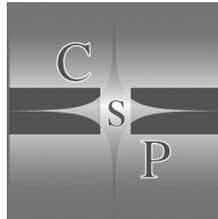


Navigating Multiculturalism

Navigating Multiculturalism Negotiating Change

Edited by

Dawn Zinga



CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS PRESS

Navigating Multiculturalism: Negotiating Change, edited by Dawn Zinga

This book first published 2006 by

Cambridge Scholars Press

15 Angerton Gardens, Newcastle, NE5 2JA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN 1-84718-016-7

This volume is dedicated to all those who are working to navigate multiculturalism and negotiate change in their own lives. Including all of the contributing authors and their families as well as all of the research participants who have shared their experiences and perspectives. It is also dedicated to my husband, Leo and my daughters, Marina and Victoria, in honour of their patience during the creation of this volume. If we continue to work together, we will be successful in our efforts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This volume has been produced through the collective efforts of many individuals. In particular, I would like to thank Megan Davis, Love Otuo-Acheampong, Carol Penner, and Sherri Young for their assistance in preparing the manuscript. I would also like to thank all of the blind reviewers who provided such insightful suggestions on earlier drafts of each of the chapters. Each of the contributing authors also deserves a word of thanks for their infinite patience with the process of producing this volume. Thank you also to Andy Nercessian for his editorial assistance during this project, and to the staff at Cambridge Scholar's Press. I would also like to acknowledge the support of Dean David Siegel of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Brock University who has always encouraged and supported my initiatives. My colleagues in the department of Child and Youth Studies and my colleagues within the university at large have also been very supportive. Fran Chandler of the Office of Research Services at Brock University has often gone above and beyond the call of duty to assist me in obtaining support for this volume and related research. I appreciate both her efforts and her friendship. A special thank you to Marina and Victoria. Our conversations and your questions provide me with inspiration and a need to need answers or at least more questions.

It is important to recognize that there are a number of Institutions who have supported this volume and its authors' exploration of research questions. This volume has been supported by an Aid to Occasional Conferences and International Congresses Grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, which supported "Multicultural Days: An International Perspective," the conference from which this volume originated. Much of the research within this volume has been supported through research grants from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Multiculturalism Program of the Department of Canadian Heritage, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. We are all grateful for this support, which is essential in assisting to produce strong research that contributes to the literature and has the potential to lead to positive changes in the lives of individuals.

FOREWORD

CECIL A. FOSTER

THE MORALITY MULTICULTURALISM

Ultimately, multiculturalism is about how we live together. It is about humanity and what types of groups human beings form, how we run these groups, and who may have membership in any of them. In this respect, the nation-state is nothing more than just another group. It is made up of a specific bunch of people; it is inclusive of some and exclusionary of others; the members of group claim an absolute right to determine who should join them as members. In the name of their sovereignty, they even decide the forms of governance for the group as a whole, and how to hand out rewards and punishments to members. Ideally, group membership would be a reflection of those who are best suited to the group, as much as there will be a unity and oneness as the group mirrors its members. This would be the practicality of group or nation-state formation and preservation as an on-going project.

But at the same time, it would be foolish to present the nation-state as just any other group. There is a long history and discourse about the relevancy of the nation-state or country as a very unique way of arranging how particular people can live together. At a time when globalization seems to be just as voracious, despite misplaced claims to its death (Saul, 2005), we still have to look at the nation-state as special: as, among other things, that place that brings into actuality what we may call our social reality. It is a site of traditions, either those that are grounded imaginatively in something called history and patriotism (Anderson, 1991) or in those traditions we are still busy inventing and constructing (Hobsbawn and Ranger, 1983). Similarly, history has taught us that we have yet to create that ideal state, one where there is harmonious reflection of membership and the group, and where, in all respect, there obtains what we may call social justice (Rawls, 1971; Foster, 2005).

Idealistically, the nation-state is where we are still expected to be most human, for it is within the nation-state that we can put into actions our thoughts and imagination. This is where we can create things in “our” own image. It is where we perfect our landscape and ourselves, importantly, to our imagination and models of perfections. It is where we can make things happen, where we recognize and even create real differences, and where, at the social level, we can

reconcile all these differences and inequality. The nation-state is where we, as social beings, must get along, if, by definition, we are to be both social and human. Seldom is the nation-state exclusively about how an *I* or a single individual can get along, but rather about a *We*. And where the *We* is the subject, we are into questions of differences and possible inequalities: we are talking about producing a single way of life for the several or many that make up this we, and who must somehow discover a way that allows the many to co-exist and to even behave as if they are, in fact a big One, or a *We*. This is the dream Modernity placed in all of us, even unto this day. Seen from this perspective, any country that claims to be both liberal and multicultural should expect to be beset by internal contradictions. The nation-state is where, supposedly, diversity and differences are not expected to lead automatically to inequalities or injustices (Cooper, 2004), or even to a socially stratified society (Foster, 1996, 2005).

Therefore, multiculturalism really speaks equally--at the idealistic and practical levels--to what kind of nation-state we envision, and what type of state we want to bring forth from our minds into a social reality. Two issues arise, both of which I will deal with in this *Foreword*, as salient aspects of what we may call the multicultural experience. More than that, these issues are central to understanding what I term genuine multiculturalism—where we accept social equality as the norm, where there is recognized differences in the polis, and where democratically every human being is considered to be the source of her or his enlightenment, or even authenticity, if we may use such a word. This genuine multiculturalism has to come to terms with the pragmatics of multiculturalism, where the ideals and practices of living together converge into a historically structured social or lived reality, one that must always be clothed in its peculiar context for easy identification. These two issues can be covered under a) *citizenship* and b) *race*—two social concepts that are at the heart of any discourse on multiculturalism.

Specifically, I am thinking of Canada, with its own unique history of nation-state formation. Particularly, I am thinking of the ideals that now speak of Canada as a liberal democracy that is officially and, in practice, too, multicultural. And still on the matter of contradictions, we may also ask ourselves if it is possible to have a fully multicultural state that is not also democratic? Indeed, are the two terms, multicultural and democratic, synonymous in modern discourses? And talking of history, tradition and all those things that ultimately end up helping us to understand a specific way of life, we might want to reflect on the insights offered by Peter Ratcliffe in his book '*Race*', *Ethnicity and Difference*.

While there is certainly a kernel of truth in all these (geopolitical and national hypotheses [to explain the modern world]), none comes close to providing a convincing sociological explanation. It is the primary purpose of this volume to provide readers with the tools to find better answers to arguably the most pressing questions of global society. In most cases, it will be seen that divisions are rooted in forms of ‘difference’ conceptualized in terms of ‘race’, ethnicity, culture, religion and nation; in variably mediated by issues of class, status, power and gender. None of these have a reality independent of history. An appreciation, where relevant, of the impact of colonialism, imperialism and slavery will therefore contextualize the analysis (Ratcliffe, 2004, viii).

In very much the same way, this book that you are now reading attempts a similar task, even if it approaches the issue of diversity and difference from a different starting point. Ratcliffe goes on to argue that, ultimately, the question of differences is really about race. Even though race started out as a philosophic enlightenment discourse, he claims correctly that the debate now cuts across all academic disciplines. This debate is an examination of the reification of this socially constructed thing called *race* or difference and how they have been produced in racialized or unjust societies marked by social inequalities. As he says,

the key point, however, is that (race) is much more than a discursive tool. If it were merely this, it would be of considerably more interest to philosophers than sociologists. The latter are compelled to discuss the concept because, through various forms of social agency, it continues to invoke significant material effects (Ratcliffe, 2004, x)

Multiculturalism is, indeed, about more than this discursiveness. It is also about how we dream and live. It is about the ethical relations that we think most appropriate for the group(s) in which we claim belonging and membership, how we expect others to treat us and how they can reasonably expect us (whoever that is) to treat them (whoever they are). Multiculturalism is equally about the dream and practice of this thing called race. Therefore, not only is multiculturalism, ultimately, about living together, it begins with the dreams of this living together in a raceless state.¹

I shall return later to a fuller discussion on multicultural citizenship as an ideal of racelessness. Before doing that, allow me one more detour by way of the observation by Craig Calhoun in his well-read article *The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers*. Calhoun claims, as an antidote to the perceived problems of diversity, multiculturalism could only be a form of cosmopolitanism, the seemingly contradictory idea of having the likeness of the entire globe at home within a particular nation-state. “The notion of cosmopolitanism gains currency

from the flourishing of multiculturalism—and the opposition that those who consider themselves multiculturally modern feel to those rooted in monocultural traditions. The latter, say the former, are locals with limited perspective; if not outright racists” (Calhoun, 104). But this argument would be equally one-sided, for it would not acknowledge that, as Calhoun says,

[I]t is often the insertion of migrants from around the world into the Western nation-state system that produces intense ‘reverse monoculturalism’, including both the notion that the culture ‘back home’ is singular and unified and pure, and sometimes the attempt by political leaders on the home front to make it so. Such projects may be simply reactionary, but even when proclaimed in the name of ancient religions, they often pursue alternative modernities. An effectively democratic future must allow for such different collective projects—as they must all for each other. It must be built in a world in which these are powerful and finding starting points within them; it cannot be conceptualized adequately simply in terms of the diversity of individuals (Calhoun, 104-5).

With this view in mind, we may have a greater understanding why some of us take it for granted that if Canada is, indeed, the first officially multicultural country, then, pragmatically, it also has to be the first post-modern country, too.

Genuine multiculturalism, as an ideal in living racelessness, must be always be contextualized—it is dependent on the lived reality existing as a product of history, tradition or culture in any given moment. It is about handling change and shifting with the tides of life; and about our moral failings and success dealing with differences and diversities. Genuine multiculturalism is about understanding the human condition, and that condition is still one of uncertainty, arbitrariness and where most human feel that they live in an unjust world. But it is also part of the human hope and aspiration that says that out of the dross of the current context, out of all the diversities, differences and inequalities, we as human beings can produce better: we can create a society or even an exclusive nation-state where there will be social justice for all members. Indeed, there is always the hope that we can create a nation-state, our little piece of a heaven on earth, that is better than what we now have. But importantly, this goodness would be only for members of the specific group.

But at any given moment, we have to start with what we have. We have to make use of the only materials that are available us. Multiculturalism has to be a perfecting project—not where we attempt to eradicate differences and diversities in the search for a oneness on which to base social justice through the assimilation of other groups into a dominant group, culture, tradition or history

as a fully-formed way of life. Rather, the practice is about a lived experience that is open ended—changing and adapting, constantly hybridizing in new and even unexpected ways, adapting to the imagination of the group members and not necessarily forcing the new members to be just copies of the old. There must be the dynamics and uncertainty of change. And at any point in history—certainly in what we may term Canadian history—the challenge has always been how best that we get all these many different and diverse people to get along, and how we can get them to see themselves in a social reality as all being equal and even happy.

So, context, as the existing lived reality, must be important to our understanding of how to read and understand multiculturalism. As I am writing, there are three events that are occurring in Canada that speak to the country's engagement with this concept we call multiculturalism. How we react to them—indeed, how we incorporate them both into the way we imagine how we should live together—will help to understand several of the issue that the writers are grappling with in this book. The first is, that in spring 2006, a number of mainly construction workers in the Toronto area were forced to make a hasty departure from Canada for their native land. These are mainly Portuguese migrants who have been living illegally for quite a while in Ontario, even with the knowledge of the federal government, and that in so doing they have been providing the backbone for the booming construction industry. They have been filling a badly felt need for skilled labour. A new government in Ottawa decided to deport these illegal immigrants *tout suite*, even against the protests of construction industry. Obviously, something other the purely economics is at issue here. The minister of immigration was insistent that it was best for Canadians living together if they respect the rules of the land. For the government maintaining the fidelity of the immigration progress and laws of the country were more important than any economic gain from having the undocumented workers fill a badly need void for skilled labourers. But who was it that said the way we conceptualize who we are is usually best illustrated in the way we treat foreigners and those who we consider not to be us?

The second frame is that of an article published in this month's issue of *Walrus Magazine*. The article suggests, yet again, I suppose, that Canada is suffering an identity crisis. The article states that, in effect, multiculturalism is not working: it says too many immigrants are now living in ethnic enclaves—what used to be called ethnic ghettos in another time—and that these immigrants are not assimilating into what the writer calls Canadian culture. This article was written by the well-known public opinion pollster and media commentator, Allan Gregg, and it is supposed to be a reflection on the crisis that Canada has stumbled into, or found itself in, since the federal election in January

2006. In his mind, this crisis does not bode well for the real Canada. The quality of Canadian life is at issue here.

The third frame is a report that was issued by Statistics Canada that as high as 40 per cent of immigrants to Canada are not staying. They are high-tailing it out of Canada for greener pastures. The reason for their leaving: many of the highly qualified immigrants that we are picking do not feel welcomed in Canada. They do not feel they are wanted or that they can help perfect or even improve Canada. To this end, Canada appears to be the loser in two ways—it cannot reach the annual targets for immigration, managing about 240,000 annually compared to the annual target of about 270,000; and a significant number of those immigrants that it does attract, are leaving. The question of nation-building is at issue here.

These three frames help to give a clear picture of some of the challenges we face in multicultural Canada. They also serve to remind us that what we are talking about are still contentious questions that are subject to the political will. They remind us that the battle for the full recognition of a humanist-type multiculturalism as the *de facto* way of life in Canada is not yet over. And together, these three issues or frames show us that, whether we are talking about multiculturalism, immigration and ethnicity—that we are talking about issues of race and citizenship in Canada. Particularly, we are dealing with questions of nation-state construction, and of who among us are, indeed, authentic to the emerging and really real Canada. Indeed, they are all issues of morality—of what we deem to be good for all of us as nation-state. In the old philosophical sense, these are issues not only of quantity but of quality as well.

This is where I would like to return formally to the issues of citizenship and race. Indeed, I want to argue that it is virtually impossible to not to see the sameness in the two concepts when associated with the nation-state. It is not a trite statement to say that Modernity in giving us the ideals of the nation-state and citizenship was also giving us the ideal of race and racelessness (Alcoff, 2003). So let us start with a look at what is race, and we see that it is predicated on the notion that humanity is made up of differences and inequalities. All individuals or groups of individuals are not same either in natural talents or in the socialization that is their culture. In this regard, race tells us that we can place humanity in a hierarchy and classify some people according to a sameness that allows us to differentiate those who are superior, inferior or equal. This hierarchy is an approximation of the usefulness of the various human resources available for the formation of the nation-state. In a system, where all members are equal, there would effectively be racelessness.

It is now a common place argument that modern citizenship is about equality (Heater, 1999). But what do we mean by equality? This must be a social construct where we *imagine* that all of us are the same—that we are re-

constructed or re-constituted in the nation-state so that all the differences and diversities that we have are eliminated. But on the other hand, citizenship also suggests, contradictorily, that we, as a group are different—we are separate and different from all the remains of humanity. We are the subjects and masters/madams of our exclusive group, they or of their groups. The equality that citizenship creates is to say that within the exclusive group, i.e the nation-state—there is racelessness. There are no members who are superior or inferior, but rather, all members are equal and, imaginatively, raceless.

To this end, I want to make two points. The first is that racism is wide spread in Canada. It is systemic—clearly imbedded in the historical Canada that we have inherited and which is today's lived reality. Racism has a hand in all three stories or frames that I have just raised. This is a racism that is not some form of exoticism, or mere *othering* for many of us, who actually live it. I should also point out that multiculturalism, as an issue about quality of life, was and is intended to combat racism and ethnic prejudices—and that Canadians had adopted multiculturalism even before they brought home their constitution and entrenched a Charter of Rights and Freedom in it.

Multiculturalism and Canada

1969 Royal commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism
1971 Canadian Multiculturalism Policy
1973 Multiculturalism Directorate
1977 Canadian Human Rights Act
1982 Constitutional Act of Canada
1986 Employment Equity Act
1988 Multiculturalism Act
2005 Canada's Plan Against Racism

Prepared by Grace-Edward Galabuzi

In the accompanying graph, we see a chronology of events that are part of the efforts by Canadian to produce a unique way of social existence. It starts with the aim of eliminating racism through an official multicultural policy and proceeds to the adoption of specific measures as practical and even pragmatic efforts to achieve a specific goal. These measures include adoptions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms as part of a liberal agenda, but it also continued to this day as also a civic endeavour through the current Canadian Plan Against Racism.

Too often we forget this important chronology—so that in much of our discussion—whether on citizenship, multiculturalism or illegal immigration—some of us tend to suggest that multiculturalism was intended to support the Charter of Rights, instead of the other way around. Canada adopted multiculturalism as replacement for a specific policy—one that was that Canada was to be a white man’s country. We often forget that it is morality that drives our historic choices and that we make policy based on our morality.

A fundamental concern for me is what we mean by race in today’s multicultural Canada. In a general, and indeed, common sense usage, race and racism have come to mean ethical relations involving non-white Canadians. More than that, they have come to mean how do we really deal with those non-Canadians in the true sense, those groups that we all conflate in our consciousness to “immigrants,” with those people that we assume not to share our core values. In the discussion, these immigrants are the ones that do not fully belong or have the rights to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Here, we are doing two things. First we are reducing, in the main part, race to the exoticism of skin colour or of a particular culture, one that is not European in origin. So that we have come a long way from seeing race as an issue of citizenship—of who really has a right of belonging, and who also has an unfettered entitlement to all that is good and bad in their country. In this regard, in much of our conversations, we assume that the group we call ethnically white does not have races in it. One of the participants in this book, Carl James, has done much research on this, particularly in his book, *Seeing Ourselves*. So that for many of us race and racism are issues only about non-whites, about those who have not yet made it into a narrowly defined mainstream, and that race discussion is really about a) how they live their exotic lives and cultures in a dominant white Canadian space called Canada, and b) what should be terms under which we bring these non-white groups into the modern Canadian state, one that as I said is imagined as white.

In all these cases, race is ultimately about determining what people are good for and how they should be positioned within the state—whether they are superior, inferior or equal in a general way to those considered to be the normal Canadians. Much of the discussion about racism in Canada today is about norms that accept a homogenous white ethnicity—if there can be such a thing—as superior or as the status on which equality and rights are based, and where the non-whites in all their many ethnicities and so-called races start out by being inferior, ethically unequal and socially undeserving.

They are not full or even normal citizens—therefore, we can now reflect back on the three frames inserted above. These kinds of exclusionary attitudes of *othering* some Canadians inform policy in a very meaningful way, and is an approach to citizenship that does not, I would argue, allow us to reap most of the

benefits and potentials that are embedded in our ideals of multiculturalism. Our discussions about race must be discussions about citizenship, and about what is good for the well-being of all of us in the nation-state.

Indeed, ironically, this is the argument that is central to the discussion in the *Walrus* magazine that I referred to earlier. It starts with the notion that at the heart of multiculturalism is still what for many of us is a discredited concept—that of bi-culturalism—an ideal that simply refuses to stay buried. According to this way of thinking, the Canadian mainstream is made up of so-called two-founding peoples, the French and the English, and they are to be the movers and shakers forever and ever. In this arrangement are the minority groups, who are all scattered around this unchanging bi-cultural core. Those on the periphery get recognition as different, but they only get a real sense of belonging and any taste of power by joining either the Anglo or Franco club. They have to be co-opted and even assimilated.

That, however, is not the historical multiculturalism. It is also not the multiculturalism we encounter on the streets and supposedly now in the voting booths. This real or genuine multiculturalism is one where there is no unchanging core or mainstream, but in a democratic way, it is a mixing of people and groups with no prior dictates or previously agreed outcomes. In this arrangement, no one or two groups can make any claim to power forever. Power as well as recognition should come through negotiations and in the way that various interests line up—even if it means having minority parliaments in Ottawa. So that in this market place of ideas and interests all groups are equally mainstream.

Therefore, I agree with Allan Gregg that this bi-cultural multiculturalism of which he is writing is dead. But what I would add is that that bi-culturalism died way back in 1969—when Canadians told the then bi-and-bi Royal Commission that they had no use for bi-culturalism (Innis, 1973). Bilingualism, yes; but not bi-culturalism. Yet a certain morality exists that keeps these hopes of a bi-cultural Canada very much alive today.

Usually, we get two types of approaches when we try to speculate about the multiculturalism that is the *de facto* lived reality in Canada. Usually, we hear proponents, including myself, talking about the idealism that is at the heart of multiculturalism. The main concern is whether at times, we do not appear as too optimistic and as well “too boy or girl scoutish” about multiculturalism—presenting it as if we have already entered the promised land of harmonious living. Then, there is the skepticism that comes from recognizing that in a practical sense, we have definitely not entered the land of the good, and of water, and milk and honey or even milk and cookies, or whatever our particular ethnic mythology tells us.

The second concern is usually about those who say, well if we accept some element of idealism, what exactly are we talking about? What is the real identity of a real Canadian in a multicultural Canada? In this discussion multiculturalism and Canada are both about values, usually presented as the four core values as the ideals of democracy, social justice, tolerance and equality—all of them speaking to a specific idealized quality of life and approach to living in an ethical relationship that we call Canada. Here, I am reminded by the statements by Trudeau that the ideals of Canadian multiculturalism are non-conformity, unity of intentions, and the core values that bind us together, such as tolerance, love and understanding (Trudeau, 1998).

These are values that are supposedly embedded in our Canadian culture, or in the culture we are now in the process of creating, one that is not already fully formed, and in our policies, and in our dreams of being a country that is different from any other in the world.

Indeed, Will Kymlicka (1998) and others argue that they are the ideals and values of small *l* liberalism, and that they are values most immigrants to Canada expect. We do not have to sell these values to immigrants. Indeed, it is because that they want these values and already subscribe to them that they come to Canada. Therefore, Canada is essentially a site of values, where as Trudeau argued such things as the colour of the skin, sexuality, religion, gender, place of birth etc. are accidental to being Canadian. They are accidents of birth and contingent on being Canadian. And they are not the essential or serious materials that make us Canadian—not if we truly want to achieve the ideals of multiculturalism.

So where is the problem or challenge, you may ask? I would suggest that it is for all of us as policy makers, academics and even public intellectuals, a question of how to think of Canada and Canadians. It is about how we imagine Canada and Canadians according to the values that we agreed upon. Is Canada, as I think, a work in progress or is it a finished project? Should we view immigrants as potential Canadians, dressed in the fullness of their humanity, or should we view them as leeches and others with no sense of belonging in Canada.

And this is where I want to end by again returning to where I started, by arguing that, ultimately, multiculturalism is about how we can get along together, that multiculturalism is about living in groups. These are some of the issues that are raised in this volume. Indeed, the title is most fitting: *Navigating Multiculturalism, Negotiating Change*. The two parts of the title seem to be mirror reflections of each other. Can you navigate multiculturalism—and indeed, at times it seems that the most we can do in the stream of life is to navigate around the obstacle in our way—without expecting change? And are not negotiations a kind of navigation, or trying to reach an acceptable outcome,

but have to make allowances for the challenges along the way. Indeed, just to think of this process, we are reminded tolerance—a word that has been so much bandied about when we think of multiculturalism. But even here tolerance, as is usually the case, does not seem to be adequate, for a good negotiation and/or navigation must require more than the one-sidedness of subjectivity that is usually associated with tolerance. It suggests the likelihood that the subject, the person or group making the navigation, might be placed in a position of needing tolerance from an/other. Now, how does it feel to be in the need of tolerance, and knowing that tolerance can be given or withdrawn at any time? That is why multiculturalism is about a way of existence—a lived arrangement that is more akin to what we may call a covenant than what is usually presented as a social contract.

So multiculturalism is about living and about being human, and how we can neither be fully human if reduced to abstractions, and how we can never live to the fullest unless we face up to life in its many manifestations. Therefore, it is useful for us to understand why, in any society, we set ourselves goals. And equally important is to understand why we support a specific choice of life, why we try to inculcate specific values through education, and what are the roles and responsibilities expected of those of us who happen to call ourselves multicultural citizens. Why we need a practice that is reflective of our dreams for our society. Indeed, the entire process is all about how we live together and how we try to minimize any violence we may inflict on ourselves. For in the beginning and in the ending too, multiculturalism is about citizenship and belonging and how we can all live together, not as inferiors and superiors, but racelessly as social equals.

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March, 2006

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Endnotes

¹In a forthcoming book, *Canada and Blackness: A Phenomenology of Blackness and Multiculturalism*, to be published shortly by McGill-Queen's University Press, I take this argument further by making the point that genuine multicultural is ontological and epistemic blackness. I argue that blackness is a world, ontologically, of diversity and difference and that the task of Modernity

has been to produce the “white” nation-state of purity and oneness as promised by Enlightenment. Indeed, the announcement of official multiculturalism by Canada in 1971 was formal recognition that—after valiant efforts-- it was unable to complete this Modernity project. Canada conceded that by being multicultural it has always been, and probably will always be, a site of Enlightenment blackness. However as an Enlightenment project and through its search for justice, Canada is committed to a particular form of blackness--where there are differences and races, but socially racelessness.

