Other examples of African Canadian responses to the increased complexity are found in the uproar that surrounded the 1993 production of Show Boat in the Toronto area (see Nourbese Philip, 1993). “An acceptable commodity for African-American audiences, Show Boat was, for many African Canadians, grimly insulting kitsch” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xx).

11 The clichéd term, “silenced” is used here to reference what Prince (1997) described as stories that need to be told, usually stories that cause a reaction either from “the people who are doing the silencing or people who have been hiding their own silence” (Prince, 1997, 5).

12 Brent Davis (1996) wrote of how, the hermeneutic research question “occurs to the researcher” as opposed to being the framework through which the researcher is propelled toward specified discoveries.
postmodernists have tended to value the centrality of the researcher's role in developing a narrative. The postmodern researcher thus presents "a story" formed from her or his interpretations of events in a setting or of a subject (see, for example Ellis, and Bochner, 1992; Rambo Ronai, 1992; Richardson, 1992). The result is that research is sometimes represented as a highly crafted story, a narration of insights, and a creative communication of ideas. Writing creatively, then, is now appreciated as a "method of discovery and analysis" (Richardson, 1994, 516) through which the researcher is thought to grasp a subject more deeply. Another important postmodern view is that the reader is made aware of the centrality of the researcher's voice through the applied style of narration.

Richardson has gone so far as to say that "(i)n writing the Other, we can (re)write the Self" (Richardson, 1992, 524). In a comparable view that acknowledges the impact of research upon the researcher, anthropologist Michael Jackson wrote about the way that "(l)ived experience accommodates our shifting sense of ourselves as subjects and as objects, as acting upon and being acted upon by the world, of living with and without certainty, of belonging and being estranged" (Jackson, 1989 quoted in Ellis and Bochner, 1992, 99). These social scientists have helped expand the idea of what research writing is by regarding research as, put simply, a presentation of interpretations that are intended to give insights as opposed to present "facts". In this way, the postmodern goals of research writing are about forging a link between scientific analysis and the translation of experience into story by helping readers think more deeply about a subject.

The presentation of research material in the form of creative stories has become more widely acceptable through the development of this newfangled postmodern canon. Interpretivists and other experimental research writers have essentially rejected
authoritative academic writing styles, with their propensity toward abstraction, as
incapable of capturing the subtleties, particularities and perspectives of research subjects.
Ellis and Bochner, for instance, wrote a text with the express purpose of performance “so
that nuances of feeling, expression, and interpretation could be communicated more
clearly” (Ellis and Bochner, 1992, 80). Richardson, on the other hand, used poetry to
write up data on a project about unmarried mothers as a way of being more authentic to
the women’s voices, feeling they could not be represented adequately within “an academic
culture that holds a traditional authority over them” (Richardson, 1992, 125). Writing in
mixed genres is accepted by Atkinson (1990) and by Butler (1993) as a way to challenge
the realist hegemonic vision or by Ellis and Bochner (1992) and by Richardson (1992) as a
means of communicating the subtle nuances of a research subject’s life world.

These “new approaches” have contrasted what were once commonly accepted
measures of validity. Richardson (1994) made the case for entirely new measures of
validity and reliability (see also LeCompte, 1993). Until recently, validity was measured
through “triangulation”—by looking at a specific research question through the
deployment of three or more different methods. Richardson challenged this very definition
of validity as unsound, saying that the reason why researchers valorized triangulation in
“traditionally staged research” was because their world view implied a sense of an
objective truth and, therefore, an object that could be triangulated. Richardson suggested
that postmodernist research, which implies a different sense of truth, must therefore have
distinctly different methods through which to measure the validity of findings. In rejecting
the ideal of an objective truth, interpretivists have sought to develop “deepened, complex,
thoughly partial understanding(s)” (Richardson, 1994, 522) of their topics. Thus, rather
than triangulation, characterized by the process of displaying findings "accurately" through the deployment of three or more different research methods, postmodernist research, according to Richardson, should utilize a process she termed as "crystallization." Through crystallization the researcher is said to obtain different perspectives on a subject by regarding the subject through different writing "lenses." These writing lenses are "tried on" by the researcher who writes about the subject in more than one style. That is, by writing about the subject in different ways, the researcher will have tried on different "writing lenses" and will have "crystallized" her or his understanding about the topic. This kind of research (e.g., Richardson, 1991, 1992, 1994) was thought capable of reflecting insights about a subject of study. In contrast, it was thought that more conventional research paradigms were limited—both in their manner of presentation and by the ideal of objectivity. Richardson described the difference between more conventional forms of social science and the postmodern approach as the difference between looking at the two dimensional figure of a triangle and looking at a crystal that is capable of reflecting and refracting light in infinite ways.

In agreement with Richardson, I also found that postmodern academic writing styles, more so than conventional academic writing styles, can help address the currency of theories and definitions as well as complicate understanding. In addition, these methods provide a means to present the knowledge that we are not unitary subjects, and that we are shaped by various biographical influences and by what we might think of as our social conscience— influences from what may be termed as our communities which are, in turn, shaped by factors like race, sexual orientation, physical ability, class, and gender. The image of crystallization offers the possibility of reflecting how this thesis is not credited to
myself alone, but reflects the influences of various individuals, writers or political activists along the way, friends or acquaintances who I consider to be members of what could be determined as a loosely-knit "community", and African Canadian community activists whose voices gave shape to this thesis and whose activism provided the framework for this discussion.

1.8 Different Kinds of 'Truth’, Different Kinds of ‘Knowledge’

My views about what kinds of “truth” and “knowledge” I believe are important can be viewed as either postmodern or post-colonial. I understand knowledge to be “performative of relations of power” (Britzman, 1995, 17) and always assume it to be partial. In my view, the roles of both readers and writers are an active part of research—the goal being, rather than to observe and record, to push “the sensibilities of readers in new directions” (ibid., 18-19). My goal as a writer, therefore, is not simply to relate or discuss empirical facts, to articulate pre-formulated ideas or to emphasize a series of concepts in a chronological fashion. Rather, I seek to go further—to find writing styles which engage in the truth of the interaction and to perhaps alter perceptions of the readers who are believed to be oriented toward deepening their understanding of the issue at hand. I therefore make attempts to actively engage readers by developing more complex writing practices and readers, in turn, are asked “to construct more complicated reading practices that move them beyond the myth of literal representations and the deceptive promise that the ‘real’ is transparent, stable, and just like the representational” (ibid., 19). When postmodern and post-colonial views of truth and knowledge are employed by both the reader and the writer it is possible to move beyond a myth about the literal representation of what is “real” into a view of knowledge and truth that is actively engaged in by both the
reader and the writer. For instance, the reader of the scene from *Shanks*, a fictional script located in Chapter 6, will apply aspects of her or his own history and identity development to this dialogue. This would occur because the structures of the discourse are arranged by “what it is that structures the reader’s own identity imperatives and her or his own theory of reading” (ibid., 19). In this way, the writer’s “own structures of intelligibility might become open to readings not yet accounted for, not yet made” (ibid., 19). The readers’ imperatives make room within the discourse for different ways of thinking, a broader understanding of how “knowledge” is created, and also “an ethic that refuses the grounds of subjectification and normalization and that still worries about that which is not yet” (ibid., 19).

Following upon Britzman’s views about the active role required of readers and writers, Peter McLaren (1993), who based his theories upon the groundwork laid by Foucault, suggested that an “ethic of perception” was required through which to view individual narratives and that narratives should be situated both ideologically and discursively. McLaren used the term “counter-narratives” to describe narratives with a post-colonial political orientation. He suggested that counter-narratives are capable of making “hegemonic inscriptions” or “legible lines of forces” that disrupt and repress power (ibid., 211). Patton (1986, in McLaren, 1993) was quoted as a means to add greater depth to this view of a counter-hegemonic narrative. Patton noted that Foucault’s conception of the modern self “presupposes an activist conception of the human subject” (Patton, 1986, in McLaren, 1993, 210). This “activist conception,” he argued, is the political task which is suggested by Foucault’s implication of a political commitment that is “neither utopian nor nostalgic...to those movements in present society which are
engaged in the attempt to push back those limits and to extend our sphere of freedom” (ibid., in McLaren, 1993, 210).

In the discussion about African Canadian literature, located in Chapter 5, I sought out African Canadian writers who presupposed an activist conception of the human subject in their writing—where relations of political and ideological power in Canada appear to have been consciously questioned and challenged. Maart said that within “Multicultural Canada...to be Black always means to exist at the backdrop of the white experience” (Maart, 1997, 19). The literature included in the discussion presents a few examples of what George Elliott Clarke earlier called African Canadian literary themes of “exile and belonging”—themes such as immigration, emigration, forced relocation and community histories—reflect active, counter-hegemonic political choices of African Canadian writers that assert the centrality of a space for exile and belonging.

1.9 The Research Question: Telling a Story

While understanding that within this thesis I am required to follow a standardized format, I do not have a research question. I found conventional approaches toward the triangulation of data in research to be both inadequate and contrary to my purposes. This is not to say that I discarded ideals of academic rigour, but that I preferred a hermeneutic inquiry, the purpose of which is “to open up alternatives and present questions within unquestioned ways of acting” (Davis, 1996, 5). At the core, this thesis is about how stories by and about African Canadians further the dialogue about racism in Canada. Rather than providing what would inevitably be only a partial and unsatisfactory answer to a standard research question, this research is framed within an understanding that I am telling a story. That is, I understand story in the way that McLaren (1993) understood it
when he said that “translating an experience into a story is perhaps the most fundamental act of human understanding” (McLaren, 1993, 206). Rather than apply a formulaic process that propels me toward an identifiable answer, I have needed to carefully clarify and examine, through telling a story, various aspects of the dialogue about racism in Canada and the ways that I am related to it. Like McLaren (1993), I believe that the narration of a story “provides us with a framework that helps us hold our gaze, that brings an economy of movement to the way we survey our surroundings” (ibid., 206) and I have needed to “suture disparate images and readings of the world into a coherent story” (206) about how I, a white Canadian woman, could contribute to the dialogue about racism through this thesis.

Consider, then, that, as the result of rigorous academic research into African Canadian histories, literature, literary criticism, and into the etymology of various theories and terms about the representation of a research subject, I have developed a thesis. As such, I have “translated my experience into story”, albeit a story that is designed to meet APA guidelines, as a fundamental act of my humanity. In so doing I have “crystallized” my understanding and developed “a deepened, complex, thoroughly partial” (Richardson, 1994, 522) perspective about how stories by and about African Canadians impact on furthering and enhancing the dialogue about racism in Canada. In this way I explored multiple aspects of this subject. In search of the “story” that was written here, I have appreciated the act of writing as “a method of discovery and analysis” (ibid., 522). As such, I have employed a “mixed genre” approach, believing this to be the most effective way of “crystallizing” what I once thought I knew about the topic. If, as Richardson said, “what we see depends upon our angle of repose” (ibid., 522), then I have written about
the topic from four angles: 1) an historical contextualization of the dialogue; 2) a
discussion about the historical impact of philosophical and scientific discourse on the
dialogue about racism in Canada; 3) a discussion about pedagogical issues that frame the
dialogue in multicultural educational settings; and 4) a scene from a play that was written
about the ideas, issues and histories that surround the dialogue about racism in Canada.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Entering the Discursive Field: the Lived Relation of Racism

In November 1996 my acquaintance was riding his bicycle home late at night to an apartment in Vancouver’s West Side. He was disturbed by the sight of a woman who had been attacked and lay on the ground bruised and semi-conscious. Conscientiously, he stopped to help her. The police drove by and, on seeing a white woman who lay injured and dazed, and an African Canadian man beside her, they immediately presumed him to be the assailant. My acquaintance was beaten by the policemen despite his well spoken and polite protests about what had occurred. The rape victim was only semi-conscious and therefore incapable of vouching for my acquaintance. My acquaintance sustained several injuries and was detained overnight. He charged the two white police officers with assault, but these officers were acquitted on the basis that their error was “understandable”.

This scene invites a question of how racism factors into this and other incidents of police brutality due to racial profiling in Canada and the United States. An exploration of this question can help clarify what N’gugi Wa Thiango (1990) termed the “lived relation” of racism—a relation that is “felt in the flesh, in the very practice of daily living” (N’gugi, 1990, 121). Described as a lived relation, the term correctly references its roots in past and present violence. N’gugi noted one of the most appalling crimes of racism as being that it “numbs human sensibility” (N’gugi, 1990, 121) to acts of violence. When beatings and murders of African Canadians and African Americans are excused as “understandable” not only are peoples’ lives at stake, but also racist values are being perpetuated. These values “become the norm innocently passed on in the family and in other formative social circles” (ibid., 122).
Despite the problems in Canada, racism continues to be cast as an American problem. With Multiculturalism firmly in place, and Section 15 of the Charter ensuring equality under the law "in particular, without discrimination based on race" (Section 15, Subsection 1, Charter of Rights and Freedoms), Canadians "tend to perceive themselves as tolerant of racial and cultural diversity, to possess a history of equal treatment towards all, to have avoided the syndrome of racism so evident south of the border" (Walker, 1997, 3). Police departments in large American cities such as New York or Los Angeles with their ruthless racial profiling policies and violent beatings have gained a reputation—the result of several incidents perpetrated toward innocent victims\(^\text{13}\). The same image of Canadian police is not popularized despite similar incidents that occurred in Canada\(^\text{14}\).

Racism is somewhat successfully *erased* in Canadian historical landscapes. Highly public incidents such as the events at Dresden\(^\text{15}\), dramatic increases of KKK activities in the 1960’s and 1970’s such as the 1965 event at Amherstberg\(^\text{16}\), or the 1907 Nova Scotia bylaw about the "white" cemetery of St. Croix that was made public through African Canadian and African American activism\(^\text{17}\) are by now faded or forgotten. Some Canadians might forget that changes

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\(^\text{13}\) The most glaring, publicized examples are the acquittal of policemen involved in the 1992 videotaped Rodney King beating in Los Angeles or the recent killing of Amidou Diallo in front of his New York apartment and the subsequent acquittal of four white New York City police officers in year 2000.

\(^\text{14}\) Glaring examples include the March 1988 Montreal police shooting of an African Canadian youth or the May 1992 police shooting in the back of the head of an African Canadian man in Toronto.

\(^\text{15}\) In 1954 an African Canadian couple from Toronto visited the town of Dresden in rural Ontario where, in violation of the *Fair Accommodations Practices Act*, they were refused service in a restaurant. The town of Dresden became the worldwide focus of media attention covering a court battle that lasted ten years.

\(^\text{16}\) An incident of Ku Klux Klan violence in Amherstburg, Ontario resulted in threats to the lives of several African Canadians as well as the defacing of an historic African Canadian monument. A cross was burned in town centre and the famous Black Baptist Church, icon of the escape from American slavery that figured in Harriet Beecher Stowe’s famous novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, was defaced. The church was built in 1849 and was the meeting point where Eliza and her husband re-united. "Amherstburg, home of the KKK" was spray-painted on town’s welcome sign.

\(^\text{17}\) The by-law stated that "No Negro, Indian, or poor Coloured Person" was to be buried in the ‘white’ cemetery of St. Croix near Windsor, Nova Scotia. This by-law was made public upon the refused burial of an African Canadian baby, a story which prompted a coalition of activists, including African Canadian heroine Carrie Best and African
in policy have come about not because of Canadians' moral superiority, but because African Canadian activists worked hard for racism to lose its legitimacy. They might not consider that the 1971 policy of Multiculturalism came as the result of activism that helped bring into favour the new wave of cultural "tolerance." Canadians might also not remember that between the mid-seventies and the mid-eighties, dozens of official inquiries were launched which recognised the inequalities experienced by African Canadians who noted discrimination in housing, employment, education, justice system, courts, and prisons.

The problems in Canada give weight to Esonwanne's (1992) earlier point that to speak of race is not to address an abstract construct, but "to intervene actively in a discursive field that is highly charged by a sense not only of past and ongoing grievances, but also of present investments" (Esonwanne, 1992, 565). Even as Section 15 of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* secured racial equality before the law in Canada, many problems persisted. For one, the sensationalization of acts of violence committed by young African Canadian men, such as the tragic 1994 murder in a Toronto metro station of a young man from the African continent by a young Jamaican Canadian man, led to further stereotyping of African Canadian people. The reality, as seen by the 1997 brutal beating and murder of the young Indo-Canadian woman Reena Virk in a Victoria suburb by a group of her white peers, is that young people from various backgrounds are engaging in acts of horrific violence. This reality affects all Canadians. Nevertheless, "(s)ome whites become inured to negative stories, satisfying themselves with the belief that acts of violence and/or hostility are natural to black people" (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 267).

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American activist Stokley Carmichael, to form a coalition that included civil rights leaders from around North America. This pressured the Nova Scotia government to begin examining racism that had resulted from historic, unfair policies and practices in the provinces toward people of colour and people of First Nations ancestry.
2.2 Anti-racist Education and the Multiculturalist Critique

When I researched into how African Canadian literature might further the anti-racist dialogue in Canada I unwittingly broached a dialogue between anti-racists and Multiculturalists that could be termed both unpredictable and explosive. I was confronted with a perception of anti-racist educators and theorists as somehow coming into conflict with what are essentially well-meaning and sympathetic Multicultural educators and theorists (for a discussion see Sivak, 1998). Because I identify my own perspective as explicitly anti-racist and a concern of mine is that Canadian Multicultural policy is problematic, I could be perceived of as presenting what Sivak (1998) described as a view that is “irreconcilable” with the theoretical orientation of Multiculturalism or, alternately, a view that suggests the “inevitable compromise” of these two approaches. I could also be seen as conflating what is done in the name of that policy with the theoretical orientation of Multiculturalism. My orientation to these issues, while explicitly anti-racist, does not fit within the approaches identified. My perspective is compatible with the views of African Canadian anti-racist theorists Dei (1996) and Lee (1984), views that sustain a belief that the term anti-racism is currently required to draw explicit reference to issues that need to be addressed at all levels of Canadian education. As Dei argues, this term “names the issues of race and social difference as issues of power and equity rather than as matters of cultural and ethnic variety” (Dei, 1996, 25). I further agree with Dei’s point that “educational and social transformation” should proceed “from a critical understanding of how contemporary social formations provide the educational and institutional structures through which dominating values, principles, and traditions are actualized in everyday experience” (Dei, 1996, 25).
I realize that this subject area is difficult to discuss without stepping on toes. While I know that Sivak approached the subject with the best of intentions, I take issue with what she suggests is now *required* of Canadian anti-racist theorists. Sivak suggests that anti-racist theorists should engage in specific critiques of Canadian Multiculturalism—particularly when they reference American or British theorists who are relating their ideas to foreign contexts. Her problem is essentially that Canadian anti-racists quote American and British theorists, but have “not engaged in a very detailed way with the very thing—that is, Canadian Multiculturalism”—that they claim to be critiquing” (Sivak, 1998, 40).

The focused nature of Sivak’s argument may have prevented her from seeing that the argument itself may be problematic. Despite her best intentions, her thesis—that to offer up anti-racism as an “alternative vision must *necessarily* entail a detailed critique of multiculturalism, *specifically the way it is conceptualized in the Canadian context*” (Sivak, 1998, 32, her italics)—could be viewed as inflammatory. My problem with her work is that she does not explore some of the reasons why anti-racist theorists would not always choose to engage in a detailed critique of the Canadian context. The issue that Sivak failed to investigate is that, within the context of Canadian racism wherein Multiculturalism is referenced as a Canadian policy and as a term of Canadian racial equity, I believe there is still a place for the expression of explicitly anti-racist voices. Anti-racist theorists should not always be *required* to engage in a “detailed critique” of Canadian Multiculturalism, particularly when they are addressing well-informed audiences who understand that the terms of an anti-racist critique are well substantiated elsewhere.

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18 Small community papers such as *Kinesis: News about women that’s not in the dailies* published by the Vancouver Status of Women Vancouver; or alternative magazines and periodicals such as *Fuse, Kola, or Gallerie: Women’s
My contention with Sivak is not that she made the argument—which I believe is useful—but that she does not review the idea that theorists may choose to articulate an "authentic voice" that is specifically anti-racist for a variety of reasons. In using the clichéd term, voice, I draw reference to a point that was identified by prominent African Caribbean theorist and writer C.L.R. James (referenced in Prince, 1997). African Canadian writer Prince identified that James "hit on the core of the issue" when he wrote of how, in response to the colonial hegemony in the Caribbean, "there were writers speaking in an authentic voice, who could speak in the language of the people" (Prince, 1997, 4). What Prince and James both recognized is that, while out of the process of colonialism there came both a colonial and a colonized voice, "there was also another voice which had managed to hold onto the root and the core" (Prince, 1997, 4). Essentially, these theorists recognize that, within certain oppressed communities such as those communities that experience racism in Canada, there exists a need to hear authentic voices. They identify the authentic voice as a political tool in that "if you write with an authentic voice, you really don’t have to worry about being overtaken by a dominant hegemony" (ibid., 4).

Some Canadian anti-racist theorists provide counter-hegemonic voices that resist the dominant hegemony of Multiculturalism and its associated ideological badge. The problem with Sivak’s argument is that it could imply that the purposes of anti-racist research are always specific to understanding the Canadian context rather than to claim a counter-hegemonic argument. She lacked sufficient attention to a need that exists in some

Art are some places where resistant voices are published. Within such periodicals a number of articles have offered critiques of Multiculturalism with specific Canadian examples.
communities—the need to articulate an authentic voice that stands apart from the dominant hegemony of Multicultural Canada.

2.3: On Being White: Seeing and Confronting the ‘Untrammeled Dominance of Space’

As a white woman writing about racism in Canada, I do not mean to suggest that I am an oppressed person articulating an authentic voice. I further recognize that, in spite of efforts to the contrary, my voice could be perceived as a “monologuing voice” (Odhiambo, 1994, 273). Writing in conversation with Anthony and Hudson, David Nandi Odhiambo (1994) referred to the way that men sometimes find themselves dominating discussions “even when we’re talking with women about things that affect them as women. We place our ideas, or lack thereof, at the centre. At times like these there doesn’t seem to be space for anyone but the monologuing voice.” While Odhiambo looks at the issue that “(a)s men we need to find the courage to see and confront this untrammeled dominance of space” (ibid., 120), a parallel condition exists for a white person such as myself when I explore how stories by and about African Canadians might further and enhance the dialogue about racism in Canada.

My intentions on entering this dialogue about Canadian racism, in contrast to the monologuing voice, are to disrupt the untrammeled Eurocentric dominance in all levels of Canadian education. At the core of this thesis I am appealing to both myself and other white Canadians to “call upon the integrity of our common human spirit” (Armstrong, 1992, 75)⁰ and help to alter conditions of Eurocentric dominance in Canada. I hope to

⁰Prominent Okanagan First Nations writer and activist Jeannette Armstrong (1992) wrote about a need that exists, within the context of building coalitions against Canadian racism, to use words that “call upon the integrity of our common human spirit”.

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add further constructive energy to past and present struggles that promote better understanding between various coalitions and perspectives engaged in a dialogue about Canadian racism. Perhaps the discussion herein can be said to be addressed primarily to well-intentioned and sympathetic educators who find the ideals and arguments of Canadian anti-racists “compelling”. While knowledgeable and informed, these educators may need, as Sivak said she needed “conceptual guidelines to explain what anti-racist theories have that that theories of multiculturalism are missing and how to fit those theories into…[a] conceptual framework that has been influenced by multiculturalism for almost three decades” (Sivak, 1998, 24).

I explicitly position myself as an anti-racist. At the same time I am not against the theoretical position of Multiculturalism, nor do I conflate what is done in the name of Multicultural policy with that theoretical orientation. Nor, I might add, do I see a “necessary conflict” between the two theoretical approaches of Multiculturalism and critical anti-racism. Like Moodley (1995, 811), I have observed anti-racism in Canada often “coupled with” Multiculturalism. I recognize that I address a scholarly audience of well-intentioned, well-informed educators, activists, and scholars from various social, political, cultural, economic and educational backgrounds. In regards to this diverse audience I agree with Sivak that there currently exists a need for extensive scholarly work that both “illustrates the way multiculturalism portrays culture in Canada” and that clarifies the “elements that are marginalized in that portrayal.” Attention to the illustration of how Multiculturalism portrays culture in Canada is also in keeping with Aruna Srivastiva’s (1997) position that Canadian Multiculturalism is distinct because of “its imaginative hold on its citizens” (Srivastiva, 1997). Further complicating the depth
required of this discussion, I agree with Joshee's (1995) point, paraphrased by Sivak, that Canadian Multiculturalism is made up of “a complex combination of ideology, policy, research and practice” (Sivak, 1998, 60) and that Multiculturalism has affected various cultural groups differently, depending on the historical particularity of that community.

In keeping with the positions outlined, I agree with Sivak that a gap exists in Canadian anti-racist research, a gap that is likely related to the difficulties and time involved with the endeavour of conveying these ideas through extensive research as well as the lack of funding afforded to such endeavours. I have looked at how African Canadians are marginalized by Multicultural policy and practice as a way to convey these ideas. In looking at this specific example I tried to avoid not only the “lack of engagement with Canadian multiculturalism” (Sivak, 1998, 56) that sometimes characterizes its critique, but also the tendency that can occur toward unsatisfactory generalizations and some of the “difficulties with placing individuals into neatly conceptualized boxes that will allegedly capture the complexity of their experiences” (Fumia, 1995, quoted in Dei, 1996, 61).

Before I continue, however, perhaps I need to also clarify what it is that I am not doing. I do not want to fall among a class of non-African Canadian researchers who “write, with empathetic authority, on black history and expression” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997, 12). Nor do I attempt or desire to achieve an empathetic or authoritative representation of African Canadian identity and experience. Likewise, I in no way define the authors and perspectives represented in this thesis as constituting “authoritative” voices about African Canadian experience or identity. Further, I do not fancy myself as a modern-day missionary writing to an uninformed African Canadian audience. I recognize
that African Canadians are all too familiar with the history of Canadian racism and
Eurocentrism. As African Canadian/Anishnawbe writer Browning (1997) wrote, she and
others have been required to reconcile with “the lack of attention that’s been paid to the
histories of peoples of African descent, on the North American continent in particular”
(Browning, 1997, 12) and have, in the process of trying to rectify this problem, spent
many years struggling to inform non-African Canadians and whites in particular about
anti-racist perspectives and African Canadian history.

2.4 Before We Begin: A Need to Determine the Equal Status of Science and Fiction

Vattimo (1988) identified the increased complexity now required of theorists in any
field to be the result of a dissolution of the discourse of history in the post-modern era. More recently, a number of “petits-recits” (Lyotard, 1993) or, different histories, have
signified a “narrative turn” (Peterson and Langellier, 1997, 135; see also, Langellier, 1989)
in the social sciences, a turn that is reflected in the popularization of narratives, life
histories and the field of narratology. This dissolution of history “in the form of a
dissemination of ‘histories’...marks an end to historiography as the image” (Bloch,
paraphrased in Vattimo, 1988, 9) which previously described a unitary process of events,
even managing to characterize various temporal rhythms within a unitary time-line of
progress. Within the former view of history as a time-line of progress, anthropological
discourse appeared as a discourse through which Europeans encountered Other

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20 Gianni Vattimo’s (1988) characterization of the current historical moment as a “post-modern era” is based on an
expansion of Arnold Gehlen’s idea of contemporary Western society as post-histoire. Vattimo designates the current
historical condition as one wherein “progress becomes routine” and the human capability to control nature through
higher technology has increased to the point that even the “increased capability to order and arrange (objects)
simultaneously makes them ever less ‘new’” (9). History, understood as being determined by those in power and
indicative of relations of power, is described as being marked by three stages determined as the secularization of
progress: (1) a history of Christianity’s salvation; (2) a history of secularization; and finally (3) a history of progress.
civilizations. Anthropological discourse arose during this era as a construct—a "way of considering other cultures (which) ...designates them as primitive or archaic" (Vattimo, 1988, 9). The implicit argument was that Others existed as an original human essence—more primitive, ancient phases of "human civilization, which is that civilization in which cultural anthropology acquires for the first time the dignity of a scientific discourse" (ibid., 9).

African Canadian literature, as a body of work that dates back to 1785, can be understood as a voice that resisted these scientific, historical, and philosophical discourses that sought to define the Other. While these scholarly discourses were almost off limits except to the most elite in society, African Canadians were able to communicate their resistance to colonialism and racism through literature, plays, religious writing and anti-racist or anti-slavery pamphlets and petitions. Early African Canadian literature merits a study unto itself, but can be understood herein as a response to discourses about Othering.

In a related discussion about post-colonial literature, Mishra and Hodge (1991) indicated that it is possible to view the narrative mediated through the European bourgeois novel as "an available discourse to the post-colonial writer" (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 281), a philosophical apparatus that implicitly questions "the representation of history to the extent that any counter-historical move must begin with a reading of the capacities of the novelistic genre itself" (ibid., 280). Likewise, African Canadian writing can be viewed against the backdrop of colonial discourse, as capable of filling

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21 The original purposes of anthropology which were to capture an available essence of the so-called Other has, of course, changed considerably as the knowledge and theories became more complex less dichotomous. Currently, anthropology is sometimes used to undermine the very ideal of an Other that it was originally constructed to discover.
out the other half of the equation with those very precise, historically and culturally specific distinctions that mark off post-colonial difference without constructing, in turn, a post-colonial homogeneity that cancels out its own oppositions and fractures (ibid., 281).

A political agenda is thus inscribed within a post-colonial narrative because the colonial discourse has constructed the colonized as a fixed reality. The political agenda of the post-colonial writer is to deconstruct what has been constructed as “fixed” by enacting her or his own post-colonial subjectivity. Mishra and Hodge suggested that, while the post-colonial narrative is also “lumbered by the discourse” of colonialism to which it is “inexorably fissured” (ibid., 281), the post-colonial writer is nevertheless capable of enacting her or his own subjectivity through the construction of narratives.

Jamaican Canadian writer Prince (1997) constructed a similar argument about her own prose writing when, as a graduate student in sociology, she suggested that what she termed “ethnographic fiction” should be considered “on the same level as anthropologists’ ethnographies” (Prince, 1997, 8). Prince proposed that she should be able to write her graduate thesis as fictional prose. Arguably, because what she termed ethnographic fiction was written in an authentic voice, Prince also enacted a political agenda by enacting her own subjectivity through the construction of a narrative. She made an argument that, as a fiction writer who is trained in sociology, her “lens widens to include politics” (ibid., 8). She writes about fictional characters, but at the same time the characters’ struggles are grounded in daily struggles that she has observed within Jamaican society. For example, her characters might experience emotions that are caused by factors such as widespread emigration or a lack of social assistance in Jamaica. Prince concluded that not only does she have a greater authority to make observations about Jamaica than a foreign
anthropologist, but she also has greater access to Jamaican culture. She says, "(y)ou are not then going to say that the fiction is not valid [as ethnography] because it is fiction: that is crazy" (ibid., 8).

Despite Prince's compelling argument about her use of ethnographic fiction, her manner of representing data was not valued by her professors as equivalent in status to ethnography. Instead, she was required to make a case for her use of fiction as the "manifestation of a state of mind". This example underscores a paradox that may exist within some academic contexts. Despite the need, identified by Vattimo, for increased complexity that is now required of academics in the post-modern era—a need for complexity that has come about as the result of a dissolution of the discourse of history as a unified time-line of progress—ethnographic studies that were conducted by foreigners were, in Prince's case, given authority as "factual" and "truthful" over her representation of Jamaican society. This meant that Prince's own narrative about Jamaican history and culture was not valued as having the same status as a "non-fictional" ethnography even while Prince was training in sociology and anthropology and was prepared to conduct a thorough ethnographic study.

Prince's struggle with her thesis committee is reflective of a larger split between that has occurred in the post-modern era. Essentially the split indicates different researchers' values and decisions about what emphases are important when it comes to developing insights and determining "truth." The split occurred as a shift in the social sciences, mentioned in Chapter 1, toward postmodernism and away from modernism. The current purposes of anti-racist theorizing suggest the currency of the postmodern position, discussed earlier as a need to move beyond an intentional separation between the
“knower” (researcher) from the “known” (research subject). This is particularly important when one realizes that the assumption of the self-Other relationship developed out of a context of oppression.

I am not suggesting that we push conventional research paradigms aside completely, but that the grounds of what has been taken for granted in scientific relationships is ready to be further re-examined and disrupted. As discussed in Chapter 1, social scientists have worked to develop methods of data collection and presentation that do not objectify research subjects and that do not participate in the Western scientific construction of the self-Other binary. Said (1989) and Fine (1995), among others, have queried whether Western science has the capacity to offer up a discourse that moves beyond the previously determined limits of its epistemology to disrupt the suggestion of a self-Other dichotomy. Any conclusions about this debate are beyond my reach. I am suggesting, like the postmodernists identified previously, that story is a useful way of developing valuable insights as opposed to amassing what have been considered valuable “facts”. As Prince suggested, fictional prose can, like postmodern research writing, be viewed as a discourse equal in status to ethnography. This point can be related to what Mishra and Hodge clearly stated, that fiction is a discourse that was available to the post-colonial, a discourse through which it was possible for the post-colonial writer to enact subjective, post-colonial perspectives that uniquely contrasted colonial perspectives. The sum of my points is that, while it may be argued that fiction is significantly different to ethnography in terms of its methodology or its claims to “truth,” there still remains the unanswered question of which claim to “truth” is more relevant. A serious issue is that “scientific” discourse developed in the context of oppression and during this period of time the discourse was
almost entirely off limits to African Canadians. It is only fair to assume that, given that African Canadians wrote in the language of whatever discourses were available to them, these articulate voices that resisted oppression are equally important to recognize and explore. The view that post-colonial fiction writers provide “the other half of the equation,” can help anti-racist theorists, researchers, and educators in their search to identify more authentic perspectives on history and human interaction—perspectives that were untold, unacknowledged and undermined in the past by those “scientific” voices that have been deemed more authoritative. It may be that African Canadian literature will eventually be viewed as a discourse that is—as the feminists said—“equal, but different,” to anthropological, scientific, philosophical and historical discourses.

2.5 The Post-Colonial Roots of the Postmodern Connection

Patton’s (1986) view, noted in Chapter 1, that Foucault presupposes an “activist conception of the human subject” is important to both postmodernism and post-colonialism. However, Hutcheon made a distinction between postmodernism, which makes challenges to an assumed autonomous subject, and post-colonialism, which first questions the idea of an autonomous subject and then works to assert an alienated subjectivity (Hutcheon, 1989, 151). An “alienated subjectivity” is described as one that was constructed by the colonizer as a fixed reality. Noting formal, thematic, and strategic overlaps in the concerns of postmodernism and post-colonialism along with feminism, I use the term “feminism” to reference a discursive field which is attached to a “feminist movement” through a Hegelian problematic that accounts for the centrality of action in a re-theorization of history as a class struggle. Just as post-colonialism is “inexorably fissured” (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 282) to colonial discourse, feminism is also “inexorably fissured” to patriarchy and heterogeneity within the humanities and social sciences. Feminism has been described by Edward Said (1989) as a discourse that is subsumed within the larger discourse of post-colonialism. However, while some “feminist discourses” could be described as post-colonial, the term also references various other streams of the discourse which could be understood as representative of a totalizing
Hutcheon described the major difference between these discourses as being that both post-colonialism and feminism carry distinct political agendas and often a theory of agency. It is this theory of agency that allows these discourses to go beyond the postmodern limits of deconstructing existing orthodoxies and into the realm of social and political action.

Hutcheon also identifies their overlap with postmodernism as being related to three things: a dialogue with history, concerns with the idea of marginalization, and (within literature) the strategic use of irony as a trope.

Said (1989) takes the argument a step further than Hutcheon (1989) and suggests a slightly more radical view than Vattimo's (1988) Marxist perspective that determines the postmodern era to have come about largely as an effect of secularization and the increased capacity to control nature through technology. Said (1989), knowing that postmodernism evolved within the larger dynamics of imperialism and colonization, argues that postmodernism came about partly as the result of post-colonialism. This view stands in contrast to the Eurocentric view (e.g., Lyotard, 1993) that the historicized birth of postmodernism came about for entirely Western European reasons. Within the larger dynamics of imperialism and colonization Lyotard's thesis—that the reason narrative attained such a high status in the human and social sciences within the 20th Century is that the two narratives of Emancipation and Enlightenment reached the end of their legitimacy...
when their legitimizing power was lost to the favour of smaller local narratives, or petits recits—appears “not as an explanation, but as a symptom” (Said, 1989, 222) of a larger colonial narrative which separates the history of Western postmodernism from the history of post-colonialism.

Said draws from Franz Fanon’s (1976) and Aimé Césaire’s (1983) arguments that European colonizers need to view the development of European history through a perspective that accounts for the influences of non-European countries. Said suggested that the two narratives lost their legitimacy primarily due to the appearance of various non-European so-called Others in Europe whose presence loudly challenged the seamless narrative of colonial authority over the Other. In other words, European discourses were used over an extended period to justify various scourges—particularly racism and sexism. As Said argues, as the presence of challenging discourses of post-colonialism and feminism, among others, became louder and more articulate, these European narratives of Emancipation and Enlightenment lost their legitimacy. These counter-narratives more or less had to be acknowledged and incorporated into European philosophical discourse because the arguments represented behind colonization, racism and male dominance were clearly falsified by the very presence of an articulate, knowledgeable Other. Ironically, the discourse of postmodernism appears to be the response of a dominant discourse and culture that was “unable to either say yes, we should give up control, or no, we shall hold on regardless” (Said, 1989, 223).

related in their presentations of challenges to colonial, sexist and heterosexist discourses, but with an understanding that this relationship is highly problematic.
After this evolution of postmodernism, the task for many theorists became one of determining the “defining horizon” of Otherness. However, another entirely valid response to this evolution of theoretical discourse was a post-colonial perspective that the Other is unrepresentable—a view held by Said and several other well-known theorists (e.g., Fine, 1995; hooks, 1990; Trinh, 1989). Said termed the search for this defining horizon of Otherness as a “central worldly problematic” (Said, 1989, 217). His view is that the postmodern fixation with problematizing textuality and representing the Other through the “vogue for thick descriptions and blurred genres” (Said, 1989, 219) is indicative of the relative ease of talking about textuality as opposed to politics. The problem is, according to Said, that representation of the so-called “native point of view”,

despite the way it has often been portrayed, is not an ethnographic fact only, is not a hermeneutical construct primarily or even principally; it is in large measure a continuing protracted, and sustained adversarial resistance to the discipline and the praxis of anthropology (as representative of ‘outside’ power) itself, anthropology not as textuality, but as an often direct agent of political dominance (ibid., 219-220).

Said is correct to criticize the colonizers’ incessant desire to understand the world from the Other’s point of view. He questions the question. That is, he ponders the very basis of a discourse that is constructed around a purpose that is to understand the world from an Other’s point of view. Said has, of course, been criticized for giving no credit to modern anthropologists who have critiqued the earlier focus of their discipline and attempted to turn the idea of an Other upon itself. However, his views—that an entire epistemology cannot be pushed aside simply and that there is “no way of apprehending the world from within our culture of [colonialism and] American imperialism with its’ history of
externism and incorporation” (ibid., 217) without also apprehending the colonial/imperial contest itself—should be duly noted.

What is important, and what Said recognizes is that new questions are now required of theorists. The work now required of theorists, as pointed out by Mishra and Hodge (1991), cannot be done through a totalizing project or an over-arching discourse, but only by creating room for a multiplicity of post-colonial discourses. Mishra and Hodge suggested that a need now exists for research into both the nature of colonialism and specific struggles for self-determination. In their view, theories of postmodernism may be drawn upon in order to understand more about the nature of colonialism. I agree with Mishra and Hodge and I believe that work of understanding the nature of colonialism partly involves delving into the question of why an Other exists at all. The useful questions are now about how to negotiate our relationships around an acknowledged context of oppression; about how to develop relationships in research or in life that are not defined by oppression, that are capable of traversing that undefined place between the self-Other construct.

As these kinds of conflicts in theorizing are worked out, an understanding needs to be established that the histories of these discourses—post-colonialism and postmodernism—are interrelated. While the two discourses of postmodernism and post-colonialism are sometimes represented as contradictory23, post-colonialism can, nevertheless, reference techniques “that it shares with the complicitous critique of postmodernism, even if its politics differ in important ways” (Hutcheon, 1989, 171). In fact, “because of the

23 Linda Hutcheon has referred to the “metaphoric colonization” that sometimes characterizes postmodern art and narratives, wherein the Canadian identity is reduced to “its male, Anglo-Saxon and capitalist defining essences”
indeterminacy of the fused post-colonial, (in which oppositional and complicit forms coexist), theorization about it inevitably pushes us toward postmodernism” (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 288).

2.6 What is Now Required: A Need to “Work the Hyphen”

Anti-racism research, education, and theory now needs to go beyond either the inclusion of “Othered” perspectives or the disruption of the scientific ideal of capturing an essential Other. These assumptions continue to need to be probed and questioned, but other issues also need to be addressed. Fine noted that the “master-narratives” in modernist discourse “needed, and so created, Others” (Ladner, 1971 in Fine, 1995, 73). Quoting Hénri Giroux (1991 in Fine, 1995, 73), Fine discussed the problem of how, as opposed to existing as an authentic voice, the Other was hereby “reduced to the imagery of the colonizer.” Scholarship has cornered, defined, and represented Otherness, but has constructed this view of the Other as “scientific neutrality”.

As the colonial discourse has shifted toward postmodernism, the voice of the Other was incorporated through a “nice manageable state of affairs” (Said, 1989, 222). Within this paradigm shift the “self” was still often equivocated with a white, often male, heterosexual, able-bodied self that required the definition of an Other in order to constitute itself. Over time, social scientists have sought to reconcile these “slippery constructions of Self and Other and the contexts of oppression in which both are invented” (Fine, 1995, 78). This focus within the social sciences is particularly notable since the period of increased focus on identity politics in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, but “residues of

(Hutcheon, Linda, 1989, 166). An inference can be drawn that the discourse of postmodernism is incompatible with post-colonialism.
domination linger heavily” (ibid., 81). For instance, an assumption has continued to exist in the literature that within the self-Other relationship a definition of an Other is required in order for self to be constituted (see, for example, Richardson, 1992). Even the oft-quoted Stuart Hall, in questioning the relationships between identity, history and difference, said that

(о)nly when there is an Other can you know who you are. To discover the fact is to discover and unlock the whole enormous history of nationalism and of racism. Racism is a structure of discourse and representation that tried to expel the Other symbolically—blot it out, put it over there in the Third World, at the margin (Hall, 1991, 16).

As Fine pointed out, Hall strikes two contradictory positions. One that fixes a construction of Other, arguing that “(о)nly when there is an Other can you know who you are” (ibid., 16) and the other position that “sees Self and Other as fluid” (Fine, 1995, 72). Hall “reproduces the separation” in this passage and fails to do the important work of “investigating what is ‘between’….the blurred boundaries” (ibid., 72).

Rather than re-affirm the existence of a self-Other binary, the important work for theorists is now, as Fine suggests, to “work the hyphen” by exploring an area that exists in-between the false constructions of Self and Other. The purpose of furthering Canadian anti-racist dialogue currently requires that theorists investigate and disrupt these constructions specifically as they appear in Canadian Multicultural landscapes. The specific study of African Canadian resistance to colonization and the fight for African Canadian self determination provides insight into how colonialism, racism and, more recently, the ideology of Canadian Multiculturalism have created a “self” as white and an “Other” as marginalized African Canadian. The real work, however, will come as we negotiate our relationships to a place where we are all human—where no one is objectified
and marginalized. We can aid this process by doing research that complicates the false self-Other binary and that questions not only the basis for this self-Other mirror, but also how such a reflection was constructed and for whom.

2.7 Movement away from Emancipatory Research toward the next Epistemological Break

A significant amount of upheaval occurred in the social sciences during the 1990’s as academics made room for a new wave of researchers who poked holes in the once cherished ideal of a self-Other binary (for a discussion see Fine, 1995). As we move into the new century, research paradigms that were previously thought to be progressive are sometimes being discarded in favour of approaches that seek to “work the hyphen” by disrupting an ideal of the self-Other binary. Progressive research is now thought of as research that might help to clarify relationships that can exist in-between these constructions that were created in the context of oppression.

Previously, during the 1970s and 1980s, many social scientists presumed that a critical theory perspective combined with an advocacy approach helped produce social change. Borrowing from Hesse (1980 in Lather, 1986) who references Althusser, Lather referred to the proliferation of emancipatory research paradigms during the 1980’s as an “epistemological break”24 in social science literature. This term referred to a perceived rupture in what had become an established way of conceptualizing an issue or an inversion of the taken-for-granted. Lather suggested that in the 1980’s research was characterized by a lack of belief in absolutes. Referencing the large number of post-positivist research

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24 Hesse used what she describes as an Althusserian term, “epistemological break”. It was actually the French philosopher Bachelard who originated the concept of epistemological break, which Althusser then applied to the
paradigms that were developed with an openly emancipatory intent, Lather said that this radical, widespread change in social science literature indicated an epistemological break had opened the possibility for the development of what she termed “emancipatory knowledge”. Emancipatory knowledge was characterized as knowledge that increased research subjects’ awareness of contradictions that were either hidden or distorted by the dominant hegemony that produced what Gramsci termed as “common knowledge” or what can be understood as commonly accepted understandings. The researcher with an emancipatory intent sought to direct research subjects’ attention to the possibilities of social transformation that might be available to them. It was thought changes would occur by heightening research subjects’ awareness that their “common knowledge” contributed to the oppressive relationships in which they found themselves (Lather, 1986, 259).

Researchers in the field of education may still argue that action research paradigms, capable of “empowering” research subjects and of producing a pinnacle for social change, are essentially the radical way to effect praxis. However, given the expressed need to move away from subject-object dichotomies and work the hyphen, it may be that an epistemological break now resides in a complete break away from empirical research paradigms. As Catapano (1991) argued, social science and education are now “at a point where [they] need the interpretive texts,…[because] it’s time now for theory building” (Catapano, 1991, in Lincoln, 1993, 23). Lincoln (1993) also suggested there is a need for “authentic” texts that are more representative of the “interconnectedness of the knower and the known” (Lincoln, 1993, 23). Paraphrasing Van Maanen (1988), she suggested the

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work of Marx. This term refers to a rupture in the established way of conceptualizing an issue—a rupture that inverts meaning.
need for an “open-endedness with respect to authority, interpretation, reinterpretation, and finality of findings” (Lincoln, 1993, 33) saying that, at times, the role of a text may be to “demonstrate the hermeneutic and interactive role of social science” (Lincoln, 1993, 40). Smagorinsky went even further than Catapano and Lincoln and criticized prevailing beliefs about the value of empirical research as “a social construction, being developed and practiced primarily in Western cultures that value the development of ‘scientific thinking’” (Smagorinsky, 1995, 198). He further criticized the argumentative form of presenting empirical data. This approach to presenting and then proceeding to justify an hypothesis through data was understood by Smagorinsky as being founded on outmoded beliefs about research, representative of “the rational approach to problem solving that characterizes the dominant institutions of Western culture” (ibid., 199).

As mentioned in the introduction, the contextualization of research, an integral element of either a hermeneutic or a post-colonial approach, can avoid the re-perpetuation of a self-Other binary as well as the suggestion of a subject-object dichotomy. Likewise, what were once clearly drawn distinctions between what were called “oppositional paradigms” of social science—phenomenological versus praxis oriented approaches—25—are now exposed as representing a false dichotomy. As Fine asserted, the most important work occurs as the researcher

... probes how we are in relations with the contexts we study and with our informants, understanding that we are all multiple in those relations.... Working the hyphen means creating occasions for researchers and informants to discuss what is, and is not, “happening between,” within the negotiated relations of whose story is being told, why, to whom, with what interpretation, and whose

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25 Lather (1988) references Morgan (1983), who used the term “praxis-oriented” to clarify the “critical and empowering roots of a research paradigm that is openly committed to critiquing the status quo and building a more just society” (Lather, 1988, 258). This form of research was distinguished from phenomenological approaches.
story is being shadowed, why, for whom, and with what consequence (Fine, 1995, 72).

My purposes to interrupt and question unquestioned way of seeing, acting, or thinking and to open up alternatives follow on this distinctive trend of looking at who we are “in relations with the contexts we study…understanding that we are all multiple in those relations” (ibid). In the following chapters I utilize both conventional research writing and postmodern writing methods to represent a “story” of research. I looked at the question of who I am in relation with the cultural resistance of African Canadian communities and individuals to historical, philosophical, anthropological and scientific discourse. This purpose is clearly in line with Fine’s view that we need to establish “critical conversations among qualitative social researchers, eroding fixed categories and provoking possibilities for qualitative research that is designed against Othering, for social justice, and pivoting identities of Self and Other at the hyphen” (Fine, 1995, 81).
CHAPTER III: THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY: THE NORTH STAR MYTH

3.1 The Knife and the Whip

In our dealings with You the knife and the whip in one form or another have been a constant. One day we woke stretching and shaking the sleep from our eyes to find ourselves chattel. You did not erupt the elemental God

in Your silence
we were ravaged

(Claire Harris, 1984, 25).

The pioneering African Canadian presence on Canadian soil, along with the existence of slavery, has long been ignored and denied in Canada. Even though African pioneers on Canadian soil date back as far as 1604, many of the contributions of African Canadians have been “lost” to the annals of Canadian history. Commonly, the perception among Canadians with regard to African Canadian history is one that places white people at the centre of Canadian involvement with the Underground Railroad, the name given to a complex routing system wherein enslaved people of the United States escaped over the Northern US border to safety in Canada until the termination of slavery in the United States in 1865. The denial of the existence of slavery, racist immigration legislation and legalized segregation in Canadian history has been so complete that many people are not aware of Canada’s complicity in slavery and legalized segregation. An 1891 magazine article, for instance, predicted that “to the end of time Africa will bless Canada for the refuge and home given to her children in that period of their trouble and trial” (Hamilton, 1891 in Walker, 1997, 124). This point of view has been articulated most recently in a “Canadian Heritage Moment,” a television clip which positions white Canadians at the
centre of the Underground Railroad system, humbly leading grateful African Americans to safety in the “promised land” of Canada.

Like other colonial nations, throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Canada was involved in the buying and trading of slaves. Enslaved Africans arrived in Canada from many parts of the world such as Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States; some slaves were born in Canada. Almost all of the people of African descent in Canada between 1628 and 1783 were slaves, but the first known record of an African on Canadian soil was a free man, Mattieu da Costa. Da Costa was known to have traveled with the Champlain expedition to Port Royal in 1604-1606. The next record of an African on Canadian soil was Canada’s first officially recognized black slave, Oliver Le Jeune, who was sold into slavery in New France in 1628. Over the next two hundred and six years, slavery was practiced in several Canadian provinces. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Lower Canada (Quebec) and Upper Canada (Ontario) were all slave colonies. Most slaves in Canada were of African descent, but First Nations people (called Panis) were also enslaved.

Slavery was practiced extensively in Canada under both British and French rule. Various legal restrictions were imposed in early Canada to ensure that people of African descent would remain in a servile position and that white residents of the newly

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26 According to J.L. Dillard (1973), who was quoted by George Elliott Clarke (1997a, xiii), slaves were also transferred between Nova Scotia to Surinam quite freely in the eighteenth century. For further information on this aspect of slavery history see Dillard, 1973. Other accounts of Canadian slavery include Hill, Daniel G., 1981; Smith, 1899; Trudel, 1960 and 1990; Viger and Lafontaine, 1859; and Winks, 1971.

27 Da Costa arrived with the French force of Pierre de Gua des Monts. Along with another black man, name unknown, who died of scurvy, da Costa helped found Port Royal in Nova Scotia. He was a member in Canada’s first social club, The Order of Good Cheer. This membership, as well as his job as a translator, indicate that it was unlikely da Costa was a slave. He worked as a translator for the fur traders in the expedition’s interactions with the Mi’kmaq First Nations and his knowledge of the language, as well as other knowledge he displayed about the customs of the Mi’kmaq and the terrain, suggests that he had been to Canada prior to the date of this expedition.
developing colony would be accorded legal rights over the lives of their slaves. Africans were enslaved in Lower Canada prior to 1685 when Code Noir became French law, but the Code Noir firmly established legal restrictions that were to be imposed over the activities and lives of enslaved Africans. The Code Noir established prohibitions against slaves marrying whites, carrying weapons and, among other things, legalized white slave holders to take ownership of slave offspring. In the early 1700s some habitants of New France were encouraging slaves to leave their masters on the grounds that slavery was deemed illegal. Slavery’s legal status in the colony was confirmed through an order signed by Intendant Jacques Raudot on 13 April 1709. This order clarified the habitants’ title to First Nations and African slaves in the colony. Raudot declared slaves to be the property of the persons who bought them and announced a fine of 50 livres for anyone assisting a runaway (Viger et LaFontaine in Walker, 1997, 137).

During the eighteenth century, changes in American legislation sometimes affected the lives of enslaved African Canadians, offering possibilities for escape. Unlike enslaved First Nations who could sometimes escape to their home territory, or European indentured labourers who could defect and blend into the wider population, enslaved African people had nowhere to hide in the Canadian countryside. Black skin was a mark which identified their status as slaves. In the eighteenth century conditions were inhumane in Canada for enslaved Africans. While abolitionists were making progress in the Northern United States, measures were being taken within Canada to ensure the continuation of slavery in Upper and Lower Canada (Canada’s colonial forms). In 1734 Intendent Gilles Hocquart

28 Incidentally, 1734 is the same year of the highly publicized case wherein the enslaved Marie-Joseph Angélique was said to have set fire to her mistress’ home to distract attention from her own escape from slavery. After a trial and appeal, Angélique was publicly hanged and burned in a public square in Montréal. Accounts of this event vary in
ordered the militia to arrest runaway slaves and introduced a complicated procedure which would make it difficult for masters to free their slaves. Thus, when slavery was abolished in Vermont in 1777, slaves were found to flee Canada to the United States. In addition to this ruling in Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and within certain limits Connecticut, had each abolished slavery by 1784. These rulings occurred fifty years before slavery was abolished in Canada in 1834. The United States then passed a law under the Articles of Confederation which prohibited slavery in the Northwest Territory after 1787 (see Zilversmit, Arthur, 1967). Sovereignty was still being disputed over some of these areas. For instance, when Upper Canada came into being 1791, it claimed sovereignty over Detroit. While the British still living there ignored the new law which prohibited slavery, some of the slaves living in Upper Canada did not. Several of them swam across the Detroit River to freedom (see Hill, 1981, 22).

The colonial practice of granting land was practiced extensively in Canada and slavery was commonly understood and accepted by the colonists of Canada to be necessary for economic expansion. When the British took over French territory in 1760 they had no intention of challenging the existence of slavery. Article 47 of the Capitulation provided that slaves should remain the property of their masters:

> Les nègres et panis des deux sexes resteront en leur qualité d'esclaves en la posession des français et canadiens à qui ils appartiennent; il leur sera libre de les garder a leur service dans la colonie ou de les vendre; ils pourront aussi continuer a les fair léver dans la religion catholique. [Negroe and Native slaves of both sexes will remain as slaves to be possessed by either French or Canadians; the colonists remain free to either maintain or sell slaves in the colony; they may also

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detail, but it is documented by Daniel Hill (1981) in *The Freedom Seekers* that "a rope was tied to her neck, signs bearing the word 'incendiary' were fastened on her back and chest, and she was driven through the streets in a scavenger's cart. Worse was to come: she was tortured until she confessed her crime before a priest; then her hand was cut off and she was hanged in public." A succinct account of her escape, recapture and execution can be found in Trudel, 1990, 113-14.
continue to maintain their Catholic religion] (Viger et LaFontaine, 1859, 4-5; also quoted in Walker, 1997, 138).

Confirming what was considered most important to the residents of the new colony, the governor of Montreal wrote to the commandant at Detroit, explaining that, although he had been required to surrender the territory, he had managed to do so in conditions that were very favourable to the colonials. Effectively, they would maintain both the rights their freedom of religion and the possession of their slaves—the two things considered of utmost importance to the newly British subjects. “En effet ils conservent le libre exercise de leur religion, et sont maintenus en leur possessions de leurs biens...; ils conservent leurs Nègres et Panis [Effectively, the colonists retain their free rights to exercise religion and maintain possession of their property...; they maintain possession of their Negroes and their Native slaves]” (Vaudreuil to Belestre, personal communication, 1760 cited in Walker, 1997, 138).

Clearly, the British had no intention of challenging the existence of slavery when they took control of Lower Canada. On the contrary, with the British conquest of New France in 1760 came a rapid increase in slave importation to Canada. Some slaves came directly from Africa, but most black slaves were imported after what was called “seasoning” in southern plantations or the Caribbean (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 41). Not all slaves in Canada were of African descent, however. As mentioned, First Nations (called Panis) were also enslaved, and were preferred in urban areas because they were considered to be more docile and exotic than Africans (ibid., 42). In the countryside, however, as First Nations could more easily escape to refuge in their home territories, most colonial settlers
preferred African slaves. General James Murray, the first English governor, wrote a friend in New York in November 1763, describing his preference for black slaves:

I must most earnestly entreat your assistance, without servants nothing can be done. Had I the inclination to employ soldiers, which is not the case, they would disappoint me, and Canadians will work for nobody but themselves. Black slaves are certainly the only people to be depended upon...I shall begrudge no price (Riddell, cited in Walker, 1997, 138).

It was not only the European settlers who had slaves, however. In spite of the fact that some First Nations people were enslaved in Canada, other First Nations people had bargaining and negotiation powers—and slaves. For instance, after the loss of Acadia in 1713, the French, from their bastion at Louisbourg, attempted to retain good relationships with First Nations as it was considered that they “would be useful allies in future contests with the English” (Viger et LaFontaine, 1859, 4-5; also cited in Walker, 1997, 138). At various times throughout the settlement of Canada, First Nations that were positioned at strategic locations around the country were considered to have knowledge and expertise that was valuable to the colonizers. In addition, their presence in areas that were sparsely populated by Europeans was sometimes considered as a threat to European expansionism. Alliances were thus fashioned with First Nations that were advantageous to both European settlers and fur traders.29

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29 Like other subjects of Canadian history which encompasses diverse geographical regions and cultures, the history of First Nations/European relationships is highly complicated. The subject merits a specific examination of each geographical region and even specific nations—an examination that is beyond the scope of this thesis. In certain areas of Canada First Nations were without land or bargaining rights, whereupon they were forced into abject poverty. In Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, for example, aboriginal title was not recognized and all available land was presumed to belong to the ‘Crown.’ First Nations in these areas had to petition local governments in the eighteenth century in order to be granted any reservation lands whatsoever. In other parts of Canada, however, First Nations were considered to be valuable European allies. Some historians (e.g., Fisher, Robin, 1977) maintain that the fur trade was of mutual benefit to both First Nations and white communities during the maritime and land-based phases of the fur trade. This position is debatable, however, considering the enormous degree to which First Nations suffered. For instance, massive epidemics due to the importation of European diseases such as smallpox were known to have wiped out up to eighty percent of the population in some Pacific Northwest communities.
Before the confederation of Canada in 1871 and the Indian Act of 1876\textsuperscript{30}, some First Nations people also had slaves\textsuperscript{31}. Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant (also called Thayendinaga), for instance, owned 30-40 blacks. Other First Nations people actively participated in the slave trade. Shawanabe and Potawatomis and other western tribes brought slaves from Ohio, Kentucky and sold them in north. Members of the Six Nations First Nation in Quebec/Ontario also sold slaves to settlers in the Niagara region (see Hill, 1981).

Relationships between First Nations masters and African Canadian slaves were, however, more egalitarian than European/African relationships. For instance, some African slaves intermarried with First Nations people with the blessings of Chief Joseph Brant even while they maintained their slave status (Alexander and Glaze, 1997, 47). Some First Nations also provided safety for escaped slaves even though these escapees often maintained slave status.

The abolition of slavery in Canada was slow to develop and partly depended upon the changing economy. As the economy began to change, so did the conditions slowly

\textsuperscript{30} The traditions of First Nations administration that emerged within various regions of Canada prior to Confederation, as well as the historical significance of treaties that were signed between the government of Canada and various First Nations are distinct and complex. In part, the complexity of this history is related to historical immigration patterns of Europeans and African Canadians, as well as priorities of European economic expansion in the various regions of Canada. A thorough discussion of this topic, as it interrelates with African Canadian history, is worthy of examination, but beyond the scope of this paper. To the best of my knowledge, a comprehensive study of the development of this history in Canada does not currently exist. For discussions about the development of Indian Affairs and relations between European colonizers and First Nations see: Fisher, Robin, 1977; Morris, 1991; or Titley, 1986.

\textsuperscript{31} In addition to those First Nations people who enslaved Africans, some First Nations were also known to enslave Europeans. Slavery was practiced among some nations in the Pacific Northwest even prior to contact with non-First Nations. Members of neighbouring nations were sometimes enslaved after being captured in battle. After Europeans arrived in Northwestern British Columbia, the Haida were known to enslave Europeans captured in battle.
improve for African Canadians. At the end of the eighteenth century abolitionism gained in popularity among the white colonials throughout the British Empire. As certain cases of extreme brutality toward enslaved African Canadians became known publicly, European Canadians finally began to listen to the rights of African people. This long awaited shift signified a positive turn of events for enslaved African Canadians because, as they were not considered human under the law, their resistance to the existence of slavery could have little lasting effect without the support of the European Canadian community.

This insistence on the abolition of slavery would slowly take effect. In 1791, Lieutenant-Colonel Simcoe, a sympathizer of the abolitionist cause, became the first Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada. In 1793, a highly publicized case of brutality against Chloe Cooley, a slave from Queenstown helped to bring attention to the inhumanity of slavery and problems with enslaved peoples’ lack of human rights. Cooley was badly beaten by her master, transported against her will across the Niagara River and sold into slavery. Many people were upset by this incident, but English law made prosecution impossible because slaves were seen as personal property. Appallingly, human rights abuses couldn’t be charged because slaves were not considered human. As the result of this controversy, in 1793 the government passed law entitled *An Act to Prevent the Further Introduction of Slaves and to Limit the Term of Enforced Servitude Within this Province*. This was a compromise for the abolitionists in that it did not ban slavery, left slave owning opposition legislators unaffected, and freed children of slaves only after they reached 25 years of age. Still problematic, Simcoe’s Act also remained mute on the point of slaves being considered human. On the other hand, Simcoe’s Act prevented settlers from bringing slaves into the province. The significance of this Act is debated by African
Canadian historians (compare, e.g., Walker, 1985, 1997 and Bristow et. al., 1994) in that “slave owners continued to be protected by the over-reaching laws of property and commerce” (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 53) The Act, in fact, proves that “(i)n the pioneering development of Canada, slavery, in short, was deemed too important for outright abolishment. Black slaves helped build the country and were necessary for its continued prosperity” (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 53). Whatever its deficiencies, the Act is significant in that it does represent one of earliest attempts at the establishment of anti-discrimination legislation in Canada which contributed, however minimally, to the gradual elimination of slavery in the colonies.

The American War of Independence (1775-1783) marked the arrival of Canada’s first sizable “free” African Canadian population—3500 Black Loyalists—in 1783. They had fought with the British against the Americans in exchange for the promise that they would receive a plot of land and other citizenship rights in British North America in exchange for their services. However, not all the Black Loyalists who arrived in Canada were free. An additional 1500 slaves also arrived in the company of white Loyalists. Prevailing racism toward people of African descent complicated matters for politicians who had made promises to the Black Loyalists. The result—many of the free Black Loyalists did not receive their promised land once they arrived in Canada. Rather than being treated to their promise as equal citizens, their slave status still clung to them.

In nearly every case the Black Loyalists were forced to live in areas segregated from white neighbourhoods in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. They were given opportunities for only the most menial labour opportunities, many of which were unpaid, only rewarded with food and lodging. For instance, while the white Loyalists were given land grants of
between one hundred and four hundred acres throughout Annapolis County, most of the
new black immigrants to Annapolis County were not granted any land at all. Where land
was granted to seventy-six Black Loyalists, each of these plots were located in a black
township of Digby and each family received only a single acre. Conditions varied for Black
Loyalists in various parts of the Maritimes. In general, they were given only the most
rocky and unfarmable plots. These injustices, and other frustrations with the British
system that did not provide them with their promised equal status, prompted about one
third of these new Canadian immigrants, mostly community leaders such as Baptist
minister David George, to move to Sierra Leone in 1792. This sudden decrease in
outstanding members of the African Canadian community, along with continued prejudice
toward the local African Canadian population, could only have a negative impact on the
lives of those Black Loyalists who remained in Canada.

The experience of the Jamaican Maroons, the next sizable immigration of African
Canadian people, approximately six hundred, transported to Halifax in 1796, appeared, at
first to be quite different to that of the Black Loyalists. The Maroon immigrants were
descendants of enslaved Africans who had escaped from the Spanish before the British
conquest of Jamaica. They were known as legendary warriors and the last significant
revolt, known as the last Maroon War, broke out in July 1795 while the British were at
war with France. The Maroons had represented a significant threat to British control over
Jamaica even though the British were able to crush the revolt by March of 1796. The
Jamaican legislature advised that those Maroons who had not capitulated to the British

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32 A detailed account of the history of the Black Loyalists can be found in Walker (1976). Accounts can also be found
in Chapter 2 and 3 of Winks, 1997.
33 Maroon colonies also existed elsewhere in the Caribbean.
should be deported. In June of 1796, almost six hundred Maroons were tricked into submission and then deported to the Maritimes. Initially, the Maroons were well received and respected in a way that the Black Loyalists were not: "their labour was needed, they could earn money from the outset, and since their legend had preceded them, they had the respect that a frontier and sea-going community naturally gives to brave men" (Winks, 1997, 81). However, a clash of interests occurred between various government officials, each of whom had their own ideas about the settlement of the Jamaican Maroons. Subsequent complaints from local people about different “non-Christian” customs practiced by the Maroons were added to the mandate of at least one government official who worked to ensure that the Maroons did not settle permanently in Canada. Eventually this led to a more negative public image. As certain government officials became committed to the forced removal of the Jamaican Maroons, in 1800 all the Maroons living in Canada, including one family who had moved to Ontario, were removed to Sierra Leone.

Conditions experienced by the Black Loyalists, the prejudice exhibited toward the Maroons, and the degree to which slavery was firmly established in Canada are indications of how racism shaped the prevailing attitudes of European Canadians toward African Canadians in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. If Canada had developed as a plantation economy, in the manner of the Southern United States, it is therefore likely that slavery would have remained as a Canadian establishment until a much later date. However, legal conditions condoning the existence of slavery began to change as the need for a slave economy became less important to the new British colonists. In 1803, William

34 For a fuller account of this history see Chapter 3 in Winks (1997).
Osgoode, Chief Justice of Lower Canada, ruled that slavery was incompatible with British law. This ruling set free 300 slaves of Lower Canada and began an era of increased Northern migration of African Americans. At this time, William Wilberforce, in the company of John Graves Simcoe, also tabled a bill in the British House of Commons to stop importation of slaves in all British colonies. In 1807 a British Act of Parliament made enslaving British subjects illegal.

The historical immigration of thousands of African Americans after the War of 1812 indicates just to what extent the prevalent attitudes and behaviours of European Canadians toward African Canadians had changed. During the War of 1812, thousands of black American slaves fled to British protection, encouraged by promise of complete freedom and settlement on British land in Canada. Known as Refugees because of their former slave status, the earliest of these new citizens arrived in Halifax in 1813. At first, their immigration was recognized as valuable labour resource. Their immigration was welcomed by Nova Scotia and New Brunswick governments because they were expected to perform manual labour at low pay rate. However, this influx of African American immigration was to follow a pattern that became well established in regard to the push-pull attitude of the British government toward African American immigration into Canada. African Americans were welcomed just so long as it served the interests of the expanding British Empire. Once their services were no longer needed, they were cast out.

The so-called Refugees were given tracts of land organized into settlements or townships that were segregated from the white populations. Unfortunately, “the land given up to the Refugees was poorer than most, for the best had already been taken up” (Winks, 1997, 125). Like the white settlers, these Refugees were given some aid in terms
of small rations and a few farming supplies. It was thought that they would best integrate into society as farmers. Others were located in segregated townships outside white settlements and searched for available work as servants for the white population.

Unfortunately, various conditions combined to create a situation which was very unfavourable for the Refugees. In 1815 an influx of poor white labourers from Ireland further reduced the employment opportunities for the new African Canadians. This also increased whites' hostility toward African Canadians who were perceived as competing with and taking jobs from whites.

In regard to conditions faced by farmers, climatic conditions confronted them that were “unparalleled in their severity” (ibid., 125). In spite of the greatest efforts, many of the Refugees were unable to develop their farmlands adequately. The Refugees were also just that, “refugees” who were emerging out of the experience of slavery. Understandably, they had not yet developed, through education and perseverance, other assets that would have enabled them to maintain complete independence from charitable donations. This, coupled with prejudice toward them which limited their opportunities, created a temporary condition of dependency in this community of new immigrants. Rather than developing and promoting understanding about the perseverance required to survive and escape slavery, many European Canadians were quick to paint the Refugees with stereotypes about inherent laziness. Shortly, after agitation from the European Canadian community, the Nova Scotia Assembly began to observe the arrival of the black Refugees “with concern, and alarm” and passed a resolution “to prohibit the bringing any more of these people, into this Colony.” Their reason, explained in the resolution, was
that the proportion of Africans already in this country is productive of many inconveniences; and that the introduction of more must tend to the discouragement of white labourers and servants, as well as the establishment of a separate and marked class of people, unsuited by nature to this climate, or to an association with the rest of his Majesty’s Colonists (Nova Scotia, House of Assembly, 1815 in Walker, 1997, 125-126)

The resolution reveals to what extent that attitudes toward African Canadians had changed in the Maritimes. The resolution also indicates the way in which racism was to develop with fervour, and become more and more firmly established as the era of slavery came to an end. Not only were African Canadians viewed as a “separate and marked class of people,” deemed unsuitable to associate with European Canadians, but also African Canadians were also deemed unsuitable “by nature” to the climate in the Maritimes.

3.2 Early settlement and Canada’s Silent ‘Jim Crow’

The issue of African Canadian settlement is different than other non-white Canadian immigrants. The racism toward this group of people could never truly be argued to be a result of their foreign status. Many African Canadians went to Christian churches and had been living in Canada for far longer than most white Canadians. Their “unsuitability” then, was based solely upon the colour of their skin. The examination of historical attitudes toward people of African decent thus provides a means through which to determine how nineteenth century “scientific” theories functioned and affected the lives of early African Canadian settlers.

Within colonial Victorian-modernist discourse in the nineteenth century on bodies as phenotypes, the phenotype of the so-called Hottentot Venus and the history of the scientific discourse on primitivist sexuality bore a direct relationship to the experience of African Canadians. The colonialist construction of Other presented and conceptualized a
primitive woman by utilizing the primitive trope as a base line. On the edge of this spectrum was the early fascination with female genitalia of the so-called *Hottentot Venus* among early nineteenth century European scientists. Saartjie Baartman, also called Sarah Bartman and known as the *Hottentot Venus*, was exhibited naked in 1810-1815 throughout Europe. She died in Paris in 1815 at the age of 25. Her buttocks and her genitalia provided the central images for the black female in the nineteenth century. At the same time, people who escaped slavery in the nineteenth century were viewed as contraband bodies, a term that refers to outlawed or forbidden goods or merchandise. Within the context of this so called scientific discourse, then, in newspapers published during the Civil War, this term

no longer meant only things that are stolen but also people who have escaped. The implication was that black people are things, objects. And so they were, in the slavery system and on the minstrel stage (Gottschild, 1996, 108-109).

African Canadians, understanding the falsity of these theories, established various settlements throughout Canada as a way of combating the segregation and racism they experienced in Canadian society. A debate existed among African Canadians as to how their communities would best settle within the hostile climate of Canadian racism. Understandably, some community members felt they would do best to form segregated settlements as had African American settlers in Oklahoma who had formed fully functioning, self-supporting communities35. Others, however, felt that racism could only

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35 Examples exist of African American communities who were profiting and self-supporting under the Reconstruction Era. Between 1879-1881 approximately 50,000 blacks, mostly sharecroppers, escaped indebtedness and KKK fled the South. They called themselves “Exodusters” after Biblical story of Israelites fleeing Egypt for Promised Land. Many of them fled to the American Midwest. Within a few years most were managing their own acreage. Most families were self-supporting within one year. Several thousands of them lived in all-black communities in Kansas and Oklahoma, but others chose to live in integrated communities. Integrated schools existed at this time throughout rural Midwest.
be addressed and dismantled through integration. Some African Canadians felt this was the only way that their children would be ensured a foothold within the developing Canadian society. This debate within the African Canadian community can be noted within two influential black newspapers of the time. The Voice of the Fugitive, established 1851 by former slave Henry Bibb argued against white charity and supported segregated land settlements and black-owned businesses. The Provincial Freeman, founded in 1853 by editor Mary Ann Shadd, stressed the value of integration. Difficulties persisted with integration, however. Excerpts from European Canadian magazines and newspapers in the nineteenth century reflect the prevalent attitudes of European Canadians toward African Canadians which made integration difficult. For example, The Windsor Mail perceived the African Canadian to be full of "peculiarities ... so abnormal that... he sinks to the level of the animal" (Windsor Mail, 1876 in Winks, 1997).

The establishment of an African Canadian presence in British Columbia followed the same pattern that was established elsewhere in Canada. As in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Ontario, and later on the prairies, the British invited African Americans to Canada for just as long as this suited the interests the expanding colonial empire. Once the African Canadian community was no longer of use to the British Crown, segregation was established and difficulties persisted for the community. During the 1850's a large number of Americans came to British Columbia in search of making their fortune from the BC Gold Rush. The British were in need of establishing a presence on the west coast for fear of losing this region to American interests. Governor Douglas, of mixed Scottish and

36 Reverend Samuel Ward, a well known abolitionist, loaned his name to the paper as editor. Although Shadd was also well known, educated, and an outspoken activist—clearly capable of running the paper herself—conventional
Creole parentage, recruited settlers from the United States who could be considered loyal British subjects and could come to Canada's western region during the Gold Rush. African American communities were an obvious choice given that slavery had not yet been abolished in parts of the United States and the Fugitive Slave Laws (1763, 1850) made conditions dangerous for free blacks. Hoping to establish a flourishing community on the west coast, Governor Douglas urged many of the educated, hard working black communities of San Francisco to come North. Many black families came to settle on Saltspring and Vancouver Islands and the mainland.

By the end of the summer in 1858, 800 black settlers had come to Vancouver Island, outnumbering the whites who resided there. These settlers, unlike the Refugees of Nova Scotia, had been living in the free state of California for some time and had owned businesses or farms in California. Many of them set up and ran successful businesses in the Victoria region and some of them worked as police officers. Not only did they have the capital to succeed as settlers, these settlers were eager to show their loyalty to the interests of the British Crown. They did so by setting up the Victoria Pioneer Rifle Company in 1860. However, the Company required approval from London to become an established regiment in the British Order of Battle. This approval was never granted and the company was barred from public ceremonies. Once the attention surrounding the Gold Rush settled down and the threat of American expansionism was over, segregation came into effect, particularly after Governor Douglas was voted out of office. Although on paper government legislation was that equality prevailed for all people, the reality was that thinking about the role of women caused them to decide to conceal the fact that Ms. Shadd would be doing the real work of establishing, writing, and editing the paper.
restaurants, taverns and churches practiced segregation. It appeared that the African American immigrants had not escaped the prejudice that had initially caused them to flee the United States. An American newspaper correspondent visiting Victoria in 1864 claimed that prejudice was as serious there as in San Francisco (see Walker, 1985, 11).

Various African Canadian settlements were attempted throughout the rest of Canada by industrious and resourceful pioneers, but like the settlement in Victoria, these attempts were usually thwarted by prevailing attitudes of whites toward blacks. The Elgin settlement has been considered an historic integrationist settlement (see Alexander and Glaze, 1996; or Hill, 1981) in that a debate occurring between the settlers and the residents of Chatham county represented a turning point in Canadian history. The Elgin community was set up in 1849, fifteen years after the abolition of slavery in all British colonies, by a former slaveholder, Reverend William King, who had become known as a white abolitionist. There is some discrepancy among historians as to the purity of King's intentions in helping to establish the community of Elgin (see Bristow et. al., 1994). It seems that differences existed between Reverend King's outward persona as an abolitionist and his personal views about Africans and slavery. In his autobiography, written years after the Elgin settlement was disbanded, King stated that “one could not get faithful and trustworthy servants unless you bought them” (Public Archives of Canada, ca. 1890, cited in Bristow, 1994, 75). In addition, King’s autobiography suggests views that were in concert with many influential white people of his time, that slaves “had come to consider that slavery was their natural condition. They did not know what freedom meant....They thought that to be free was to be like their master, to go idle, and have a good time” (ibid., in Bristow et. al., 1994, 76). In spite of these internal contradictions,
King had gone to Edinburgh to study theology in previous years and was influenced by the Glasgow Emancipation Society, an organization that opposed churches having ties with slaveholding Christians. When King emigrated to Canada he began plans to begin a settlement at Elgin. Given that several men and women were left to his charge by his father in law (a rich Southern slaveholder) upon his wife’s death, King’s actions were to affect the lives of several men and women, including several other slaves that he had bought previous to his trip to Edinburgh.

Opposition existed among the white people of Chatham toward the settlement at Elgin, organized by legislative member and school commissioner Larwill around a belief about the inability of blacks and whites to live together peaceably. In spite of this, the Elgin Association was incorporated on June 8, 1850. By 1854 the community featured a bustling economy. African Canadian men, as property owners, were granted the right to vote. This and the promise of legal protection were factors that distinguished conditions of American and Canadian blacks and offered hope of improving conditions to early settlers. A victory occurred for the community after a coalition of African Canadian groups among these early settlers of Chatham forced Larwill out of office in 1856 and elected a known abolitionist, Archibald McKellar, to Legislature in his place. The support of the white community of Chatham, as well as the determination to engage in a political campaign, showed that peaceful co-existence was possible.

Unfortunately, Canada missed this early opportunity to encourage and foster the establishment of a sizable African Canadian populations in both British Columbia and
Ontario. Compared to Canada, the United States was doing a lot more for its black population in the time period around Canada’s confederation in 1867. In 1865, America restored its Union. Before the Civil War ended, US Congress established the Freedmen’s bureau. The purpose of this bureau was to provide food and clothing to former slaves, and to help them locate jobs and accommodation. By 1867, the Bureau had set up close to 4,500 schools across the southern states. Parents had to pay tuition to finance the operation of these schools, but, understanding the importance of education to the future of their families, thousands of impoverished blacks sacrificed whatever they had in order to educate their children. In the 1870s Bureau schools in the United States came under the jurisdiction of the public systems. These schools enrolled both black and white students.

African Canadians,

frustrated by their failure to gain access to public education, now wondered if their children wouldn’t be better off in schools ‘back home.’ The exodus from Canada that began with the Civil War continued throughout Reconstruction, and the perception that educational opportunities were now available in a reformed America was one chief reason for it (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 82).

In contrast to the United States at this point in history, African Canadian students were often barred from the common schools of Canada West. In spite of this, African Canadian communities found ways to educate children. In some cases the education of children and adults would take place at night in church basements after a full day of work. Something had to be done so that black students could receive the same educational opportunities that white Canadian children were receiving. Given the previously

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37 Until recently, the number of 30,000 to 40,000 has been the widely accepted figure among historians for the number of American fugitives who came to Canada. They came expecting not only freedom from slavery, but also from the inequalities imposed by racism. Approximately three quarters of them returned to the American South, however, after emancipation. Michael Wayne (1995), however, in “Black population of Canada West on the Eve of the Civil War: Reassessment based on the Manuscript Census of 1861,” has reassessed this number and suggests a total of only about 20,000 to 23,000, most of whom remained in Canada.
established pattern of the experience of African Canadian settlers, the events that followed 
African American immigration to Ontario should come as no surprise. By the 1840s, 
African Canadians were no longer welcomed as menial labourers, in part due to the 
increasing availability of Irish labourers and other poor whites. However, conditions were 
very dangerous for free blacks in the Northwest United States and by the time the second 
American Fugitive Slave Act was passed in 1850, Ontario’s black population had grown 
to 40 000. In order to placate the white community, legislation was passed to legalize 
segregation in education. The Upper Canada Common Schools Act was worded to calm 
African Canadian parent protest and was passed after a long period in which African 
Canadian parents had been agitating their school districts to include African Canadian 
students. The legislation allowed 12 or more heads of family to request a separate black 
school (Statutes of Upper Canada 1850 c.48, s. 19). Under this legislation segregated 
education was imposed in most Ontario school districts with a sizable African Canadian 
population. The reality that followed this legislation was that education was established for 
black students that was separate but not equal. Many black schools ran into financial 
difficulties, were reliant on volunteers, and were given less qualified teachers.

Many of these schools folded. In spite of these difficulties facing African Canadian 
communities, however, examples of successful black schools were also evidenced at this 
early point in Canadian history. For example, the Buxton Mission school, located at the 
Elgin settlement, was noted for its curriculum, which gave excellent education in both 
professions and trades. Although black students were not allowed to enter common 
schools, some white parents did not hesitate to enroll their children at Elgin because of its 
superior curriculum (Alexander and Glaze, 1996). Girls’ education, however, was not a
priority at Buxton and they had to wait five years for a school where they could be instructed. When the school for girls finally arrived, girls were instructed in home economics rather than Latin and Greek like their brothers (Bristow, et. al., 1994, 90). The Buxton Mission School is, nevertheless, an example of a successful black school which continued to operate even after Elgin Settlement disbanded in 1873. The *Upper Canada Common Schools Act* was not the only segregationist legislation in Canada. Education was the area of most significant legislated segregation in Canada. In Nova Scotia, the *Education Act* of 1836 permitted local commissioners to establish separate schools for “Blacks or People of Colour” (*Statutes of Nova Scotia* 1836 c. 92, s. 5). Once again, the result of this legislation on black students was that the quality of the children’s education suffered as the segregated facilities were dependent upon irregular legislative grants and charitable donations.\(^{38}\)

Segregation legislation seems to have occurred wherever there was a large influx of African Canadian immigration. For instance, Toronto did not experience a sudden influx of black immigrants and education in this city was integrated from the beginning. The black population in this city grew slowly. Therefore, some of the graduates of these

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\(^{38}\) The African Canadian community in Nova Scotia actively protested against the limitations placed on their children’s education. In some instances in the city of Halifax African Canadian families ignored the legislation and enrolled their children in schools with whites. In response, the white community of Halifax prompted the City Council to pass a by-law excluding blacks from all common schools in the 1870s. African Canadian parents, however, recognized the value of education for their families and continued to protest and challenged the exclusion of their children from school through the courts. Nevertheless, during these legal challenges the *Common Schools Act* of Ontario was generally referenced and interpreted as giving school boards the right to enforce segregation. The courts even sanctioned segregation in schools established prior to the Act. African Canadian protests in Nova Scotia culminated in an 1883 petition which demanded the full integration of provincial schools. Finally, a debate in the legislature resulted in amendments to the *School Act* in 1884 which represented a partial victory. The revised Act continued to permit segregated facilities, but added that no African Canadian students would be excluded from instruction in the area where they live. This provision granted African Canadian children access to secondary education for the first time. However, a later section of the 1884 Act was less progressive and stipulated “that no school receiving special aid could hire a teacher with anything higher than a fourth class certificate” (*See Revised Statutes of Nova Scotia* 1884 cited in Walker, 1997, 128). Given that every segregated facility in the
Toronto schools, upon their graduation, actively pushed to help rural blacks receive equal opportunities in education. Slowly, as the result of this agitation, the Buxton Mission model was transplanted into other jurisdictions in Ontario. However, discriminatory education legislation remained on the statute books in Ontario until 1964 and Nova Scotia continued to have segregated schooling until the 1960s. This Canadian legacy occurred ten years after the famous *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision made racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional in the USA in 1954.

Education was not the only area where discrimination and segregation were practiced. Although Canada did not explicitly legislate segregation as in the Southern United States, the same conditions existed with regard to racist segregation in Canada as in the United States. Examinations of the ways in which the courts handled cases of discrimination can be instructive as a means of understanding prevailing attitudes of the times. These, rather than laws as they were written are a more instructive means of determining what conditions were actually like for African Canadians (e.g., Walker, 1997). Walker (1997) describes the significant parallels between American and Canadian ‘Jim Crow’ laws in his reference to the American classic about post slavery United States, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, by C. Vann Woodward (1955 in Walker, 1997, 124-125). Walker firmly establishes that the existence of ‘Jim Crow’ in Canada existed long after the extinction of slavery in Canada.

Vann Woodward identified the areas of life where legalized segregation tended to apply following the end of slavery in the United States. He listed ‘churches and schools,’ ‘housing and jobs,’ ‘eating and drinking,’ ‘public transportation,’ ‘sports and recreations,’ ‘hospitals, orphanages, prisons and asylums’ and, in

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province of Nova Scotia received provincial aid, this legislation served to ensure that segregated facilities would be both separate and unequal in accordance with Nova Scotian law.
death, 'funeral homes, morgues and cemeteries.' In virtually every one of these areas of life and death, African Canadians too experienced exclusion and separation from mainstream institutions, amounting to a Canadian version of 'Jim Crow.'

3.3 Into the 20th Century

Racist attitudes continued to take on an even more sinister tone in the twentieth century. Agnes C. Laut, considered a "respected popularizer of Canadian history," wrote in *The Canadian Commonwealth*, 1915 about

the 'dangers within, not without' already posed by too many Jappy-Chappies, Chinks, and Little Brown Brothers who could not be assimilated. There were 'dangers of dilution and contamination of national blood, national grit, national government, national ideas,'...for self-seeking 'Jews and Pollacks and Galicians' would corrupt Canada. 'Theoretically...the coloured man should be as clean and upright and free-and-equal and dependable as the white man; but...practically he isn't' As for inter-marriage, 'we do not propose poisoning the new young life of Canada' (Walker, 1997, 380).

The blatant racism contained in this article was a sentiment that was well established in turn of the century press clippings. Not limited to press, these sentiments were also reflective of the attitudes held by various members of society. This can be noted, for instance, in the debates of the Legislature which follow an influx of African American immigration to Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1911. This influx of African American immigration to the prairies resulted from an ad campaign that had been administered in the United States for farmers to settle in Canada. As no specifications were stated in the ads as to the racial origin of the settlers, many African Americans—most of whom were

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39 Walker also notes that, according to Van Woodward, "The origin of the term 'Jim Crow' applied to Negroes [sic] is lost in obscurity. Thomas D. Rice wrote a song and dance called 'Jim Crow' in 1832, and the term had become an adjective by 1838" (Van Woodard, in Walker, 1997, 7). Rice is the alleged originator of blackface minstrelsy in the United States. He is said to have designed his dance after seeing the choreography of an African American man with a physical ailment. Walker notes that, since this dance is said to have originated with slavery, and "since slave dances were often mockeries of their masters' dancing styles...and since 'old Mr. Crow' was a term sometimes used by slaves to mean slave owner...it is possible that Rice's Jim Crow dance was a satire upon satire (Walker, 1997, 379-380).
proven farmers who had decided to leave the United States because of the growing hostility toward blacks—decided to try and emigrate to Canada. The definitive pull for settlers of white Anglo Saxon heritage, or, what was considered to be "proper stock" soon became apparent to new African American immigrants, however. Debates existed in the press about whether a restrictive head tax should be imposed to discourage African American immigrants. Minister Frank Oliver, while not refusing their entrance on the grounds of race, stated that, nevertheless, when an immigrant "is of the presumably less desirable class then they are administered more restrictedly" (Oliver, cited in Walker, 1997, 128). But this wasn't enough for MP William Thoburn from the Ontario riding of Lanark who asked "Would it not be preferable to preserve for the sons of Canada the lands they propose to give to niggers?" (Thoburn cited in Shephard, 1985, 105; Walker, 1997, 128; and Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 106).

These attitudes persisted even during the emergency conditions of wartime. During World War I, thousands of African Canadians were excluded from military duty in spite of their eagerness to serve Canada in the war. After extreme losses of life on the part of white troops, the Nova Scotia No. 2 Construction Battalion was established in 1916 to perform auxiliary services for white troops. African Canadians were recruited from Ontario and West as well as Nova Scotia. Their proof of allegiance to Canada, however, once again did not win African Canadians a prominent position in Canadian society. During the time between World Wars employment segregation was obvious. African Canadians continued to suffer the humiliation and insult of segregation in public buildings such as theatres and restaurants. African Canadians, believing the Canadian laws providing equality for all citizens also applied to them, agitated in the courts, organized into unions,
and resisted discrimination through community based struggles. Nonetheless, it was many years before any significant changes were implemented.

Perhaps one of the more dramatic examples of how Canada’s silent ‘Jim Crow’ laws were enforced and implemented by the white community occurred in Oakville, Ontario on 28 February 1930 when a black man, Ira Johnston, became engaged to marry a white woman, Isabella Jones. Miss Jones’ mother tried to prevent the marriage by applying to the police and the Oakville magistrate for legal intervention. When she learned that no law existed to prevent her daughter from marrying an African Canadian man, she wrote to the Ku Klux Klan\(^{40}\) for assistance. Miss Jones and Mr. Johnston had trouble finding a minister who would marry them and in February Miss Jones moved in with Mr. Johnston, still unmarried. The Klan kept watch and, when it was learned that Johnston had arranged with the pastor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church to conduct the marriage on March 2\(^{nd}\), the Klan proceeded with its first “direct action” in Canada on the night of February 28. On that night, about 75 Klansmen from different parts of Ontario traveled by to Oakville where they marched through the streets wearing white hooded uniforms. They burned a large cross in downtown Oakville in the presence of hundreds of spectators, and then went in pursuit of the offending couple.

The couple were found at about 11pm, playing cards at the home of Mr. Johnston’s aunt. Miss Jones was taken home and made to promise never to have any dealings with Ira

\(^{40}\)The Ku Klux Klan is a secret society that was founded in 1866 in Pulaski, Tennessee. The group was organized after African Americans began to actively participate in society during the Reformation years and their active participation in politics was having both a social and an economic impact on white landowners. The Klan sought to terrorize newly freed Blacks into subservience and submission through widespread assaults, lynchings, and murders. Klan violence became a prevalent force in Canada from the 1920’s. Currently, this secret society is alive in Canada. Over and above rituals of racial violence, Klan members also actively preach racial hatred and intolerance of non-white people as well as Catholic and Jewish people.
Johnston again. She was then taken to the Salvation Army hostel for safekeeping at the request of Mrs. Jones. The home of Ira Johnston was then surrounded by Klansmen and another cross was burned on the front lawn. When Ira’s mother explained that he was out in search of his fiancée, “the spokesman told me that if Ira, my son, was ever seen walking down the street with a white girl again the Klan would attend to him” (Toronto Daily Star, 1930. Also cited in Walker, 1997, 135-36). Apparently, members of the white community were quite pleased with the conduct of the Klan.

The following day Oakville Mayor A..B. Moat told the press: ‘Personally I think the Ku Klux Klan acted quite properly in the matter. The feeling in the town is generally against such a marriage. Everything was done in an orderly manner. It will be quite an object lesson.’ (Police) Chief Kerr, explaining why he did not arrest anyone, said ‘They used no force nor did they create a disturbance of any kind…. The conduct of the visitors was all that could be desired’ (Toronto Daily Star, 1930. Also cited in Walker, 1997, 135-36).

A minor degree of justice was served against the Klansmen only after agitation from the black community in Ontario. Finally, charges were laid against only four of the 75 Klansmen, only one of whom was found guilty of having his face “masked or blackened, or being otherwise disguised, by night, without lawful excuse” (Toronto Globe, 1930. Also cited in Walker, 1997, 135-136). He was fined $50.00. The couple continued to search for a minister who would marry them and were eventually married by Rev. Frank Burgess, the First Nations pastor of the United Church on the New Credit Six Nations reserve. When the Klan learned of the marriage a spokesman said the matter was now closed.

It wasn’t until after World War II, when the reality of what had occurred in Nazi Germany became public, that European Canadians became sufficiently embarrassed by signs in restaurants that read “No Coloureds” or “No Jews.” Racism and its partners of
political terror and genocide had been exposed as the political and moral territory of another white European nation that had recently been considered to be one of the "civilized". The horrors of the concentration camps had an impact on Canadian society. There now existed an abhorrence of racism and anything racist in the political and social climate of Canadian society. Finally, a few significant changes could be implemented as African Canadian groups were quick to capitalize on this new Canadian benevolence.

A significant occurrence in 1945, the same year that the Nova Scotia Association for the Advancement of Coloured People was founded, took place as the culmination of a long battle that had been occurring in Dresden, Ontario for over ten years. The issue was a racially restrictive property covenant that restricted African Canadians and Jews from buying land. Finally, a favourable ruling was received. These and other changes gave African Canadian activists hope, but some changes attempted through the Canadian Justice system were still too slow and the victories hard won. The struggles against Canadian racism changed with the times, became centred outside of the courts and moved away from organized sit-ins and specific, site-by-site struggles.

Gradually the direction of change became organized through coalitions rather than through legal avenues. The emphasis was toward the establishment of over-reaching changes in the constitution. Various other avenues of change began to be more actively pursued throughout Canada in the 1960s. In 1960, the Federal Bill of Rights refuted personal limitations by reasons of race, religion, or sex. In 1962 new immigration regulations began to dramatically change who was allowed into Canada. These new regulations made individual skills the chief criterion for admission and ended race or national origin as reasons for exclusion. In 1967 further regulations established a points
system whereby all who accumulated sufficient points were automatically admitted.


In spite of the activism of African Canadian and other communities, the national Canadian narrative throughout the 1970s identified racism as a recent phenomenon in Canada. A discourse continued to develop which attributed the settlement of Canada to two founding peoples, the French and English, and which denied the existence of a long-term, pioneering presence of African people in Canada—let alone the founding presence of First Nations. As the predominant national narrative on the subject of ethnicity was thought to belong to the two so-called founding peoples of Canada, French and English, the existence of Canadian slavery and Canada’s silent ‘Jim Crow’ were somehow pushed aside in favour of a more endearing self perception of Canadians’ assistance with the Underground Railroad.

By the late 1970s, the existence of racism could no longer be denied. Somewhat belatedly in 1975, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared in a Montreal speech that “racism is evident in this country and … violence is coming to our land” (Trudeau, 1975, cited in Walker, 1985). Demographics of the African Canadian population were also changing dramatically throughout the 1970s. By 1981 Census Canada recorded over
200,000 West Indians in Canada compared to 68,000 in 1971. Another 50,000 black people immigrated from Africa during the same period. The indigenous African Canadian community now made up less than 15 per cent of the total black population in Canada. African Canadians were widely understood to be newcomers from Africa and the West Indies who had immigrated to Canada after the recent changes in immigration policies. An influx of the Western Guard and the Ku Klux Klan had occurred and racist violence was now being widely publicised through media. Although several reports were filed containing investigations into conditions faced by “visible minorities” in Canada between the years of 1975-1984, no significant improvements were seen in the lives of African Canadians. Within these investigations it was found that the majority of white Canadians admitted to some degree of racial bias (Walker, 1985, 20). About one third reported that they might move if many black people moved into their neighbourhood. These attitudes, held by European Canadian toward African Canadians were not ahistorical, and reflected a pattern that had been occurring in relation to African immigration to Canada since Canada’s early history.
CHAPTER IV: THE EDUCATIONAL CONTEXT IN CANADA

4.1 Toward an Inclusive Education: Needs and Limitations

Many changes have occurred in education since the policy of Multiculturalism was
instated in 1971 and since the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 35 guaranteed
aboriginal rights and freedoms. Agitation from various African Canadian community
groups, along with other coalitions, has resulted in a proliferation of anti-racist workshop
materials. African Canadian lobby groups have also been “instrumental in pushing
Ministries of Education and school boards to move beyond the somewhat nebulous
philosophy of multiculturalism, and to invoke solid anti-racist initiatives in all areas of
education” (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 240). Anti-Racist Education units are now
established as a functional aspect of school boards across Canada.

Nevertheless, problems of access and inclusion persist. Alexander and Glaze stated
that “the most important changes...must be curricular” (1996, 240). However, “because
provinces set educational priorities, battles for black history modules and other cultural
initiatives are entirely localized” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xvii). In spite of a general
perception in Canada that “schools [are] more attuned to race” (Globe and Mail, July 10,
1995, cited in Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 238) than they were previous to the 1970’s and
1980’s, African Canadian activist Keren Braithwaite indicated that a list of 45
recommendations to address the issue of African Canadian education in schools drawn up
by the Consultative committee on the Education of Black Students in Toronto has more or
less sat “on the shelf” since 1988 (ibid., 238). In the face of such problems, African
Canadian university student Faith Holder described herself as being “beyond frustration”
as she perceived African Canadian youth are now "feeling more insecure at an earlier age" (Holder in Avis and Glaze, 1996, 238).

The Language Arts represent an opportunity for a more inclusive Canadian education as the "cornucopia of magnificent literature by black authors" (Lewis, 1992) could be easily included in the curriculum. Not only is a changed curriculum important for students of African descent, but these changes will be important for students who are not African Canadian. In spite of the many benefits that would be incurred through such initiatives, changes to Canadian curricula have been agonizingly slow. Findings in British Columbia are similar to those previously mentioned in the 1992 Report on Race Relations in Ontario (Lewis, 1992). Integrated Resource Packages, curricular materials for British Columbia which replaced the Year 2000 initiative published in 1996, for instance, figure the same texts, deemed "classics", that have been there for over 40 years. These texts, such as To Kill a Mockingbird or Sounder, in the Heat of the Night, "present images of quiet, suffering black folks who are reviled and persecuted by white folks, but also delivered by them" (Brown, 1997, 14). As Brown said, what is required are stories that represent African-Canadian people as "agents and people of courage" (ibid., 14).

A reality that exists for Canadian educators, however, is that discussions about racism and African Canadian history can present "uncomfortable" feelings for both educators and students. One problem is that these issues are emotional. Painful, conflicted emotions, expectations, and memories lurk beneath the surface of what is discussed. A tendency to avoid difficult issues is coupled with the fact that Canadian curricula is partial toward representing white Canadian narratives. This means that students may graduate without ever having learnt anything about African Canadian enslavement, displacement or many
other historical passages of Canadian racism. A result of this learned ignorance is that white learners usually have only limited knowledge about the history of racism or about various African Canadian communities, identities and backgrounds. The limitations of such an education are underscored by discussions of what are privileged narratives of history that “speak verbosely of [their] own silences [and] take great pains to relate in detail the things they do not say” (Foucault, 1980 in Britzman, 1993, 199).

4.2 Problems with Discussing Racism

Racism and African Canadian history are difficult topics to discuss without in some way re-perpetuating hurts of racism. Currently within education, African Canadian history and cultures are represented only in superficial terms—as a celebration of Black History Month or Day for the Elimination of Racism. This situation promotes “tolerance,” but does not address a fundamental change of the postmodern era that was discussed in Chapter 2—that the discourse of history is now made up of a number of “petits recits”. The meaningful inclusion of various “petits recits” of history represents one of the greatest challenges for educators within the context of a Multicultural student body. But without this change,

(m)any black students [will continue to] resist measuring themselves against the traditional values and goals of our public education systems because these systems do not, by and large, pertain to the ‘lived culture’ of these students. [In addition,] (i)n order for multiculturalism to work, all students must be given the opportunity to learn about the histories and cultures of races other than their own in formal academic settings (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 236).

Despite of the opportunity that exists to include African Canadian history and cultures through Language Arts, the inclusion of African Canadian literature is avoided. A problem that can be partly attributed to these avoidances is that white narratives dominate
Canadian students’ education. The result is a sort of miseducation. Part of the result of that miseducation is that white people are unlikely to be aware of how their privileged locations function, either socially, culturally or historically. This learned ignorance can cause serious problems for learners who can take their privileges for granted. The placement of white cultures at the centre and the assurance of only white peoples’ successes all appear as normative. White students then might feel assured by the way that “curriculum is designed unconsciously or not, to ensure white student success” (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 236). They may find the assurance in the many images of white success and even in the lack of information about the lived culture of African Canadian students or in the assurance that African Canadian students’ position is “outside the white norm” and therefore no threat to their own success. Hall (1981 in Britzman et al, 1993) described this as a learned ignorance that creates a series of “hidden narratives” in the anti-racist classroom. Hidden narratives can influence the dynamics of learning environments in unexpected ways. A discussion about racism and African Canadian history within this context can become highly charged emotionally as new information threatens to disrupt and dislodge what world views that are taken for granted. Anti-racist educators have sought to address these dynamics within learning environments, but their attempts have sometimes been structured around an assumption that such a discussion would be rational. Hall, for instance, contends that we are better off to know what the hidden narratives are so that these can be confronted directly.

Hall said that anti-racist educators need to open up the discussion. He said that educators need to expect that unexpected and uncomfortable issues will arise. He says there is a need to “connect with our students’ experience and can therefore be sure of
defusing" some of the issues that can surface. His perspective is "(t)hat experience has to surface in the classroom even if it's pretty horrendous to hear: better to hear it than not because what you don’t hear you can’t argue with" (Hall, 1981, 58-59 in Britzman, 1993, 195). Hall’s premise, that we are better to get it out in the open so we can deal with it, is problematic, however, because it is based in an assumption that racism can be discussed in a rational way. He does not adequately account for the factor that when racism toward African Canadians is discussed, African Canadian students are placed at a disadvantage. When what he calls the “racist time-bomb” goes off African Canadian students are the students who are made vulnerable. While bringing the racist time bomb to the surface in a deliberate way may be effective in terms of learning what these hidden narratives are, educators also need to account for the fact that learning environments are not closed systems. That is, learners may form relationships with their peers that continue over an extended period and to deliberately bring the racist time bomb to the surface might cause more harm than good.

4.3 Seeking Solutions: A Pedagogy for Painful Issues

Emotionally charged investments and unacknowledged privileges that condition learning environments may indicate that the subjects of racism and African Canadian history are better raised indirectly through literature or plays rather than by addressing how the issues figure in people’s lives. However, the problem of how to handle difficult emotions still arises. Even though stories by and about African Canadians may be rich historical resources and, as Sumara (1995) discussed, stories provide us with emotional triggers and links to significant memories, the tendency of both learners and educators is often to avoid emotions that arise. In seeking a solution to this problem, Sumara adopted
Natalie Goldberg’s idea of a “root thought,” and questioned what happens when a subject that is generally avoided surfaces in a learning environment.

Goldberg wrote about human life as a process through which we learn “to wake up before we die” (Goldberg, 1993, xiii). She describes her own process of awakening as a process of being mindful of unrooted thoughts that dart around on the surface of one’s consciousness. These are the thoughts that keep our minds busy, but do not allow us to drop more deeply into what Goldberg terms root thoughts. She said that by allowing root thoughts to surface we are able to gain understanding about the nature of life and harness that raw energy that comes from the bottom of the mind. In order to do that we must embrace the whole mind, be mind-full....Usually we use thoughts to try to get control of a situation, even the situation of our own mind. These are called second and third thoughts, thoughts on thoughts. We have a raw real root thought that comes from the bottom of our mind—‘I am going to die someday’—and instead of staying with that and feeling our fear or curiosity or whatever arises naturally, we grab that thought and try to choke it (Goldberg, 1993, 92).

In Sumara’s discussion of Goldberg, reading aloud is conveyed as a teaching tool where root thoughts are likely to surface, a tool that could be utilized to help learners gain insights about emotions in their everyday lives. He asks what it means when, while we are learning together with others, root thoughts surface and penetrate the busyness of our other thoughts. He is concerned with how educators might take advantage of such a situation when reading aloud.

While I am aware that Sumara’s specific strategy of reading aloud can be explored and discussed in depth, a discussion of teaching strategies is beyond the scope of this paper. What concerns me here is that whatever teaching strategy is employed, teachers could utilize the concept of root thoughts in terms of an exploration of students’ feelings
about privilege and inequality. Sumara pointed out a contradiction that educators will instead often focus upon an analysis of the structure of a text or an identification of literary terms rather than explore students’ root thoughts. Thoughts about our daily lives or personal issues are viewed by teachers and students as “uncomfortable” and “difficult” to discuss. Whereas the very function of literature may be “to open a door to our experiences that had not been there before; to help us learn to see differently; to make the familiar strange” (Sumara, 1995, 98), to provide us with an opportunity to discuss what is meaningful in our lives, this idea is sometimes resisted by educators who might adhere to more conventional means of education characterized by the direct “transmission” of knowledge from teacher to student (Miller and Sellar, 1990). As Sumara also noted, the power that privileges certain narratives over others is another factor that sometimes convinces educators or students that there is no room for a discussion about emotions. A commitment to the convention of neutral knowledge transmission can be a practical one for educators. Gay, lesbian and bi-sexual teachers, for example, may hide the emotions related to root thoughts for very practical reasons.

There is no room in the classroom for life that is infused with the kind of passion that goes along with having a body that expresses emotions. There is certainly no room for the disclosed experience of gays and lesbians in classrooms. And so, when they surface, without permission to do so, those emotions that arrive in tandem with root thoughts must be squelched, squeezed out, choked (Sumara, 1995, 103).

While Sumara suggests that a “fictive identity” is sometimes presented by gay, lesbian and bisexual teachers to avoid uncomfortable feelings and even job loss, African Canadian learners and teachers are often highly visible. Within Multicultural learning environments, African Canadian learners may be pressured to “know things” about their history or
cultures. In some classrooms at a university level, for example, I have seen white teachers inappropriately ask learners of colour or First Nations learners to lead discussions about racism, or, alternately, look to them for guidance and direction. Citing the infamous debate about what is “politically correct”, these teachers claimed they were “uncomfortable” taking control of the discussion. Further problems arise when learners feel silenced. Afraid to say “the wrong thing”, they may—as Hall pointed out—remain silent about their beliefs and opinions, an experience which can add to the environment of anger and hostility.

In “real life”, learning environments are messy and talking about our “root thoughts” may not be easy. For African Canadian learners at the “real life” school in Abbotsford mentioned in Chapter 1, the “blacking up” of students and the ensuing controversy might well have created a number of problems at school. While these students might have liked to remove themselves from the conflicts by presenting a “fictive identity” this option was probably not available to African Canadian students and teachers.

4.4 Listening Education

African Canadian students and teachers are made visible through a “racialized discourse [that] is continually fashioned through an ideology that suggests that black bodies can and must be abused, misused, regulated, disciplined and over-policed” (Walcott, Rinaldo, 1997, 39-40). For changes in this discourse to occur theorists and educators need to, as Fine says, work the hyphen. Mutual, long-term exchanges need to be formed between individuals and between communities—exchanges which resist hegemonic centres of racism. The Abbotsford example is what, unfortunately, often occurs in “real life.” While the educators involved in the Abbotsford incident, most of whom were white, may have perceived themselves to be open to the idea of anti-racist education and they
demonstrated a willingness to dialogue with African Canadian individuals and communities, the "blacking up" of students and the events that followed indicated their profound inability to do so. What is needed for these and other well-intentioned white people is a kind of education about how to listen.

The Abbotsford example is a good indication of what can sometimes occur when white people lack a truly complicated picture about African-Canadian history and cultures. Ultimately, an entire history of disappointment and injustice about which these white people remained ignorant is triggered. This contributed to the further alienation of the two "sides." African Canadian community groups are positioned at a disadvantage in terms of communicating their position to white teachers. The white teachers and principal uphold a shared narrative—the "common knowledge" narrative about Canadian history; an official story that developed in the context of oppression. The principal’s decision to "authenticate" characters by having them wear what he termed "ethnic make up" was clearly painful for African Canadian community groups and individuals because a painful history of blackface minstrelsy was referenced. The teachers and principal were incapable of acknowledging that pain because they had no analytic or historical frame of reference through which to understand the community groups’ shared position. In relation to the white principal and teachers, the African Canadian position existed as "highly devalued, within society’s rifts and margins" (McLaren, 1993, 205). Because of this, the African Canadian community members were met with hostility, indignation and defensiveness on the part of the educators from the school. The principal, perhaps a well-intentioned individual who was eager to separate himself from an identification as "racist", was unable
to find compassion for the angered voices that defined him as such. The end result was that the play continued.

4.5 Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack: Factoring in Learned Ignorance

Like it or not, learned ignorance is a factor of anti-racist discussions. At the same time, so too is the factor of racism—a form of epistemic violence stored and remembered in the body. It can therefore become difficult to direct learning experiences where racism is discussed. The Abbotsford example provides an illumination of how ignorance on the part of white people can be wounding for African Canadians. McIntosh (1989) discussed how white people who believe they support anti-racist initiatives, may at the same time be unwilling to admit their own culpability in supporting the dominant hegemonic centres of power. The “invisible knapsack” is a term used by McIntosh to describe the way in which white people may “operate from a base of unacknowledged privilege” (ibid., 10). The Abbotsford incident is but one example of this widespread problem that may be rooted in a Canadian education system where learners are not told “about displacement and the horrific treatment of indigenous peoples.” As Brown pointed out, “(s)tories that are told [about Canadian history] are stories of glorification, adventure, and fun” (Brown, 1997, 14).

McIntosh described her inability to understand how she was privileged as a white woman. She interrogated and criticized schooling practices which gave her no training to see herself “as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture” (McIntosh, 1989, 10). McIntosh discusses how she wanted to be a “good person” who was “helpful and supportive” in terms of anti-racism. However, while she had a moral belief of challenging racism, McIntosh saw her own life as “morally
neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal,” and so thought that when she worked “to benefit others, this [was] seen as work which will allow ‘them’ to be more like ‘us’” (ibid., 10). McIntosh discussed how this orientation toward change was differentiated from a deeper process that required her, as a white person, to develop a meaningful relationship to the resistance of hegemonic centres of oppression. In this way, she compared the development of this deepened understanding about herself as an oppressor as the process of unpacking an invisible knapsack.

Research is required to develop a way of learning that helps white people unpack the invisible knapsack. Learners need knowledge that challenges and undermines the powerful forces of both the official story of “Canadian history” and of the ideological badge of Multiculturalism that allows Canadians to wear cultural diversity as a value. These institutions will not be challenged and ignorance will not be “unlearned” by means of the rational discussion and round-table debate formats that characterize so many Canadian learning environments. Emotional issues such as racism are rarely discussed in a detached fashion. Those who remain at the hegemonic centre are also, as seen by the Abbotsford example, very likely to grasp defensively onto the position of being “right”41. Somewhere within Goldberg’s aforementioned concept of “root thoughts” and her suggestion that human life is a process through which we learn “to wake up before we die” (Goldberg, 1993, xiii) is an ideal that it is important to be mindful and to gain an understanding about the nature of life. We need to harness “that raw energy that comes from the bottom of the mind. In order to do that we must embrace the whole mind, be mind-full” (Goldberg, 1993).

41 For discussions about the internalized dominance of white people see Findlay, Barbara (1991) and Frye, Marilyn (1983).
1993, 92). Literature and plays can provide opportunities to explore root thoughts. African Canadian literature and plays can help learners develop a more complicated picture of African Canadian history and cultures. But more is required of educators in that white learners also need to be taught to "see differently". Again, learners need to see African Canadian stories as counter-narratives rather than reading these stories "against society's treasured stock of imperial or magisterial narratives" (McLaren, 1993, 205) and viewing them as "highly devalued, within society's rifts and margins" (ibid., 205).

4.6 Learning to See Differently: The Value of Empathy in Working the Hyphen

Educational models are required that will enhance white learners' abilities to unpack the "invisible knapsack" and therefore increase their capacities for the development of empathy, an important factor of meaningful relationships—particularly when those relationships evolved in the context of oppression. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis (1997) designed the research method of "portraiture", a method which demonstrates a model for listening that incorporates the value of empathy and that could be adapted by anti-racist educators. Portraitists place a high value on the emotion of empathy. Empathy is described as a position that procures a quality of a deep understanding as well as the self-reflective, self-analytic framework that enables an individual to connect her or his life experiences to others'. A position of empathy "not only requires an open-minded, generous stance, it also requires a knowledge base, a level of understanding, and a body of information from which...[to]...draw connections and contrasts to the [other person's] reality...." (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis, 1997, xvii). As the authors stated "the more self-analytic you are about your own [reality], the better you will be able to empathise" (ibid., xvii) with the reality of another.
The implication for anti-racist education is that if white learners are helped to become more self-analytic about their own position of privilege they would likely become more empathetic. Given that whites have acquired and amassed a degree of ignorance through what is essentially a Eurocentric education, learners require a knowledge base, a level of understanding, and a body of information about African Canadian history and cultures, information that is conveyed alongside the history and cultures of white people rather than as a celebration of African Canadian “difference”. That is, instead of one dominant narrative of history there should be a number of “petits recits” from which to draw connections and contrasts.

African Canadian literature can help provide teachers with a “jumping off point” for discussions about racism, African Canadian history and African Canadian cultures. What educators need to give students is not just knowledge and is not akin to therapy, but is “an education that is healing to the uninformed, unknowing spirit” (hooks, 1994, 19). Students want and need “knowledge that is meaningful. They rightfully expect that [teachers] will not offer them information without addressing the connection between what they are learning and their overall life experiences” (hooks, 1994, 19). The key to making changes in Canadian curricula is not only about ensuring students will have more information about African Canadian history—an important change that is required—but also that students need to be helped to articulate how their emotions about this history affect their lives and relationships. Education thus needs to account for the larger picture of the material relations of racism and help students work the hyphen.

Within the method of portraiture is a method of listening that can help students work the hyphen by enhancing what might be termed as their ability to engage in a subject-to-
subject as opposed to a self-Other encounter. Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis compare the process of seeing and listening that is required of portraiture to the way that Picasso saw when he painted the portrait, “Girl Before a Mirror”. Picasso saw and listened, not just to the surface image of a girl before a mirror, but he captured an essence of her likeness.

The girl looks in the mirror and does not see her likeness. Instead, she comes face to face with a more penetrating image – one that is both revelatory and disturbing. She does not see the literal portrayal that she expects, the smiling prettiness that she anticipates. Rather she perceives, in the refracted forms and surprising colors, a deeper, more authentic reflection of who she is. She sees, and reaches out to, her essence (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis, 1997, xvii).

Educators can help students see the ugliness of hanging on to the position of being “right”. Students can be taught to learn to listen and see in a way that is sensitive to how knowledge and perspective shapes and re-creates the shifting, multi-place of subjectivity. In this way, students can learn to look like Picasso’s “Girl Before a Mirror” looked, and learn to see “a deeper, more authentic reflection” (ibid., xvii) of who they are.
CHAPTER V: AFRICAN CANADIAN STORIES IN CANADIAN LANDSCAPES

5.1 A Primer of African Canadian Literature

History opens and closes.... I think we forget who we were. Nothing is changing, it is just that we are forgetting. All the centuries past may be one long sleep. We are either put to sleep or we choose to sleep. Nothing is changing, we are just forgetting. I am forgetting you, but it is work, forgetting (brand, 1999, 234-235).

To be both African and Canadian is to “dream in the haven of a hyphen” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xii). A sense of being at home can be thought of as remembering, of understanding one’s ancestral roots to be from a particular geographical location, but it is also linked with knowledge of one’s ancestral lineage and one’s social and cultural heritage. As Browning says, a sense of at home was ruptured for African Canadians when the “slavery system succeeded in shattering families by dividing and selling off African people’s family members, and suppressing our ancestors’ cultural practices, languages, and histories” (Browning, 1993). African Canadian writer dionne brand (1999) identified her characters’ senses of home as in-between places, the yearning for a connection to a place where the line of ancestry would be “constant, unchangeable” (brand, 1999, 246). The characters in At the Full and Change of the Moon often exhibit both a loss of and a longing for home as described by Eula in a “blue airmail letter” to her mother, the great-great-granddaughter of Marie-Ursule.

I would like one single line of ancestry, Mama. One line from you to me and farther back, but a line that I can trace. I don’t know why I thought that or ask you. One line like the one in your palm with all the places where something happened and is remembered. I would like one line full of people who have no reason to forget anything, or forgetting would not help them or matter because the line would be constant, unchangeable. A line that I can reach for in my brain when I feel off kilter. Something to pull me back. I want a village and a seashore and a rock out in the ocean and the certainty that when the moon is in full the sea will rise and for that whole time I will be watching what all of my ancestry have watched for, for all ages (ibid., 246-247).
George Elliott Clarke (1996, 1997a, 1997b), understanding that African Canadian literature has developed from out of "crisis," expanded what is meant by both literary and national boundaries and rendered the definition of who is considered African Canadian both complex and fluid. His position, that "exiles and refugees" have been the primary source for African Canadian literature and that this literature "has been, from its origins, the work of political exiles and native dissidents" (Clarke, 1996, 7)42 helped form a discourse about African Canadian literature that could be "conscious of the locality of national boundaries, but also the limitations of nation" (Walcott, 1997, 41).

This expanded understanding of what makes a writer African Canadian meant that many "lost" African Canadian writers could be recovered. African Canadian claims to historic and current literary figures now allow that certain early historic figures published works while residing in Canada as "fugitives"43. This meant that the discovery and identification of these texts was rendered extraordinarily difficult until more recently when Clarke’s bibliography (1997b), the most comprehensive scholarly work on the subject to date, identified numerous early works written in Canada but published in the United States. As Clarke writes, African Canadian texts are an “Ellisonian ‘ectoplasmic’ presence. One finds them only if one possesses an extraordinary degree of patience” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b, 108).

Among early African Canadian writers are included some women who broke traditional molds that constituted social boundaries for women of the day. In 1849 Mary Ann Shadd became the first African Canadian woman to publish a major text when she

wrote *Condition of Coloured People*, a pamphlet which was published in Wilmington, Delaware. In 1853 she later became Canada's first woman newspaper editor of the abolitionist paper the *Provincial Freeman* (see Sadlier, 1994). Ann Wallace may be Canada's first African Canadian poet with her poems “Hymn to the New Year” and “My Dreams” (Wallace, 1868, in Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b, 110). Significant early texts by African Canadian men included Peter A. Williams's *Discourse ... for the benefit of the Coloured Community of Wilberforce in Upper Canada*, which was published in New York City in 1830. Anti-slavery narratives such as Josiah Henson’s (1849) *Life of Josiah Henson, formerly a Slave, now an Inhabitant of Canada* also contribute to a significant portion of the body of literature. Henson’s narrative was cited as a source for Harriet Beecher Stowe’s (1852) well known *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Other ‘lost’ African Canadian writers include William Stowers, a novelist born in Canada West in 1861, and Theodore Henry Shackelford, a poet born in Ontario in 1888 (see Clarke, George Elliott, 1996, 7). The pattern of both immigration and emigration is also reflected in the lives of modern writers. For instance, Canada's first African Canadian published play was the work of francophone Franc Fouche who published a version of Sophocles’s *Oedipus Rex* in his native Haiti in 1958. In 1964, he also published a play in Créole, *Bouki nan pardi*, in his adopted home of Montréal. The first African Canadian play published in English, *The Captive*, was written by award winning playwright Trinidadian Canadian Lennox Brown and published in 1965 (noted in Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b, 110).

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43 This word was used in the United States to describe African Canadians who had escaped slavery.
In spite of this rich historical picture dating the earliest known publication to 1785\textsuperscript{44}, this field of study is only now becoming established and legitimized. Previously, the lack of substantive scholarship\textsuperscript{45} in this area combined with other elements which may have hindered the development of this field. Due to this lack of available information, the late Elliott, a pioneering African Canadian scholar, charged that “there is no real evidence of extensive literary writing by Blacks in Canada before the 1970s” (Elliott, 1988, 4). These problems were amplified in that “histories of this literature are non-existent and the extant bibliographies focus mainly on writings about rather than by African Canadians” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, 108). This ‘misplacement’ of African Canadian literary history has led to statements such as the one made by Lennox Brown, who asserted in 1972 that “there is no substantial Black culture in Canada,” and that “Black culture in Canada was born in the cradle of whiteness” (in Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xxi). Likewise, Nourbese Philip, while she agrees with George Elliott Clarke’s assertion of the existence of a current African Canadian literature, argues that Canada is “unique” in that, for African Canadian writers “there has been, until very recently, nothing to follow, join, or even resist.” This is said to be a result of “the fact that there was no tradition of writing which was in any way receptive to the African writer. The African Canadian literary tradition—if we may call it that—is presently being formed, or rather wrested out of the harsh and unfriendly literary culture of Canada…” (Nourbese Philip, 1997, 71-72). Even while Nourbese Philip agrees that Clarke “has done important work reclaiming the African


\textsuperscript{45} Scholarship within this field of study has developed a great deal since the early 1970s. The validation of African Canadian literature as a field of study has been enhanced by the works of two leading pioneers in the field who tackled the monumental task of compiling bibliographies. However, these are relatively recent developments. See, especially, Elliot (1986,1988) and George Elliot Clarke (1997b).
Canadian literary tradition work from non-traditional sources such as sermons” she also argues that “unlike the United States and England, Canada did not have a long established literary tradition established by African Canadian writers” (Nourbese Philip, 1997, 73). These statements erase centuries of indigenous African Canadian resistance to racism and ignore the fact that, due to the religious constitution of African Canadian cultures the progenitors of the literature “were mainly ministers. Indeed, they produced and propagated all the literature that mattered” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1991, 8). I am inclined to agree with Clarke’s assertion that “a literature is...what its authors wish it to be” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b, 109). Slavery and racism in North America has pressed a certain urgency upon these issues being addressed. Understandably, African Canadians have.

thought it more important to author slave narratives, histories, and to compile hymnals than to publish plays and poems. This feature of the canon must be investigated and theorized, not categorically dismissed....Even contemporary African-Canadian ‘creative’ writers utilize forms such as autobiography, history, anthologies, studies, and compilations of essays and interviews. Furthermore, we still know too little about early African Canadian writing to be able to assess it in any conclusive manner (ibid., 109).

As Clarke noted, the development of bibliographic material is essential for the validation of any relatively new field of scholarship and this “applies with equal force to the construction of any ‘neo’ literature, including that now termed African Canadian” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b, 108, his italics). Several elements have been noted to distinguish a body of literature as African Canadianootnote{These distinguishing characteristics of the literature have been derived by apriori African Canadian scholar George Elliott Clarke. See, in particular, 1997a and 1997b.}. Significantly, African Canadian literature mirrors wider Canadian identity patterns that are, in accordance with the
Canadian policy of Multiculturalism, based in an alignment with ethnic origin as opposed to a nationalized Canadian identity. The literature is thus understood to be significantly different than African-American literature in that the diversity within African Canadian identities “produces a palette of discourses” (Clarke, 1997b, xviii). But while the diversity of this body of literature may be a significant characteristic, commonalities between the works are noted as being rooted “in our history of forced relocation (the ‘Middle Passage’/ immigration), coerced labour (slavery and domestic/ agricultural worker schemes), the struggle against white-imposed economic discrimination (*de jure* and *de facto* segregation/ colonialism), and the articulation of cultural links to Africa” (ibid., xix).

As mentioned, the predominant literary theme in “Canadian literature” has been of whites’ survival in a barren wilderness. This theme is upheld by the tendency of some Canadians to equate African Canadian history with the history of the Underground Rail Road. As discussed, Canadians not only erased the existence of African Canadian history, but also compared themselves in glowing terms to the “American problems” of slavery and the existence of African American ghettos. Within this context it was difficult for African Canadian writing to be recognized as a body of work evolving out of a Canadian context. A result has been that African Canadian writers are forced to carry the burden of history as part of the larger African Canadian “struggle against erasure” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xviii). An offshoot of resistance to the systematic erasure of African Canadian history has been oft-recurring thematic references about a commitment to the politics of pan-Africanism and black nationalism within the literature. That is, these politics have been thought of as “ideologies [which] exert a necessary counter-influence to the
mainstream dream of Canada as a ‘white’ country…a fantasy which stigmatizes blackness” (Ibid., xix).

Given the sheer numbers of African American people living in the United States, combined with the way the history of slavery, anti-slavery and civil rights legislations, and the Civil Rights struggle figured in the American historical landscape, African Canadians were undoubtedly also influenced by African American politics and political figures. Major historical figures such as John Brown and Frederick Douglass, who played significant roles in the American anti-slavery movement, and historical figures from the American Civil Rights movement such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X are regularly referenced in African Canadian works. However, African Canadians had their own struggle for civil rights that existed concurrently in Canada. That is, African Canadians did not sit passively by while observing these American politics. That Canadian civil rights struggle is referenced in, for example, Lorena Gayle’s (2000) play about growing up in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Outremont in Montreal. Lawrence Hill (1997), in Any Known Blood, explicitly references historical figures and events in his fictional novel (Hill, 1997, 511-512). Historical figures and incidents are also implied throughout his story which displays a considerable degree of historical knowledge. One of his characters, Dr. Langston Cane the Fourth, for instance, could be understood as a reference to the historical Canadian civil rights activist, Dr. Howard McCurdy who was an important hero of the Canadian Civil Rights movement. Other historic incidents, such as the Ontario Fair Accommodations Practices Act in 1954 which forbade racial discrimination in places where the public was “customarily admitted” (Statutes of Ontario 1954 c.28, in Walker, 1997, 173) are referenced in Dr. Langston Cane the Fourth and his wife’s 1954 conflict
with a landlord who refused to admit them as renters on the basis of Dr. Cane’s skin colour.

The nature of my inquiry has imposed a focus upon the politics of African Canadian literature. However, critics of African Canadian works have also been described as having an “obsession with its politics” (Clarke, 1997a, xviii). This political component is not always evidenced in African Canadian works. For instance, in a humorous essay by George Elliott Clarke, Austin Clarke’s fiction was compared to Ian Fleming’s James Bond spy adventures. This uncanny comparison was made because of Austin Clarke’s displayed fondness for fine living and his propensity to portray women as merchandise (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997c). Rather than political, Austin Clarke’s immigrant characters are “either would-be or used-to-be aristocrats” (ibid., 111). The political component of Austin Clarke’s works, if any, would be found in the characters’ denied access to privilege due to Canadian racism. As noted by George Elliott Clarke, however, Austin Clarke “launches few polemical assaults on racism” (Clarke, 1997c). Thus, while many African Canadian writers maintain political themes, Austin Clarke, perhaps the most established African Canadian literary figure, employs no themes of pan-Africanism and black nationalism.

5.2 The Power of the Canadian Publishing Industry

African American scholar Gates, Jr. in Figures in Black, asserted that black literature “depicts a complex and ironic relation to [its] criticism: allegations of an absence [lead] directly to a presence [fostering] a literature often inextricably bound in dialogue with its potentially harshest critics” (Gates, Jr., 1989). African American scholar Harrison (1974) also referenced the way that thematic references about the “so-called black experience” such as poverty, while not problematic in themselves, “become troublesome...when
allowed to be focused through sociological imperatives that codify, thus freeze, our relationships to the known aspects of oppression…” (Harrison, 1974, 3-5). In relation to these theses, Canadian publishing houses, like their American counterparts, have tended to punish those African Canadian writers who stray from certain ‘allowable’ topics. Harrison’s allegations about how publishing houses treat African Americans applies with equal force to their African Canadian counterparts whose stories are treated “like a slice/hunk out of a stale pie”—the principal concern being “how to translate so much potent anguish into potent bucks” (ibid., 7).

In a country where it might be assumed that Multiculturalism would assure that all Canadian cultural products would be considered equally, the African Canadian writer’s relationship to the publishing industry stands in jarring contrast to an image of the Canadian artist on a singularly creative journey. The celebration and acceptance of African Canadian literature by publishing houses or agents is decidedly underwhelming—a factor that is said to be related to its “sale-ability.” The sale-ability of African Canadian literature is decided upon by relating how the audience and critics might perceive the work in question. In general, topics that are encouraged by publishing houses represent only a limited and highly stereotyped picture of what it means to be both African and Canadian. For example, the topics of poverty or nostalgia for a “foreign” African Caribbean culture, were suggested to Caribbean Canadian writer Harris when her short story was turned down by a publishing house on the grounds that it “wasn’t ethnographic enough” (Harris, 1997, 48). In an interview with Sanders and Mukherjee, Harris spoke of how she and other Caribbean Canadian writers are encouraged by Canadian publishing houses to represent a Canadian ideal of what is meant by an African Caribbean woman who is
thought to be “poor, black, and female” (ibid., 48). Adding to these stereotypes, Walcott (1997) discussed the propensity for critics to read African Canadian women’s work “in terms of the mammy tradition” (Walcott, 1997, 49). That is, critics tend to be highly critical of African Canadian women who display women’s anger in their stories, reflecting a stereotype that African Canadian women should be able to smooth things over.

The issues faced by African Canadian writers in relation to the publishing industry are amplified for those writers who are also part of a smaller, “invisibilized” communities. As Silvera (1991) said about her “thoughts on the invisibility of Afro-Caribbean lesbians,... [as] Afro-Caribbean women we are still at the stage where we have to imagine and discover our existence, past and present. As lesbians we are even more marginalized, less visible” (Silvera, 1991, 26). Likewise, African American writer Cheryl Clarke wrote of the difficulties inherent with regards to the in-between space that she enters into as a lesbian who is in “dialogue with the black literary community and the white feminist literary community who are willing, without irony to impose silence and invisibility on black lesbian writing” (Clarke, 1991, 174).

A major concern for the literature, its readers and its writers is that the publishing industry places limits upon what are termed acceptable and unacceptable themes within African Canadian literature. This is not to say that African Canadian writers have been willing to change and write in a manner that is acceptable to the Canadian publishing industry, but that authentication may come more quickly to “the author who diligently details black life in a manner receptive to white curiosity” (ibid., 7). On the contrary, African Canadian writer Talbot (1994) emphasized that “it’s important to write from your soul” (Talbot, 1994, 155). Likewise, Prince (1997), while she maintains that, as African
Canadian writers, "we need to be aware of where we are living and who we are" (1997, 6), asserts a need to write in a way that is authentic to her own imagination. This, as opposed to restricting the directions of her work because of a response to or in reaction to the stereotypes about African Canadian people. "I can't afford to write a story that doesn't have a criminal because the Toronto Sun has criminalized all black male youth, because there may be a story that requires one....Nothing I do can really come from a place where I am reacting to the dominant society" (Prince, 1997, 6).

5.3 Foreign versus Indigenous African Canadian

The priority that is given to the themes of nostalgia for 'foreign' cultures sets up tensions between indigenous and immigrant African Canadians "vis-à-vis resource allocations (arts and research grants) and appropriation of discourse" (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xxii). As Talbot (1994) said, the influx of immigration from the West Indies had a huge impact on the indigenous African Canadian community in that, due to a number of factors, African Canadians were "lost" in this influx of immigration. Nostalgia, according to the demands set by the publishing industry, was for foreign African Caribbean writers and writers from the African continent. In relation to these cultures, African Canadian culture appeared "diluted" and "what they had was in the church", an institution that had, by the 1970's, lost its allure in a political climate that preferred cultures that were more clearly linked to their African roots (Talbot, 1994, 169). This lack of interest in indigenous Canadian cultures, along with the erasure of African Canadian history, has complicated the act of writing for some indigenous African Canadians in terms of deciding "what's valid as writing" (ibid., 169). For instance, Talbot decided that it was important to write for people in her community, who, she said still don't know their
history. This may also account for part of the reason why many "indigenous African-
Canadian writers from Alberta, southern Ontario, and the East Coast have tended to craft
community histories, memoirs, and autobiographies" (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997b, 114).

The tendency for the Canadian publishing industry and critics to preference
"ethnographic" themes or nostalgic references to foreign cultures has further implications
for Canadian Multiculturalism. The thematic presence of foreign immigration after the
1970's does not impinge upon the dominant national narrative of Canada as a white settler
colony. In contrast, themes within indigenous African Canadian works have tended to
disrupt an image of Canadian "tolerance" and "benevolence" in comparison to the United
States. Walcott (1997) referred to a particular group of indigenous African Canadian
writers, notably George Elliott Clarke, Maxine Tynes, Carol Talbot, as having "continually
emphasized place and space in their work...in particular...‘indigenous black Canadian
space’" (Walcott, 1997, 41). Indigenous African Canadian writers who point out these
issues are either dismissed or given a half-hearted reception. Walcott put it another way,
saying that the reason why these writers’ works have not garnered national attention to
the degree that they deserve is that “their presence makes a lie out of too many national
myths (or raises too many questions) concerning the Canadian nation-state” (Walcott,
1997, 41). Walcott also suggested that the perverse inclination among Canadian publishing
houses for literature that does not disrupt the preferred image of Canadian history is what
causes “definitions of blackness” (ibid., 41) in Canada to be clustered around Caribbean
Canadians. This may also account for the opinions that reduce African Canadian literature
to a matter of ‘West Indian writers’ exploring “tensions between ‘have’ and ‘have-not’
nations, and the racial and cultural hostilities that are the residue of British colonialism, as
well as the problems faced by the visible immigrants in Canada” (Palmer and Raspovich, 1988 in Clarke, 1997b, 110).

5.4 African Canadians Writing Against Erasure

Certain indigenous African Canadian writers have admitted that their inspiration to write came out of the fact that there was very “little literature available about Black Canadian children” and, given that a strong need existed for young African Canadians to see their lives, histories and cultures reflected, these writers were inspired to create literature that would provide an identification for African Canadian youth. For example, Talbot was inspired to write Anne-Marie Weems with Ann Boyd in 1977 “because there wasn’t anything. When I was growing up in the ‘70s there was very, very little, and when I was going through my period of Black identity I realized there was nothing for young people” (Talbot, 1995, 159). To a certain degree, if art and literature are understood, as stated by African American writer Angelou, as “the survival of a people” (Angelou, 1991, 26), then the burden of carrying the history of a people has been placed on African Canadian writers, who have been ignored by the educational and literary establishment. While African Canadian writers should not be required to see themselves as educators and historians, the fact remains that “because African Canadian history is ignored in Canada, [they are often] forced to act as historians” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1997a, xx).

This discussion about how the Canadian publishing industry corners African Canadian writers leads to a question of whether much has changed for African Canadians as Canada has made its way into the 21st Century. The “struggle against erasure” still manifests as a common concern for both indigenous and immigrant African Canadian writers (Clarke, George Elliot, 1997a). Like indigenous African Canadians, immigrant African Canadian
writers have also placed an importance on the documentation of their communities’
histories. At times, anthologies of African Canadian works have admittedly been
assembled in reaction to complaints “about the scarcity of, and the need for, literary works
which could inform [Black] children on the cultural background and also the experience of
Blacks who had been born in Canada or who had come to Canada before them” (Elliott,
1985, 2 also in Clarke, George Elliott 1997a, xx).

African Canadian works are also often characterized by diverse rhetorical styles that
exist in African Canadian communities (Clarke, 1997a, 1997b and Walcott, 1997). Language and style of presentation have been understood in terms of their “importance to
both domination and resistance” (Walcott, 1997, 41). An importance is sometimes placed
upon using language that is authentic to a community. African Canadian writer Lillian
Allen (1995) describes how she writes in the language and style used by her community as
a political choice. She discussed how, within the Jamaican education system, it was made
very clear that her cultural and linguistic identification was associated with all that was
“bad.” English then, or its “proper” articulation was presented as the “right way to speak.”
This strategy of colonial education “was a deliberate attempt to degrade and destroy the
very essence of who we are” (1995, 254).

In Canada, a colonial construction presents what is conceived of as a standard of
literary style (see Hutcheon, 1989). Standardized review processes in publishing houses,
curricula and elsewhere define limitations of what is recognized as literature. For African
Canadian writers, the choice to write in a voice that is authentic to one’s community may
lead to a writer’s marginalization. This is evidenced with reference to Jamaican Canadian
writer Louise Bennet (Miss Lou) who was for an extended period not acknowledged as a
writer in Canada despite the fact that she lives in Canada and has been publishing since 1942. As Allen pointed out, Miss Lou wrote in her language of choice. As an artist who “lived in a society that relied heavily on spoken communication, she wrote in the language that most Jamaicans speak most of the time” (Allen, 1995, 255). In a similar way, Talbot pointed to the political implications of language choice, suggesting that “we might need to change our construct around what’s valid as writing. If we’re writing in the community, we’re speaking for people that don’t write. It’s sort of the white, patriarchal syndrome to say you have to get it published and receive critical acclaim” (Talbot, 1995, 178). If the purposes of a writer are to write “in the community” then perhaps the standards for what is valid as “literature” may need to reflect the purposes of the writer. In indigenous African Canadian communities that have historically placed a high value on orality, the work may be considered more valuable based upon its ability to be communicated aurally. From Talbot’s perspective, “a community is important. Often I’m invited to read in a community setting and it feels good because you’re interacting with people, community and they hear your words—it means something there. The work is valid as printed material, but it is also valid orally” (ibid., 178).

The categories “postmodern” or “post-colonial” are constructions that go against their involvement in “political struggles against dehumanizing isms” (Lutz, 1996, 74).47 Empire Writes Back, in spite of being considered the comprehensive text on post-colonial literary theory, was critiqued by Mishra and Hodge (1991) who question the basis upon which the text was written, the idea of a comprehensive post-colonial literary theory.

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47 Lutz makes reference to texts by dionne brand, Lee Maracle and Arun Mukherjee, among others, whom he describes as being involved in a political struggle.
Grounded in a political agenda of establishing the post-colonial as a discursive field, *Empire Writes Back* is thought to depoliticize the term post-colonial by replacing political insurgency and action by a “discursive radicalism” (278). Mishra and Hodge rightly argue that post-colonial power is not merely discursive but must also account for the Hegelian problematic of the centrality of action in retheorization of the history of class struggle. In a totalizing discourse, however, the post-colonial subject is defined into the category of a ‘counter-discourse’ and reduced to a “purely textual phenomenon, as if power is simply a matter of discourse and it is only through discourse that counter-claims might be made” (278). Mishra and Hodge also point out that a totalizing theory of postcoloniality is unstable because of the existence of ‘pre-english’ literatures. Such a theory cannot possibly take into account the complexity and diversity inherent within such a discourse. Mishra and Hodge indicate that a theory of post-colonial literature would require, instead, culture-specific, region-specific queries into struggles for self-determination as well as into the nature of colonialism.

### 5.5 Forms of Post-colonialism

As noted in Chapter 2, a precise definition of the term post-colonialism is difficult and a totalizing discourse of post-colonialism is undesirable. However, further exploration of this term and how it can be used to discuss post-colonialism as a multiplicity of perspectives is necessary in this discussion of African Canadian literature as post-colonial. Presented with the unenviable task of defining the term, Mishra and Hodge (1991) identified three forms of post-colonialism. Postcolonialism (without the hyphen) refers to

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48 Mishra and Hodge utilize the term ‘pre-english literature’ to reference Indian Hindu texts and other literature that pre-dates the primacy of English literature. The existence of this ‘oppositional postcolonial’ literature is evidence...
the “tendency in any literature of subjugation marked by a systematic process of cultural domination through the imposition of imperial structures of power” (ibid., 284).

“Oppositional post-colonialism” corresponds with the *Oxford English Dictionary* definition. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a hyphen is used to indicate post-colonialism as a historical stage which followed colonization. At the heart of this definition are three defining elements—racism, a second language, and a political struggle. The third definition of postcolonialism, shares a commonality with Lyotard’s (1993) “unhyphenated postmodernism”. This third definition is described as “complicit postcolonialism...an always present ‘underside’ within colonization itself” (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 284).

Expanding upon these three definitions, Mishra and Hodge identified a fourth, “oppositional postcolonialism” as the theoretical position that seeks to address material struggle against racism and that requires a materialist theory of post-colonialism to indicate different levels of privilege. Mishra and Hodge’s “oppositional postcolonialism” is meant to reference a body of literature in colonial India that pre-dates the discourses of both postcolonialism and postmodernism, as well as the assumed primacy of English of an ideological orientation which resists colonization, but which existed prior to colonization. Thus, postcolonialism is viewed as an ideological orientation rather than as a historical stage.

49 I draw a distinction from the position presented by Mishra and Hodge, who opposed the existence of post-colonialism within a settler country such as Canada. While I agree with Mishra and Hodge that such a definition should not be put forth unproblematically, as in Linda Hutcheon’s (1989) discussions of post-colonial settler societies which failed to make adequate reference to the material and lived relations of racism, I disagree with their lack of admonishment of a post-colonial theory of Canadian diasporic literatures. The cultural colonization referred to by Hutcheon should, however, be distinguished from the term “colonization” as it is used in this paper. Mishra and Hodge identify three issues at the heart of “oppositional post-colonialism” which would differentiate it from the “post-colonialism” of white settler colonies: racism, second language, and political struggle. Otherwise, they say that it is “complicit post-colonialism” and, therefore, effectively postmodern. They argue that a pantextual bias exists, identified as a subversion of the term post-colonial, when post-colonialism is represented in non-political, non-racial terms and applied to literary tendencies of “white ethnicities” within the canon rather than specifying post-colonial material relations of difference. While I agree with Mishra and Hodge’s argument that problematizes the discussion of post-colonialism with reference to white settler colonies, Mishra and Hodge do not discuss how the use of this term can work with reference the presence of a diasporic community that may exist within the settler colony.
literature. In claiming 'pre-english' literatures as part of this oppositional discourse, they make explicit reference to Hindi texts which are viewed as having ideological orientations that resist colonization. However, I extend this definition to include early African Canadian texts. These early African Canadian texts are spiritual, political, and anti-slavery texts that effectively present a counter "oppositional postcolonial" discourse to the primacy of English literature, colonialism and imperialism.

Mishra and Hodge’s definition of oppositional postcolonialism can be used in reference to material relations of racism toward African Canadians. As mentioned, the standardization of English literature or Canadian literary standards informs and influences the choices available to many African Canadian writers. Indeed, the ‘choice’ to live in Canada can be seen as a choice that is influenced by the “expropriation of land elsewhere” (Walcott, 1997, 40). African Canadian writing, then, is representative of the three fundamental principles at the heart of the oppositional post-colonial: racism, a second language, and a political struggle. Mishra and Hodge’s unhyphenated postcoloniality, described as a “ghost that stalks the parent literary history” (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 288) is a descriptor that can be applied with reference to way that stories by and about African Canadians “stalk” the “parent” Canadian literary history.

Difference is recognized but contained within a single pattern, the coexistence of two kinds of relationship to the language and culture of the centre: ‘abrogation’ or refusal, and ‘appropriation’. The latter gathers under a single term a large and diverse set of strategies involving both accommodation and compromise, whose political meaning is highly dependent on specific historical circumstances (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 278).
5.6 An ‘Inextricable Relationship’ with the Harshest Critics

If stories by and about African Canadians are viewed as oppositional postcolonialism, it is possible to view the narrative mediated through the European bourgeois novel as “an available discourse to the postcolonial writer” (Mishra and Hodge, 1991, 281), a philosophical apparatus that implicitly questions “the representation of history to the extent that any counter-historical move must begin with a reading of the capacities of the novelistic genre itself” (ibid., 280). The oppositional post-colonial writer can be understood to enact her or his own subjectivity through narratives. In this way, the author’s political choices and struggle over how to communicate a story to an audience can become confused when realizing that “the artist may only be aware of who her audience is not” (Nourbese Philip, 1992, 28). This “inextricable relationship between African Canadian writers and their harshest critics” (Gates Jr., 1989) may be understood through Hildebrandt’s (1999) critique of Odhiambo’s (1998) diss/ed banded nation.

Hildebrant seems to have understood the way that abuse in Anna’s past rendered Anna, a secondary character, “unable to trust any man” (Hildebrandt, 1999, 20). However, in articulating her critical response to the main character Benedict, an immigrant from Kenya who survived the British boarding school system, she views Benedict as “a mystery” in that he “suffered no lasting emotional scars from his school traumas” (ibid., 20).

Hildebrant suggests that Odhiambo “failed” to “show how and why Benedict ends up in urban poverty, his visa expired, fearful of deportation” (ibid., 20). A close examination of the critique indicates that Hildebrant is carrying an invisible knapsack in that she fails to understand how Benedict’s responses to the world are, in part, articulated out of his survival of racism. Hildebrant’s summation of Benedict’s character, “a portrait of a loser,
someone so unsatisfied with himself that crime is preferable to old-fashioned, honourable work” (ibid., 20), may be the response of someone who has failed to see deeply into the nature of racism and how this operates to confer privileges upon white people. When Hildebrant’s knapsack is emptied, it might be easier for her to see that Benedict’s experiences of racism have affected the way he interprets his own six dollar per hour wage as this contrasts to the opulent lifestyle of his white employer.

In Hildebrant’s eyes, *diss/ed banded nation* was a window for “readers with middle-class attitudes” into “how people can live in the most squalid parts of the cities” (Hildebrant, 1999, 19). Her misreadings of the text reflect the perspective of someone who carries the ideological badge of Multiculturalism. That is, she is someone who values cultural diversity, but who continues unaware of the invisible knapsack she carries. It seems that Hildebrant, like McIntosh, was taught to see her own way of life not only as a lifestyle that is achievable to those who work hard, but also as being “morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal” (McIntosh, 1989, 10). The fact that Benedict was even hired by his wealthy, white boss for minimum wage should have thus been seen by Benedict as his white employer’s attempt to “work to benefit” him as an African Canadian, work that could “allow ‘them’ to be more like ‘us’” (McIntosh, 1989, 10).

This example clarifies how for some African Canadians the choices about how to present one’s work to an audience can determine whether the work will be accepted and understood by one’s community of origin or be embraced and understood by a wider Canadian audience. While for some writers like Talbot (1995) the need “to change our construct around what’s valid as writing” (Talbot, 1995, 178) may be clearly distinguished, the dilemma about whether to write in the community is quite often a
complex choice for African Canadian artists and the idea of community may also be renegotiated. Grappling with this internal dilemma, Nourbese Philip (1992) conveyed how this choice may be based in various concerns over economics, emotional and psychic satisfaction, and political concerns. She describes how the sense of writing to a community can be difficult for some artists, "particularly in today's world where any sense of continuity and community seems difficult to develop" (Nourbese Philip, 1992, 28).

5.7 Offering African Canadian Stories as Education

The idea that "imaginative works" by African Canadian writers can "offer more complex and specific constructions of [African Canadian] multiple historical experiences than other cultural forms" (Walcott, 1997, 41-42) is not new. For instance, in brand's (1999) In Another Place, Not Here the African Canadian presence in the streets of Toronto has been understood as an articulation which signalled "defiance, survival, and renewal" (Walcott, 1997, 40). In naming an African Canadian presence in the streets of Toronto, brand reclaims those streets as her own "and so redraws boundaries of knowing, experience and belonging" (ibid., 40). At the same time, brand's work "offers no orthodoxies on blackness. Instead her marxist, feminist, lesbian voice and political insights are the basis from which she articulates critiques of patriarchal and essentialist notions of blackness, as well as of racism, patriarchy and class exploitation in Canada" (Walcott, 1997, 40). Other African Canadian writers of fiction have asserted implicit critiques of predominant Canadian Literary themes. The thematic presence of both African Canadian and First Nations as central figures in a landscape where whites do not figure significantly is a critique employed in David Nandi Odhiambo's (1998) diss/ed banded nation, a work
that turns the canon back on itself presenting a “post-colonial counter-Conrad with a serious jazz jones” (Sandborn, 1999).

Plays by various African Canadian writers have responded to the violence and racism in Canadian history in a way that helped generate new understandings, identities, and new imagined communities. For instance, George Elliot Clarke’s (1999) play, Beatrice Chancy, has been said to shout and insist, “by way of its violent events and high-keyed language” that the atrocities of slavery in the Maritimes, “which ended officially in 1834, be written into the historical record” (Compton, 1999, 20). Beatrice Chancy can be perceived as an act of resistance to the erasure of the Canadian history of slavery in that the play “alludes to various incidents in Nova Scotia history such as the rape of the young black woman, Lydia Jackson, by her master and the sale of another woman, Mary Postill, for a few pounds of potatoes, events not mentioned in most history texts” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1999, 8).

Stories by and about African Canadians could also be understood as a useful means through which to open up discussions about significant eras in African Canadian history. Rather than learning about the history of the practice of slavery in Canada prior to its abolition in all British colonies in 1834 through a Canadian Heritage Moment sponsored by the C.R. Bronfman Foundation50, learners would probably better be educated by the stories told by those Canadians whose line of ancestry to Africa was “disrupted by a ship and ruptured by chains” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1999, 8). In Beatrice Chancy the historically realistic, poignant dialogue could serve as a means through which educators

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50 In 1993 the C.R. Bronfman Foundation presented a televised, one minute illustration of 19th century Underground Rail Road which portrayed white Canadians delivering a grateful black fugitive to freedom in Canada.
might open up discussion about an historical era. In a sense, stories told by and about African Canadians are a way to bring the reality of certain ideas home to learners in a way that a “Heritage Moment” cannot. For instance, the justification of a ‘massa’ for his natural position of ownership of his slaves is written into Beatrice Chancy. “What is whiteness without blackness? How can we be beautiful, free,/ Virtuous, holy, pure,

chosen./ If slaves be not our opposites?...Nature is slavery. We’re through slaves./ We hunger, thirst, sleep, wake, gray, paalsy, die,/ And have no vote in the business./ We are born, mewling, against our wills” (Clarke, George Elliott, 1999, 26). The slaveholder’s views about the “natural” act of slavery and the corruption of his Christian views explored through the rape of his daughter, Beatrice, fathered with a woman he enslaved. Rather than be raped by her father Beatrice begs him for pity: “Have pity, father. Murder me instead” (ibid., 86). But in response her father quotes his views of nature and his obscured versions of the Holy scripture: “Half-black Negress, scented slave of Nature: Easter demands such small sacrifices” (ibid., 86).

The stories of African Canadian women are an important aspect of the dialogue of African Canadian writers. The soon to be published play, Angelique, by Gayle (2000) a work that came about as the result of the author’s research into the history of Marie-Joseph Angelique, could, along with Beatrice Chancy, be utilized as a way for teachers to open up a dialogue about the history of slavery in Canada. However, classroom discussions should not be limited by what have been classed as “literary” works. As Browning (1993) essentially said, equally important aspects of African Canadian histories are implied in the lives of women. An aural history project that involved various elders from Browning’s home community in Amherstburg, Ontario, was later described by
Browning (1997) as an important “part of the history of the area that has not been acknowledged. It’s just been seen as work women do, when in fact many men and women wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for women like my aunt Edna” (Browning, 1997, 13).

dionne brand’s prose has been described as refiguring “the actual, literary and figurative landscapes of Canada, and so redraw[ing] boundaries of knowing, experience and belonging” (Walcott, 1997, 40). brand’s (1999) *At the Full and Change of the Moon* could provide a jumping off point for educators to discuss how history has affected the migrations and lineages of various African Canadian communities. As the result of racism, poverty, and slavery, the characters in *At the Full and Change of the Moon* lack tangible knowledge about and connection to their family’s roots. References are made throughout the novel to the loss of a connection to place and family. Also permeating the novel is a reference to the significance of an ancestral lineage, and an implied sense of how the characters’ lives and personalities are imbued with the characteristics of their ancestors. Their identification with each other ends at a relationship to a single, original ancestor, Marie Ursule, a factor that is made known through omniscient narration to the reader and not always to the characters. Yet parallels between their lives hint at the transcendental spiritual tendencies of the soul to imitate aspects or characteristics of one’s ancestors.

The post-slavery era in Canada is a topic that will enter into any important discussion centred around indigenous African Canadians. As mentioned, the “Heritage Moment” highlights Canada’s role in helping African Americans to freedom in Canada. *Ann-Marie Weems: Fugitive Girl of Fifteen* (Talbot and Boyd 1977) however, tells the story from a different perspective. Talbot and Boyd tell the story of a fugitive slave who was born in Maryland in 1853. Meant for young audiences, the book was written in the form of a
comic strip and tells the story of her insistence on escape from slavery, her insistence upon freedom, and the arduous journey to Canada. Catering to a different age group, Lawrence Hill's *Any Known Blood* could also provide a window into this era and help to bring alive the momentous courage that was required for an individual to escape slavery in American South.

I ran as I've never run before. Up one street, down another, across a yard, over a fence, and inside someone's door....I hid on the Quaker's property for a week. Much of that time, I was sequestered outside the house, near the barn, in a hidden crawl space the size of a coffin.... It was inspected three times by a local sheriff. The Quaker had no choice but to hide me underground. I coughed terribly. I had dust and dirt in my mouth, my eyes, my ears, my rectum. I was filthy everywhere (Hill, Lawrence, 1997, 442).

Other important works about indigenous African Canadian history document acts of extreme courage that were required of African Canadians to overcome racism and oppression in the Twentieth Century. For instance, playwright Adeena Sumpter-Frietag, in a one woman play called *Stay Black and Die*, relates the courage required of her mother in Nova Scotia when she was caught in the razing of Africville. Further, Sumpter-Frietag's play brings out her intricate thoughts and feelings about growing up African Canadian in the 1950s in Winnipeg's North End.

In discussing African Canadian writing in terms of its politics I run the risk of being classified among those who are "distinguished by their fixation on [the literature's] politics" (Clarke, 1997, xvi). However, the purposes of expanding understanding about the ideology of Multiculturalism the Canadian anti-racism dialogue requires that I view the writing as an oppositional postcolonial discourse. In order to expand the ideas contained within the previous chapters for educators, I have shown that various writers could be read as a way of expanding anti-racist dialogue. Fiction can provide a vehicle through
which to describe Canadian racism in a way that is complicated, a way that provides insight into how the “missing pages” of history went missing. Stories can evoke meanings and metaphors for power in a way that essays cannot. Metaphors that are evoked by Beatrice, who describes the experience of being raped by her father, the slave owner:

His eyes writhe lice-like upon me.
I am impure. I am unclean.
He pestled me against the dismayed pew,
Raped my dress so the eyes juped:
Roaches rattling the floor; his breath gnashed.
After, I wiped blood from the pew.
He’s crafted a world where words must sound
Steel skirmishing with steel (ibid., 97-98).
CHAPTER VI: SHANKS: THE ENACTED DIALOGUE

6.1 Stories, Memories, and Understanding

As discussed throughout the preceding chapters, misconceptions about African Canadian identity continue to play out metaphorically and symbolically in Canadian landscapes. The Multicultural concept of an African Canadian Other is one of an exotic Other whose food is desirable inasmuch as it is available to be snacked upon and whose customs are alternately observed, analyzed or dissected. Elsewhere, Coco Fusco (1999) described this as the existence of “curated cultures”, cultures whose art is represented in museums not as the work of individual artists such as Picasso or Rembrant, but as anonymous cultural artifacts. Throughout this paper I sought to hold a mirror up through which Canadian Multiculturalism could view itself. The following scene from Shanks can be understood as one point along a continuum of questions. Like portraitists Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman-Davis (1997), the portrait I paint is also “not a complete and full representation [of reality], but rather the selection of some aspect of—or angle on—reality that would transform our vision of the whole” (1997, 5).

Writing dialogue, for myself at least, is more closely tied with emotional knowledge than is an academic paper. Following the suggestions made by First Nations artist Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, that one should write, “not just for your academic community, not just for the art elite, but for a broader audience” (Smith, Jaune, 1992), the performance element of this text suggests the influence of this challenge. This play is capable of reaching (and already has reached) audiences outside of the academy. As I said in Chapter 1, however, I am not African Canadian and therefore the enclosed excerpt from my play, Shanks, does not represent an African Canadian story. As mentioned previously, McLaren
(1993) said that “translating an experience into a story is perhaps the most fundamental act of human understanding” (McLaren, Peter, 1993, 206). Perhaps what I did, then, is to translate an experience of doing research into a story as a way to understand it. I wove three strands of “data” together in a braid that suggests an interrelationship between the past, represented in influences of African Canadian history, the present, characterized by the depth of the relationship between Armand and Ricolla, and the future that is represented through the characters’ artistic vision.

Finally, I wrote a creative story as a method of discovery and analysis, and as a way to write up research. Connelly and Clandinin (1991) pointed out the problem that readers will try to freeze a written narrative in a fixed time frame, particularly because once a work has been published it tends to appear complete or definitive. I hoped a text that is meant to be enacted would complicate such presumptions. However, writing a creative narrative imposed other challenges. For example, when the scene was performed in Ottawa, some audience members thought the play represented an aspect of my life. The characters’ identities were, at least for some people, “assigned” to myself and the other actor. In this way, the writing was perhaps also thought to be “easy”, to come “naturally”, and to not be as rigorous as academic writing. While autobiographical elements cannot be arbitrarily separated from fictional or researched ones, the play does not represent an aspect of my life. In fact, the creative text took more effort than an academic paper of the same length and also required similar elements of rigorous research and re-writing.

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51 Connelly and Clandinin (1991) were referencing the problem of readers freezing texts in narrative inquiry.
6.2 Introduction to the Scene

The play explores the lives of two dancers, Armand and Ricolla, who meet at the University of Waterloo Fine Arts department in 1989 and marry two years later. Upon graduating in 1993 they move to Vancouver and form a small dance company in order to develop opportunities to perform their own choreography. A period of struggle ensues before they achieve a relative measure of success. They eventually receive a series of grants and are given a studio space in which to rehearse. Subsequently, they are invited to perform at a prestigious festival of modern dance in Ottawa. The couple used this change in their fortune to reprise a rendition of choreographer George Balanchine’s “Agon” (1957)—the first ballet where an African American man, Arthur Mitchell, dances with a white woman, Diana Adams.

The enclosed script enacts an event that took place several days after Armand and Ricolla’s performance in Ottawa. The couple has returned to Vancouver and, being obligated through the receipt of a Canada Council grant, is faced with the task of developing a new répertoire for their company. Armand, however, is suffering from cancer, an illness which has slowly deteriorated his health. The cancer in Armand’s body serves as a mnemonic device to remind the audience of how the malignant presence of racism erodes and incapacitates the moral and institutional fabric of society. Both Armand and Ricolla are somewhat incapacitated by the cancer and, like the chilly reception of the political themes in their Balanchine dance, it slows the progress of their lives and forces them to face obstacles that are part of their healing process.

Armand is frustrated by Canadian audiences’ lack of perspective about how the legacy of influence from his African Canadian and African American heritage affects and
informs the vocabulary of modern dance. He is consistently reminded of how this legacy isn’t recognized by Canadian critics and audiences who view his dance works with reference to a Eurocentric narrative of dance history. Armand and Ricolla decide to explore how various dance forms or “signatures” of movement can be traced to people of African heritage and to explore, through a movement narrative, the way these forms have influenced modern dance. This direction functions as both a way of healing from the impacts of the reception to their work, a reception that reperpetuates the hurts of racism, and as a way of educating Canadian audiences about historical and cultural influences that are “Canadian”, but are repeatedly brushed aside in favour of other influences.

The history of modern dance and American ballet is said to have roots in European avant-garde performance history. However, the African inspired influences upon dance forms are not well understood by many dance scholars. Modern dance movement vocabularies are divided into movement styles categorized as having different languages of technique. Certain “signature” movements are associated with the name of the dancer after which each technique is named. For instance, the pelvic contraction is considered to be a signature statement of Martha Graham, founder of what has come to be known as the “Graham technique”. Similarly, the “Horton technique” is recognized through the tendency of the choreography toward the creation of firm vertical and horizontal lines with the body. The influences of artists from “curated cultures”, however, are rarely if ever associated with prominent individual artists. There is some recognition of the influences of Asian dance forms, but again, when these influences are incorporated into North American movement language they are rarely signatured as belonging to a particular person.
The influences of African dance forms are apparent in North American dance works. "Barefoot dancers reifying contact with the earth, touching it, rolling or lying on it, giving in to it..." (Gottschild, 1996, 49) are some examples of African Canadian and African American influences. In spite of these influences from cultures that have clearly interacted with and existed alongside European cultures for centuries they are not widely recognized by modern dancers or dance audiences. African American dance scholar Gottschild argues that the inevitable conclusion of these cultures living side-by-side is that "modern and postmodern dance received...wisdom from Africanist-inspired American vernacular and pop culture" (ibid., 49). She noticed that, while modern dance is recognized as having roots in European avant-garde performance, this language of movement "had no coordinates in European concert or folk dance traditions" whereas these "traits live in African and African American dance forms" (Gottschild, 1996, 46). As yet, there is little scholarship about the influences of African Canadian dance forms. However, a few dance scholars and dance critics have successfully drawn links between what are considered to be European origins of modern dance and those African American dance forms that are now recognized modern dance "parents". Gottschild's (1996) perspective of modern dance history, for example, challenges a dominant hegemonic narrative that presents European dance history at the centre. She suggested that "the legendary pelvic contraction coined as the signature statement in Graham's movement vocabulary" (Gottschild, 1996, 49) has its coordinate, not in European folk tradition, but in African dance forms. Even Martha Graham herself identified the influences of what she termed a "primitive source, dangerous and hard to handle in the arts, but of intense psychic significance"—that source, as she said, was "the Indian and the Negro" (Graham, 1930, in Gottschild, 1996, 46).
Ricolla and Armand enter the dance studio. Both are dressed in dance clothes and carry large bags. Armand holds a newspaper which he reads as he walks. Ricolla walks just ahead of him. She is enjoying some music on her Walkman and balancing two coffees.

While Armand reads aloud, Ricolla puts down her bag and the two coffees and takes off her Walkman. She grabs the newspaper from Armand. Thrown off balance, Armand drops his bag, but he is taller and so holds the paper out of her reach and continues to read from it. Ricolla struggles for it but gives up.

Armand: (speaking in an angry voice) I’m so sick of this. Listen “...his athleticism provides an appealing contrast to Miss Slaughter’s classical training...” I can’t believe this guy. “His intuitive gift for movement and rhythm...undulating, natural movements that are reminiscent of his African ancestry....” Look.

Ricolla: Aahhh...! (frustrated from being unable to reach the review) Armand! That’s what you get with a Jim Sloane review. It’s trash. You shouldn’t be reading that...right before rehearsal.

Ricolla picks up her coffee, stirs it and pulls a water bottle from her bag. Both Armand and Ricolla sit on the floor. Armand, forgetting about his coffee, leans up against a wall. Ricolla stretches while drinking her beverages.

Ricolla: (again) You know that guy’s an idiot. Look how he reviewed Jack’s piece. What was that he said. Oh. “I sat down ready to hear another angry black male voice”.... When you looked at that review you thought it was crap.

Armand: I know. Listen. “Garneau’s splayed black figure seems to dominate Slaughter’s ethereal presence....” Did he get anything about what we were saying?

Ricolla: (Becoming frustrated, she raises her voice and looks away.) You know, Armand...this doesn’t help. Do you want to get any work done today?

Armand puts down the paper, reaches for his coffee, but changes his mind and starts to stretch out his neck, torso and arms.

Ricolla: (again) Do you think you can just focus?

Armand: Look, Ricolla. We can throw this thing out. (Armand crumples it and throws it toward the garbage.) I have no problem with that. I can throw it out right now, but
don’t expect me not to think about it. People listen to this Sloane guy. He has a weekly column!

Ricolla: (softens) I know, I know. It’s disturbing. People might listen to that sort of—

Armand: Not might. They do.

Pause while Ricolla flips on the CD player and continues to stretch. M’shell Ndegéocello’s, Bitter starts playing. She looks back toward Armand.

Ricolla: I don’t like it either, sweetie. You know I don’t like it any more than you do. I’m just saying...I think it’s a really extreme review. I don’t want to let it into our heads. We’ve got to put that stuff aside somehow and get started on our piece today.

Armand: Work. I can’t work with this shit bouncing around in my head. After all the bastard may have a point.

Ricolla: (exasperated) Armand!

Armand: No, I’m serious.

Ricolla: You can’t be. “His natural movement is reminiscent of his African ancestry.” Come on, Armand, let it go.

Armand: This reviewer, this guy—if he is an idiot, whatever that means...even if he just wants to show the world he knows something or he’s all puffed up...or whatever, he can’t be the only one with these opinions. What about that guy we talked to last week after the show, or the audience in Ottawa we performed for last week. They seem to be saying the same kinds of things.

Ricolla: We still have to dance.

Armand: You’re not really taking me seriously, Ricolla.

Ricolla: We’re not dancing for those people. I want to do this. For us. (Pause). Besides, some people do—respect our work. You just need to be more positive. Notice the good things that happen for us.

Armand: Fuck, ya.

Ricolla: (she takes a deep breath) You know, we have three days to get this up on its feet. Three days.

Armand stews in silence while looking through the CDs.
Ricolla: (again) I need to wake up (she jumps up and takes some loud deep yoga breaths. She looks in her bag, puzzled for an instant, until she finds her aromatherapy spray). Mmmm…..Ahhhhhh…I love this smell. You should try this deep breathing you know. (She is deep breathing while she sprays the aromatherapy around the room and then sprays some into her face and then Armand’s face). This is “Rejuvenation.”

Armand: Hey! (surprised at the intrusion of the aromatherapy spray). (Pause). Where’s the Angie Stone?

Ricolla: It’s in there. (Pause while Ricolla rubs her legs and arms, runs across the floor and jumps up and down to get warm. She stretches out her legs and torso) You know my upper ham is still bugging me. It’s been that way ever since I took Andrea’s class. You know how she never warms us up? (rubs the pain in her upper hamstring).

Armand: (joking) You’re getting old, baby.

Ricolla looks up to Armand from her floor stretch. She quickly pulls her sweat shirt off and throws it at him.

Ricolla: Pig! I’m only four months older than you! (Looking in the mirror, Ricolla pulls back her cheeks with the palms of her hands to give her face a tight, stretched back appearance.) This is what I’m going to look like at ten years from now cause your swinish attitude will force me into getting liposuction and plastic surgery.

Armand: (Looks over and laughs) Oh, lovely. That’s beautiful. (Picks up CD) Got it!

Ricolla: Want to get started?

Armand: Sure.

He puts on Angie Stone, Black Diamond, goes over to the bar and begins stretching and working out. Both Ricolla and Armand are stretching to the CD. Ricolla is more vigorous, doing tendus, battements, frappés, and so forth.

Ricolla: I know you’re still thinking about that article. I don’t want to feel like I’ve decided what we—

Armand: (cuts her off) Forget it.

Ricolla: Well…are you still upset?

Armand: No.

Ricolla: Promise?
Armand: Not at you at any rate.

Ricolla: Okay?

Armand: It’s the chemo. I’m tired. I get grumpy. I’ll get over it.

Ricolla: (Stops working out for an instant in her concern) Oh, sweetie, I know. We have to try alternative treatments as soon as this chemo’s over.

Armand: (defensive) I’m fine. Just forget it.

After an instant Ricolla decides to ignore him. She does her warm up across the floor (e.g., triplets, run and jetté). She starts to work on some simple choreography. Armand warms up less vigorously on his own. The mood is lighter until Armand stops. Stopping, he leans his head between his legs breathless.

Ricolla: Are you okay?

Armand: I’m okay, just keep going. Really. I’m just tired today.

Ricolla: Do you want to stop?

Armand: No. Keep going.

Ricolla: You sure?

Armand: Absolutely.

Ricolla: (doubtful) Okay.

Ricolla goes back to dancing, but keeps glancing at Armand nervously. Shortly she begins working on some choreography as Armand looks on from the side.

Ricolla: (again) Could you find that Beesette album and put on track 11?

When Armand reaches the CD’s he has to sit again and rest. At a pause between tracks, Ricolla looks over and notices his struggle. Ricolla stops and pulls a towel out of the dance bag that is over near Armand. She wipes off sweat from her face.

Ricolla: Maybe we need to stop.

Pause.

Armand: I don’t want to hold you back.
Ricolla: You won't. We'll just have to figure out another way to nail down the choreography. (she sits down beside him.)

Armand: The only thing I could create right now would be a response to that reviewer.

Ricolla: That's an idea. Perhaps we should talk to them directly. A critique of the critics.

Armand: We could enact some sort of tastefully artistic strangulation of that Jim Sloane character.

Laughter.

Ricolla: I don't know whether we should be that direct.

Laughter.

Armand gets up and walks to the window to look out. Then sits back down to have some more coffee and glance through the paper. As he does this Ricolla finds the CD she wanted and starts playing with the music, developing choreography as they continue talking.

Armand: I'm thinking about something along the theme that "high" art is supposedly European based, but then what I do isn't valued as high art because I'm "ethnic".

Ricolla: Do you remember that essay I wrote for my dance history class at Waterloo?

Armand: Vaguely.

Ricolla: Back at the turn of the century it was legal for white people to go into a black person's home or watch an African Canadian or African American ceremony, no matter how private. That was how the moves for a lot of minstrel shows were discovered.

Armand: That's stealing.

Ricolla: Yeah. And even more. You have a white man putting on blackface and saying, "I'm black."

Armand: There's a performance in there somewhere. Something about how white people appropriate dance moves.

Ricolla: Like me, you mean.

Laughter.
Armand: Like Martha Graham or whatever.

Ricolla: When they see me they don’t see how black dancers like Katherine Dunham or Jenny LeGon were my influences. They see (picks up article and reads) “Miss Slaughter was clearly influenced by the Limón technique.”

Armand: Wait, I just thought of something. Want to give it a try?

Ricolla: Sure.

Ricolla puts her towel down and clears the floor to get ready to follow Armand’s choreographic direction.

Armand: What if we.. .we do a reversal of the minstrel thing.

Ricolla: What do you mean?

Armand: I don’t know yet. (Pause). I’m thinking about how I get mad in dance class when the teacher starts doing pelvic contractions (shows Ricolla) and says: Martha Graham invented this!

Ricolla: Okay, so you want me to come out like this?

Ricolla mocks the movement he just did and both laugh.

Armand: (smiling) Get back there. I don’t know how obvious we have to be.

Ricolla: Oh I think we have to be obvious. You saw the review.

Armand: Okay, let me think. (pause) What if we show a white woman up there on stage in blackface. Like, to have your face painted up.

Ricolla: Harsh. But good ... I think.

Armand: Okay but they shouldn’t see your face right away. Somehow we would have to break it down. Maybe you could imitate me. But no—they won’t get it. Okay, so you could come out from over here (motions stage right) at first.

Ricolla moves over to where Armand pointed and poses in a funny position.

Ricolla: Like this?

Laughter.

Armand: Come on, get serious. (Armand starts coughing)
Ricolla: Okay. I’m sorry. Let’s go with it. So is my back still to the audience?

Armand: Yes. (Cough) Stay right there. Okay. Hang on, hang on. (Cough) I’m going to put on that *Sounds of Blackness* medley. (fumbles with CD player) Okay, the medley is coming in stronger from the distance. You come on from stage right (Cough) ...Umm...maybe my voice comes over the sound of the music, saying a poem, or...(Cough)

Ricolla: This is good. How about I pretend to be Martha Graham. Here. Does this look like modern dance in the 50’s?

Ricolla pulls her sweatshirt over her head and mocks Martha Graham’s early work. Laughter.

Armand: (Cough) You know, that could be good. You’re Martha Graham in blackface and, I’m Louis Horst (cough)

Armand coughs heavily and spits up blood. He leans against the bar for a moment. Ricolla looks concerned, but is containing herself.

Armand: (again) You know what, Cole? I might have to stop. I might pack it in for the day. (Cough) You keep going.

Ricolla: Don’t be silly. Sweetie. Here. Have some water. Let’s get you home.

Armand: Don’t.

Ricolla: What?

Armand: Don’t baby me.

Ricolla: Okay. I—I just want to help. (Pause. Ricolla is packing up.) Don’t feel bad about going home.

Armand: (struggling) Stay. I’ll take the bus.

Ricolla: Sweetie. Don’t be like that. Don’t worry. Some days you just have to let yourself be sick. And let me help. I don’t know what’s going on, what the future is, but right now I love you and you’re sick. Let me be here for you.

Armand tries to pick up his bag, but stumbles. Ricolla rushes over to help him. She turns off the music, lights and leaves the studio with Armand struggling to walk and leaning on her.
CHAPTER VII: CONCLUSIONS

7.1 Problems with Current Educational Practice

A positive international image has always been important to Canada, even though discrepancies existed between foreign and domestic policies. Current educational materials about African Canadian history have made that history synonymous with a history of the Underground Railroad (Canadian Heritage Moment, 1991). The name Harriet Tubman became well known in conjunction with African Canadian history, while many other unnamed, courageous African Canadian and African American women and men go unmentioned. In the Internet Resource Package for teachers on the Heritage Moment website, a lesson plan about the Underground Railroad proudly illustrates “the escape of African Americans from slavery to freedom in Canada during the 1850’s” (Canadian Heritage Moment, 1991). The website illustrates how “slaves fled the inhuman treatment they suffered in the southern United States, where they were—by law—the property of their owners” (ibid.) The role of both white and black people in the historical Underground Railroad is highlighted. Within this curriculum, the relationships between whites and blacks in 1860s Canada appears unfettered by racism. As told by the Heritage Moment, white Canadians should feel proud of the way that escaped slaves found their way through an underground system “which pointed the way north to ‘heaven,’ in this case Canada” (Heritage Post quoted in Canadian Heritage Moment, 1991). Stories about African Canadians who chose to repatriate themselves to the United States because of the poor treatment toward them go unmentioned.
7.2 Where Does This Discussion Leave Educators?

Perhaps, rather than providing Canada with a means to move beyond racism into a truly Multicultural society, educators are only capable of providing a "jumping off point"—a way to help learners enter into a discussion about their lives. In terms of enhancing and furthering the anti-racist dialogue, as the problems over the production of Show Boat in Abbotsford taught us, Canadians need to be able to discuss diversity and racism beyond a superficial celebration of difference during Black History Month. Racism may be, as Ken Alexander and Avis Glaze have said, partly "the result of a lack of meaningful contact between racial groups". In this sense, Multicultural schools have "a unique opportunity to bring down the walls of ignorance and fear through meaningful contact" (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 236).

Treatments of the subject of racism that promote a celebration of difference, while appreciated, are not enough to change long-entrenched, historical attitudes that are "innocently passed down through the generations" (N’gugi, 1990). The more profound education comes when learners are given opportunities to move beyond an easy reference to an "ideological badge" that proves they value Multiculturalism. This movement in education requires different kinds of learning opportunities to help learners explore emotional subjects, develop in-depth understandings about African Canadian history and cultures and listen to African Canadian voices. Essentially, what was written by various African Canadian activists and educational lobby groups is that Canadian curriculum and texts need to be changed and African Canadian perspectives need to be included. Unfortunately, a solution to these problems, while seemingly logical, has been slow to build. In spite of several attempts made by African Canadian educational lobby groups
such as the Black Learners Advisory Committee of Nova Scotia, Toronto’s Black Educator’s Working Group, in addition to many others, there still exists a long uphill battle, a battle that is entirely localized. Any meaningful changes to curriculum are thanks to “a history of black educational activism. It was and is, a battle for equality” (Alexander and Glaze, 238). In addition, these initiatives from community activists remain as the main instigators for change.

7.3 The Need to Hear African Canadian Voices

What has been discussed throughout this thesis is that, while an abundance of African Canadian literature exists and an indigenous African Canadian presence has persisted since 1604, the Canadian curriculum provides very few opportunities, if any, to study history and culture from an African Canadian perspective or to read African Canadian writers. As a result, learners do not have the opportunity to look truthfully at history, racism, slavery or colonization, nor to question the construction of an African Canadian identity. Like McIntosh, white learners are not given the opportunities that they need to discover their invisible knapsacks.

I regarded the works of African Canadian writers who I saw as presenting an oppositional postcolonial voice through literature. My view is that these texts need to be performed, enacted, and discussed in schools or other educational contexts. When these works are discussed as counter-narratives against the backdrop of Canadian imperial narratives there is a possibility of a more profound understanding of how Canada is affected by an ideology of Multiculturalism. The Canadian ideal of “good literature”, frequently equated with literature that can be traced to cultural and linguistic norms determined from within the “parent” European culture, can now be discarded. The
existence of a false “parent” Canadian literature could be related to what African
American writer Toni Cade Bambara (1993) described as the existence of a false “parent”
American literature. An unfortunate circumstance exists within both Canada and the
United States where the “parent” effectively defines and determines the language and
terrain against which all other literatures are held up to. Bambara described a political
choice that is faced by writers of colour and First Nations writers in the United States. She
attested to the fact that her choices about both how to tell a story and what to tell are
determined within a context wherein “the tools of (the) trade are colonized. The creative
imagination has been colonized....And the audience—readers and viewers—is in bondage
to an industry” (Bambara, 1993, 47). Canada, like America, is a context wherein
numerous cultures, communities, and therefore various groups of literature exist. The
existence of diversity in North America underscores Bambara’s point that

there is no American literature; there are American literatures....There are those
that have their roots in the most ancient civilizations—African, Asian, or
Mexican—and there are those that have the most ancient roots in this place, that
mouth-to-ear tradition of the indigenous peoples that were here thousands and
thousands of years before it was called America, thousands of years before it was
even called Turtle Island. And there is too the literature of the European
settlement regime that calls itself American literature (Bambara, 1993, 47).

As Walcott (1997) said, African Canadian stories are sites of both “domination and
resistance”. The Canadian settler narrative is a dominant hegemonic inscription that has
helped create the false existence of a “parent” Canadian literature. The existence of that
“parent” literature is contested by African Canadian writers, writers of colour and First
Nations writers who make choices to utilize language, themes, images and characters that
reflect and affect their communities. This has sometimes resulted in their works remaining
on the fringes of a Canadian literary establishment. Political, post-colonial African
Canadian narratives are made to seem less important than themes of white ethnic cultural pluralism and the priority of the two national narratives of Canada's so-called two founding peoples.

Clearly, Canadians need to be educated about racism and African Canadian history. This dialogue is undermined by an ideology of Multiculturalism in that, while some Canadians may agree that racism needs to be addressed from a moral standpoint, at the same time they may not acknowledge the material relations of racism. The ideological badge of Multiculturalism does not account for how racism can affect what narratives and themes become national priorities. If Canadians need to be educated about African Canadian history, and if that history is “misplaced”, then a natural place to turn for interpretations of that history is to African Canadian writers who have often exhibited a concern for documenting their communities’ histories. As discussed, within the past thirty years, numerous anthologies of African Canadian writers (e.g., Haynes, Camille, ed. 1973; Cromwell, 1975; Head, ed., 1976; Elliott, ed., 1985; and Black, ed., 1992) have been published. In addition, since the 1960’s there has been an enormous increase in the number of texts published by African Canadians. African Canadian writers have continued to publish stories that figure African Canadian characters, including a number of stories that provide insight into African Canadian cultures and histories. As shown throughout Chapter 4, various bibliographies attest to the magnitude of this body of work.

Within the context of a Eurocentric curriculum that is “designed, unconsciously or not, to ensure white student success” (Alexander and Glaze, 1996, 236), African Canadian literature and stories may be an invaluable resource through which to further the anti-racist
dialogue. Unfortunately, these stories remain largely untouched by educators\textsuperscript{52}. Educational initiatives are often entirely localized, volunteer driven and usually underfunded. In addition, educators may themselves remain ignorant of African Canadian history. The exploration of African Canadian literature may be difficult for educators, but the inclusion of African Canadian history and perspectives is vital. The project of representing a fuller picture of that history clearly needs to be addressed. African Canadian literature provides a ready resource for educators. That said, African Canadian writers need also be understood as accomplished literary writers in terms of a wider body of Canadian literature and not through a limited analysis in terms of their merit as either historians or ethnographers.

African Canadian literature is sometimes counter-hegemonic in its intention to “play a major role...in social and political movements” (Allen, 1995, 259). This thesis is only a partial discussion of the topic and cannot possibly present the multiplicity that exists within such a diverse community. As Jamaican Canadian writer Allen has said of the African Canadian community, “we organize, we network, we participate, we protest, we celebrate, we build a community” (ibid., 259). Limitations of time and space have meant that various works, writers and perspectives could not be represented. Recent and historic African Canadian works continually contribute to actively remaking the Canadian literary landscape, language and presence. Some of the themes mentioned—the subject of slavery in George Elliott Clarke’s (1999) \emph{Beatrice Chancy}; the assertion of an African Caribbean

\textsuperscript{52} In the Vancouver region, a project is currently being organized by a number of British Columbia high school teachers through the Anti-racism department of the Vancouver School Board. This project seeks to make aspects of African Canadian history, as well as the works of African Canadian artists more widely available to students learning within public schools. However, it remains to be seen whether this project will be funded. As mentioned previously, these types of enhancements to education also remain localized initiatives because of the way that provinces set educational priorities.
presence on Canadian streets found in the works of brand (1997, 1999) or Austin Clarke (1964); the indigenous African Canadian presence in the works of Hill (1997), and Talbot (1976); or the “evocation of the sordid surroundings and emotional anarchy of young, rebellious, impoverished urban lives” (Globe and Mail, 1998) in David Nandi Odhiambo’s (1998) diss/ed banded nation—can be seen as a partial picture that can help educators fill out the other part of Canadian history and further an anti-racist dialogue in Canada.

7.4 My Own Voice as Oppositional

As mentioned previously, being white can be like carrying around an invisible knapsack. That is, our knapsacks might be invisible, but at the same time they can take up a lot of space. Somewhere, an educational relationship, reading, or experience might help a white person to see the knapsack she or he is carrying. An educator could open that knapsack casually or deliberately. At this point, the person carrying the knapsack might be capable of seeing what Mishra and Hodge termed as the other half of the equation. That is, white settler cultures and histories in Canada might be seen not as the official story of Canadian history, but as part of a cultural context that is varied, dynamic, and de-centred. As the “official story” about Canada is de-railed, a more complicated approach to history is also required. As discussed, literature or plays by African Canadians can be utilized as a “jumping off point” into conversations about racism and African Canadian history.

Questions arise about how to position my own voice—a “non-African Canadian voice” that is pulling out the threads of the official story and conveying a portrait that is meant to help students learn to listen and see in a way that is sensitive. As I pull at the threads of an official Canadian story and convey an alternate portrait, I provoke further dialogue about anti-racism. Whether I can help students look as Picasso’s “Girl Before a
Mirror” looked—to see a deeper, more authentic reflection of who they are—is perhaps a question that is best answered from an individual perspective. At the very least, writing and performing this play gave me an opportunity to explore a territory that I believe is central to anti-racist education. The play also provided a method of discovery and analysis, another means to explore and crystallize the issues that were discussed in the academic dialogue. I believe that the performance also provided a different “jumping off point” that helped (audience members) to engage in a discussion about racism and African Canadian history.

Rather than teaching us only to “know” new information, I believe the most useful education might also insist we pay attention to how we once came to think we “knew”. I hope that the play and this academic discussion can produce such an experience for others. Presently anti-racist education is in need of voices that help learners negotiate new places of belonging for diversity—places that emerge out of a context of oppression, but are not defined by oppression. Writing provided a way for me to present my view of what I think is important to anti-racist education. Writing was the way I painted my own vision of the girl before a mirror, through which possibilities grew out of the rejection and loss of definitions and of belonging. In writing I have searched for new understandings in the place where “(y)ou write it all, discovering at the end of the line of words. The line of words is a fiber optic, flexible as wire; it illumines the path just before its fragile tip. You probe with it, delicate as a worm” (Dillard, Annie, 1990, 7).
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