NARRATING IDENTITY
"SOUTH AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS" IN GREATER VANCOUVER

by

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THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS
in the Department
of
Sociology and Anthropology

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
September 1998

ABSTRACT

This thesis has two purposes. First, to explore the ways in which a group of "South African immigrants" to Greater Vancouver talked about their racial, ethnic and national identities, and how these may shift depending on social context. Secondly, to examine how the participants differentially experienced the immigration process (i.e., deciding to emigrate, immigrating, and adjusting to life in Canada) depending on their identities and skin colour.

Through narratives, participants from varied backgrounds construct understandings about what it means to be from South Africa, to be racialized, and to immigrate to Canada. Excerpts from these narratives provide the basis for an ethnographic analysis of how the experiences of the group of participants are differentially shaped according to notions of self-identity and ascriptions of "otherness".

Drawing on the framework of relational positionality, I explore what the participants communicated about self and other and how these may shift depending on social context. By supplementing agonistic, self-other binaries with relational positionality, one is able to see how power circulates through relationships in complicated ways, as social actors seek to re-direct the flow of power in communicating who they are, and just as importantly, who they are not. As contexts shift, so to do the meanings participants attach to identities and ascriptions of otherness (i.e., categorizations).

The meanings associated with self and other are also influenced by the immigration process as different sets of difference-producing relationships are encountered. Available

identity options and associated meanings are also shaped by public perceptions of political changes in the "new" South Africa, which serve to both constrain and enable available identity options as some possibilities were restricted while others were opened up (as with "White" South Africans re-claiming their South Africanness). The research also shows that skin colour differentially affected the experiences of the participants not only in South Africa, but also when "starting over" in Greater Vancouver. Although Canada provided more "freedom" to choose identity options than in South Africa, this was accompanied by more ambiguous "othering" and racializing processes which also served to constrain and enable available identity options.

DEDICATION

To Tom

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the years many people have helped me along the way. The first thanks go to the participants who gave generously of their time. Their candidness and willingness to share their stories not only surprised me, but also made the thesis possible.

Heribert Adam showed the confidence in me to supervise me in the graduate program and get me to this point. Your confidence and candidness were inspiring. Stacy Pigg's careful guidance and extensive comments through-out the early stages of the process were invaluable. Noel Dyck, who joined the committee later, had the ability to make it all seem so simple. As well, Parin Dossa and Karl Froschauer made themselves available and offered insightful comments on the research questions even though they were not on the committee.

Susan Dehnel's comments on parts of the thesis helped move it along. Susan Frohlick's astute comments saved me from despair during the darkest hours of revisions--thanks. Also, thanks to my co-workers (Tonio Sadik, Jude Morrison, and Marnie Thorp) at the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) who were always accommodating and supportive during difficult times that always seemed to involve much more than the thesis.

Mickey Naisby, Karen Payne, and Gladys Durksen in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology always found the answers to my many questions. The Department was unfailing in providing financial assistance to attend conferences where I was able to test many of the ideas I have included here. I was also provided with what support they could through Teaching Assistantships and a Graduate Fellowship--unfortunately funding cuts have made it increasingly difficult for the department to fund its graduate students. Arts degrees are important! To make up the shortfall, scholarships from the British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union (BCGEU) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) helped. As well, Research Assistantships from Heribert Adam, Ellen Gee, and Stacy Pigg helped pay the bills.

During various stages the support, friendships and thought-provoking comments of my peers in the department were also instrumental, especially: Richard Day, Tonio Sadik, Susan Frohlick, Klara Hribkova, Ann Vanderbijl, Cristina Moretti, Richard Toews, Karen Kobayashi, Marie-Therese Reinarz, and Amir Mirfakhraie.

The greatest thanks go to Tom, without your support none of this would have been possible. You put up with a lot without complaint. Your unwavering support was truly remarkable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

ORIENTING[1] IDENTITY

It is only by exaggerating the difference between within and without... with and against, that a semblance of order is created.
Mary Douglas Purity and Danger (1966:4)

This thesis is an ethnography of identity. It is about how a small, ethnically and "racially"[2] diverse group of South African "immigrants"[3] to Greater Vancouver identified themselves and how their experiences in both South Africa and Canada mediated their identities.

Through narrative interviews, the participants construct situationally fixed understandings based on their experiences. Their narratives are "discursive productions" of knowledge about self and others (Scott 1992a; see also Personal Narratives Group 1989, Rosaldo 1993), which are mediated by public discourses about South Africa, Canada, Greater Vancouver, immigration, ethnicity, "race", place, and so on. Because the participants have immigrated, they have rather distinct sets of experiences to compare--South Africa and Canada. As a result, conceptions of self and other are called into question as they encounter different sets of difference-producing relationships.

The narratives are analyzed primarily according to participant, rather than between

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[1] There are many meanings of "Orient", I use it in the sense of "to adjust or adapt to a particular situation" Webster's New World Dictionary (Third College Edition 1988).

[2] The use of "race" and "racial" categories is not intended to reproduce, uncritically, these arbitrary distinctions. "Race" is used here because it is a "difference" that matters in terms of consequences in both South Africa and Canada. As Dei (1998) asserts, "our society *is* racially stratified". (This idea is further developed later in the thesis.) I also acknowledge Dei's insightful comment that there are many categories that are social constructs, but race is the only one placed between quotation marks.

[3] "Immigrant" appears in quotes because it is a contested term in that not all who immigrate consider

participants, to draw out identity themes. This approach gives a better sense of how they communicated their identities and how these may shift depending on geographical and/or social context, than would an inter-narrative analysis. Further, intra-interview themes leave the participants as "whole" as possible--given the focus on ethnic, "racial" and national identities.

I used the following questions to elicit from the narratives what the participants communicated about their identities. How, and in what ways, did the participants identify themselves? What did they communicate about self and other,[4] and how did this shift depending on social context? How did they respond to being categorized according to essential difference[5] and how did they use this "difference" to define themselves and others? What effect did the immigration process[6] have on their identities? Finally, if and how did political changes in the "new" South Africa and popular understandings of those changes differentially affect how the participants were categorized and what identity options were available to them in Canada?

The underlying framework of the thesis is social construction theory. I draw on work from ethnic and racial studies, post-colonial studies, feminist theory, and cultural studies to analyze processes of identity and categorization. The analysis seeks to put in to practice a theoretical approach to identity I find especially compelling: relational

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themselves "immigrants".

[4] Self (who/what *I am*) and other (who/what *they are*) can be equated with notions of "we and they" and "us and them". These are bound distinctions rooted in asymmetrical power relations that obfuscate inter-connections between "us" and "them". On a macro level self is "fundamentally assumed" (i.e. naturalized) and identified with "history's victors", while others exist on the margins of self (Coronil 1992). These processes are reproduced on the micro level, however, the power relations in defining centre and margins (i.e. us and them) can be temporarily redirected by the actions of the individuals and their ability to harness the flow of power.

[5] By "essential difference" I mean variations between peoples which are socially constructed as mattering and used to mark the boundaries of a group of people as "essentially different" from "us" (i.e. those doing the

positionality. According to Friedman's (1995) conception of relational positionality, the ways in which social actors position themselves in relation to one another must be used to supplement agonistic white-other binaries. To look only at the binary is to ignore how identities may shift and how power can circulate (however fleeting) in complicated ways, re-directing the flow of power from victimizer to victimized (e.g. from "White" to "Other").

Further, I argue that to more fully understand identities they should be considered relationally since they are constructed in relation to others, not in isolation as "islands on to themselves" (Barth 1969). Thus, the scripts by which one defines "us" says a lot about "them" and vice versa. Necessarily, how social boundaries between us and them are marked and how they shift in social interaction must be considered in the analysis. It is not only what occurs within the boundary, but also what happens across it that is important in envisioning oneself. Examining how the participants communicated their identities and how these identities shift, leads to a more complex understanding of how the boundaries between us and them shift, dependent upon the point of reference. The relational approach also lends itself well to analyzing narratives of a varied group of participants in that identity groups do not exist in isolation from one another so neither does the group of research participants.

I chose to conduct research with a "racially varied" group of participants for two reasons. First, to facilitate comparisons of immigration experiences across "racial boundaries" to ascertain if and how the colour of one's skin and identities matter in the immigration process. Second, to facilitate discussion of how identity options were either opened up or restricted for participants through the immigration process.

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defining). Skin colour is one example of "essential difference".

[6] I include in the "immigration process" deciding to emigrate, immigrating, and adjusting to a new locale.

Although a group of nine participants is too small to allow any generalizing claims to be made beyond this group, comparisons within the research group are possible. I chose this approach as one of the main purposes of the thesis was to examine how participants may differentially experience the immigration process because of their identities and the colour of their skin. This allowed me to move the analysis beyond more prevalent "immigrant integration" studies of 'ethnic group X in location Y' (i.e. *the* Chinese in Vancouver); studies which often served to neutralize intra-group variation and put forward generalizing claims about the ethnic group as a whole.[7] A varied group of participants facilitates comparisons of experiences within the research group to assess which experiences may be related to country of origin, which may be related to categorical ascriptions of otherness, or which may be some combination thereof. For example, moving beyond 'ethnic group X in location Y' enables me to comment on how experiences may be similar among participants because they immigrated from South Africa, rather than attribute similarities to

[7] These studies often relied on researchers defining participants rather than participants defining themselves, and may also have ignored "racial diasporas". Although somewhat useful at a general level, the macro focus ignored internal variation within the research category. Although generalizing within an ethnic group underscores the commonalities, the analysis is accurate but incomplete (Rosaldo 1993:128). Further, groups were uncritically defined and reproduced according to "essential difference" without addressing the construction of "differences that matter" that makes this separation possible in the first place. There is a wide range of studies that I include in this category, not all of which rely on ethnicity.

For example, Buchignani's (1980) "The Social and Self-Identities of Fijian Indians in Vancouver" addressed self-identity only at a group level, ignoring variation within the group and the internal power relationships in defining membership (I come back to this point later in the thesis when discussing definitions of "Chineseness" in Vancouver's Chinatown). Ramcharan's (1976) study of "West Indians in Toronto" accounted for "heterogeneous skin colours", but asserted that categorization of respondents into "light skinned" and "dark skinned" "was done objectively by the researcher". (This is a truly remarkable feat given the infinite possible gradations. See also footnote 10 in the following Chapter.) Unfortunately there is no indication as to how "light skinned" and "dark skinned" was operationalized.

Yet another study differentiated between "visible" and "not visible" immigrants "by virtue of racial difference" (i.e. "non-white"), determined by country of origin (Schissel, Warner, and Frideres 1989). Those originating from Africa were assumed to be visible, which, by extension, means that "White" South Africans would be defined as "visible by virtue of racial difference".

It is important to note that over time studies such as these are becoming less frequent, as work in the field of anti-racism impinges on "immigration studies" (e.g. Henry 1994).

their membership in a specific ethnic or "racial" group.

There are a number of necessary considerations that arise from conducting research on identity with people who immigrated from South Africa. First, there is the effect of apartheid. Because South Africa under apartheid was a deeply divided society, there are deep divisions between peoples, marked by "racial boundaries". Although apartheid has been officially dismantled these boundaries persist, even in the diaspora. Further the participants' "discursive productions" of identity are also affected by political changes in the "new" South Africa.

Also to be considered are public discourses in Canada about what it means to be "from South Africa"[8] (some of the more prevalent ones encountered by the participants focused on starvation, oppression, and racialization). Discourses about South Africanness (e.g. "racialist")[9] and Canadianness (e.g. "multicultural haven") may bump up against the participants' experiences which can affect how they see themselves, as well as how they define themselves in opposition to unfamiliar categorical constructions (and assumptions) of otherness. For example, although the Canadian government promotes itself internationally as a defender of human rights, participants contrasted this against the state's treatment of aboriginal peoples and some of the participants' experiences of being racialized and/or racism in Greater Vancouver.

Canada provided more identity options to choose from, which are less clearly-defined because of the state's (professed) emphasis on self-definition/ascription of identity

[8] I place "from South Africa" in quotes because the question "where are you from" was somewhat problematic for some of the participants because they found it marginalizing. I come back to this point later in the thesis.

[9] I use the suffix "ness" (e.g. South Africanness) to denote a categorical identity that is determined by much more than state borders. It includes a consciousness and awareness about what it means to be South African in boundary processes. Notions of "ness" are ambiguous and context-dependent because of the shifting

rather than legislated racial categorization to determine life chances. On the one hand, the "diversity"[10] of Greater Vancouver makes it easier to "fit in" (Lily) because there are so many people from so many places. While on the other hand, participants encountered various stereotypes linking "race" to place based on common sense knowledge that could be othering or marginalizing. In sum, the relative "freedom" of Canada serves both to constrain and enable identity options.

In the next chapter, I elaborate on processes of identity, boundary marking, and relational positioning. In Chapter Two, I discuss some of the reasons why "South Africans" emigrated and offer brief descriptions of the participants. In Chapter Three I discuss my motivations for conducting research with "South African immigrants", how the narratives were collected, and some of the methodological considerations that arose while conducting the research. The narratives are presented in Chapter Four, followed by reflections on the research findings in Chapter Five.

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boundaries between us and them in social practice.

[10] "Diversity" appears in quotes, because it is a loaded term used to refer to "racial"and ethnic others who are defined in opposition to neutralized, hegemonic notions of "White", British and French "non-ethnic" Canadians. For a more detailed discussion of the "problem of diversity" than can be offered here see Day (1998).

CHAPTER ONE

THEORIZING "US" AND "THEM"

> *Men have always divided the world up into regions having either real or imagined distinction from each other. .... It is enough for "us" to set up these boundaries in our own minds; "they" become they accordingly, and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from "ours". To a certain extent... societies seem thus to derive a sense of their identities negatively. A fifth-century Athenian was very likely to feel himself to be nonbarbarian as much as he positively felt himself to be Athenian.*
>
> Edward W. Said Orientalism (1978:39,54)

Identity is something that becomes salient in interaction, for identity is significant only in relation to (an)other. For example, ethnic, "racial", or national identity is significant only if people believe there are other ethnies, "races", or nations to be differentiated from. People define themselves and others through socially constructed categories that rely on "differences" that are communicated as "mattering" between "us and them", which in turn are used to delineate and communicate a sense of self. Therefore the boundaries that serve to differentiate between us and them are significant in defining not only who is to be excluded, but also who will be included.

These considerations are key in analyzing the possible scripts and ways in which people communicate who they are and, just as significantly, who they are not by marking boundaries according to "differences that matter". Notions of "essential difference" are significant because they provide scripts that simultaneously communicate notions of otherness (i.e. who they are) as well as usness (i.e. who we are not). Conversely, these "differences" serve to mis-categorize peoples according to essentialized notions of "the Other". Implicit in this relationship is a struggle for power. Power in determining whose

definition is salient in which contexts, power in redefining notions of self and other, power in having a particular distinction between "us and them" transformed into common sense knowledge.

Because identities are relational, my analysis of identity includes not only the markers used to define self, but also the markers used to define others. In this chapter, I elaborate on how and why distinctions between us and them "matter" in communicating identity. This is followed by an outline of the strengths and weaknesses of selected theoretical approaches on identity and the merits of a relational positionality framework in analyzing identity narratives.

Constructing Categories

> *... what we consider to be "natural" can and does change with corresponding transitions in human thought. .... All constructions of "reality" must be seen as a product of the human capacity for thought and, consequently, are subject to change and variability.*
>
> Peter Jackson and Jan Penrose "Placing 'Race' and Nation" (1993:2-3)

The underlying framework of this thesis is social construction theory, which critiques the role social categories play in structuring our experiences and analysis of the world (Jackson and Penrose 1993:2). Although categories provide a framework to make "sense" out of continuous variation (ibid.; Somers and Gibson 1994:79) they are problematic when "naturalized" and, as a result, so too are the relationships of power that lend legitimacy to securing advantages to some over, or at the expense of, others (Jackson and Penrose

1993:2).[11] By bringing the power relationships onto "theoretical centre-stage" (Jenkins 1986), "a whole range of 'givens'" (Jackson and Penrose 1993:2) and "false certainties imposed by categorical approaches to identity" (Somers and Gibson 1994:40) can be re-evaluated. There is a subtle yet critical distinction to be made here in that the point is not about exposing social constructs as "false", but rather to focus the critique on "the falseness of our unquestioning acceptance of these constructs from which their legitimacy derives" (Jackson and Penrose 1993:3, emphasis added).

It is important to state that this thesis is not about finding some "pre-existing" and/or "real" categories which can be found by deconstructing social categories, nor how categories can be empowered in "the pursuit of equality".[12] Nor is it about proposing "new" or "better" categories for social analysis. My purpose is to examine the effects of these categorizations on the identities of the research participants and the ways in which "power circulates in complicated ways" (Friedman 1995) in negotiating identities within contested categories. It is also important to state that I do not regard power as an object of exclusive possession, but rather as a social process that becomes salient through interaction. In other words, power is

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[11] For example, arguing that "South African Blacks" are not as intelligent as "South African Whites" neutralizes and legitimizes the structural inequalities which advantaged "Whites" without critically examining the iniquitous structure used to divide "races" and entrench "White intellectual superiority". Now that (some) "Blacks" are being more fully incorporated into South African society, some "non-Blacks" complain that "the standards are declining" because they are being "down-graded for the Blacks". A critical analysis of the false certainties about "Black intelligence", the systemic discrimination under apartheid that gave rise to this situation, and the neutrality of "White" as the unspoken determiner of "*the* standards" are strategically absent in discussions about "declining standards".

[12] This is not; however, to say that I do not agree with these ideas. The re-casting and literal empowerment of the category "Black" in the United States by Stokely Carmichael and the Black Power movement, which later inspired "red power" (Deloria 1988:179-182), are prime examples of the deconstruction and reconstruction of "racial" categories.

Deloria identifies how some aspects of power associated with a category can, however, be over-looked when focusing on empowerment. "Black power, as many Indian people began to understand it, was not so much an affirmation of black people as it was an anti-white reaction. Blacks... obviously had power in many respects. In some instances, publicity for example, blacks had much more power than anyone dreamed possible" (ibid:182).

not something that one possesses in isolation from one's ability to assert it over someone else.

"Us" and "Them": The not-so-great divide

> *Culture is what makes the boundaries of domains seem natural, what gives ideologies power, and what makes hegemonies appear seamless.*
> Sylvia Yanagisako and Carol Delaney Naturalizing Power (1995:19).

Barth's (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* is the root of the analytical framework. His "seminal work" (Jenkins 1986) argued against isolationist approaches that treated an ethnic group "as an island to itself" (Barth 1969:11). Instead, he offered an interactionist approach, viewing ethnicity as situationally defined through practices of production and reproduction. Barth shifted the analysis from the "cultural stuff" enclosed by the boundaries, to boundary processes. However, as Anthias and Yuval-Davis point out, it is impractical to look at one and not the other, because in practice it is the cultural stuff that is used to determine whether one can cross the boundary or will be excluded (1993:4). In other words, boundaries serve to exclude, but it is the cultural stuff, enclosed by the boundary, that provides the basis for determining inclusion or exclusion.

> Although the boundaries are ideological they involve material practices, and therefore material origins and effects. The boundary is a space for struggle and negotiation. Ethnic resources (such as language, culture, religion, gender relations) can be used in interplay with the class and political resources and positionings of the group. Ethnic processes are often implicated therefore in the pursuit of diverse political ends. These may involve exclusionary and inclusionary practices for maintaining the privileges along a number of different dimensions, or for countering those of other groups. Ethnicity can therefore be a medium for class, nation or state formation. .... Class projects may use a variety of means, which may include racist formulations of an immutable essential difference to the group for pursuing

> exploitation. Racial projects may be a mode for preserving ethnic exclusivity and privileges within the nation state of the dominant ethnic group. (ibid:4-5)

I include this lengthy quote for its relevance to South Africa. In 1948 the National Party argued that in order for the "White race" to "survive", separation between "races" was necessary (Christopher 1994:4); however, apartheid's "racial boundaries" were as much about political and material gains as survival.[13] Pro-apartheidists posited economic equality as a stepping stone to political equality and, by extension, a threat to the very existence of the "White race". For example, in 1954, B.J. Schoeman, the South African Minister of Labour, stated: "if we reach the stage where the Native can climb to the highest rung in our economic ladder and be appointed in a supervisory capacity over Europeans, then the other equality; namely political equality, must inevitably follow and that will mean the end of the European race" (in ibid:2).[14]

The "myth of racial purity"[15] and "immutable essential difference" were used to exclude "non-White/non-European others" from civil society, thereby facilitating their political and economic domination by "Whites". "Racial" boundaries became "a space for struggle and negotiation" because moving up the "racial" hierarchy improved one's life chances. Although the pinnacle of the hierarchy was reserved for "Whites Only", it was

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[13] Apartheid can be seen as a solution to the "public problem" (Gusfield 1981) of poor whiteism (Barkley 1991) and conflicts between "the English" and "the Afrikaner" (Adam, personal communication).

[14] "European" signified "White", thereby conflating "European" and "White".

[15] The "myth of racial purity" not only perpetuates the idea of "races", but also e-races the reality of centuries of "miscegenation" between socially constructed "racial" categories. For example, van den Berghe has argued that "One can safely estimate that anywhere from one-tenth to one-quarter of the persons classified as "White" in the Cape Province are of mixed descent, and that every "old family" from White Cape Society has genealogical connections with Coloured families" (1965:42; see also Simons 1970:viii).

Van Amersfoort makes an interesting observation in that "the British always considered themselves so weak that the slightest drop of foreign blood could de-classify their offspring", whereas the Dutch "followed the opposite rule. They considered themselves so important that any trace of Dutch ancestry (provided it was legal!) was sufficient to classify a child as Dutch" (in Stone 1985:19). In apartheid South Africa, social perceptions were a significant factor in determining "race" (see Watson 1970).

possible for some to cross the boundary by "passing for White". "Pass-Whites", people officially classified as "Coloured", were able to change their racial classification to "White" by building up a "White profile" and being socially accepted as "White" (Watson 1970). To do so, those on the margins of the racial category "White", relied on the "gamut of fixed notions" (Minh-ha 1995[1991]) associated with Whiteness to re-situate themselves in the racial hierarchy. I employ this example to demonstrate that, in practice, as Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1993) assert, both the boundaries *and* the cultural stuff were important, because the "cultural stuff" associated with Whiteness "provided the credentials" not only to determine Whiteness, but also to cross the "racial boundary" and *be White*".

Jenkins' (1986) distinction between categories and identities picks up where Barth's boundary analysis left off by using more precise terms to differentiate between internal and external boundary processes. Jenkins argued that "categories" are other-imposed--(re)produced *outside* or across an ethnic boundary--whereas "identity" is self-ascribed--(re)produced *within* the boundary.

> Categorisation, in particular, is intimately bound up with power relations and relates to the ability of one group successfully to impose its categories of ascription upon another set of people and to the resources which the categorised collectivity can draw upon to resist, if need be, that imposition. To acknowledge the significance of the distinction between [group identification and categorization] is, therefore, to place relationships of domination and subordination on the theoretical centre-stage. (ibid.)

Jenkins, citing Banton, goes on to differentiate between ethnicity and "race" in similar terms, whereby "ethnicity is generally more concerned with the identification of 'us' while racism is more oriented to the categorisation of 'them'" (ibid:177).[16] However, the

[16] See footnote 12 for an example of resisting the imposition of categories of ascription while at the same time identifying with the "racial" categorization.

existence of racist attitudes alone does not constitute racism, as racism necessarily entails struggles for power and the desire of a group/s to marginalize and dominate others. Further, although "race" "is primarily defined by reference to [a] purported inherent and immutable difference from, and/or inferiority to, the dominant group", this does not preclude identification with "racial" categories (ibid:178).

Bell hooks' essay "Revolutionary Black Women: Making Ourselves Subject" provides just such an example. She writes that growing up in a segregated black community--a result of the determination of "racial" inferiority by dominant "Whites"--"gave me a grounding in a positive experience of 'blackness' that sustained me when I left the community to enter racially segregated settings, where racism informed most social interactions" (1992:44).

Marable's (1992) distinction between "black" and "blackness" is useful in further analyzing hooks' "positive sense of blackness" (as well as other racialized identities). He argues that "Black" is a "race", whereas "Blackness" is about "much more than race". Blackness denotes culture, tradition, rituals, values, beliefs, social experiences, etcetera. It includes processes of awareness and consciousness constructed from within, and serves as a "cultural umbilical cord" connecting those in the diaspora to Africa (Marable 1992). By contrast, "Black" is a distinction forced upon "others" by their oppressors (Cambridge 1996). Relating this back to Jenkins' (1986) distinction between categories and identities, "Black" is a category, whereas "Blackness" is an identity. However, being racialized precedes Blackness as a form of consciousness because "Black", as a socially meaningful category, mediates experiences of Blackness (i.e. one does not experience Blackness without the category "Black").

Although Jenkins' distinction between categories and identities made sense at a theoretical level, this static framework, on its own, proved ineffective when participants would position themselves within a category in one context, yet in opposition to it in the next.[17] Further, as bell hooks' experience demonstrates, categorization can be internalized as a form of identity because Blackness is preceded by one's identification with the category "Black".[18]

Relational Positionality: Bridging "Us and Them"

> *... the concepts of narrative identity and relational setting allow us to reconceptualize the subject--object dynamic of modern social theory.*
>
> Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson "Reclaiming the Epistemological 'Other': Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity" (1994:79).

Friedman's framework of relational positionality helps to circumvent the conundrum of identifying with categories. Friedman argued that agonistic white/other binaries should be supplemented with relational positionality. Because identities are relational, so too must be the analytical approach. Thus, it is useful to distinguish othering processes in agonistic binaries, but this does not preclude identifying with a category in relation to some other position. Her relational positionality framework allows for categories of "White" and "Other" to be fixed in public narratives, at the same time as multiple and fluid identities shift in social interaction. So although South African "race relations" are often situated within binary White-Other categories at macro levels, this does not mean that in inter-personal

[17] For example, one of the participants said "I'm a Black South African", and then later said, "Black, I don't even use that word, I prefer to call myself African". He first positioned himself within the category "Black" (i.e., he identified with it), and then outside of it (i.e., it was a categorization of otherness that he did not identify with). I come back to this later in the thesis.

[18] Thanks to Heribert Adam for drawing out this theoretical limitation.

interactions all of one's identities will necessarily be pre-determined in the same way.

> Within a relational framework, identities shift with a changing context, dependent always upon the point of reference. Not essences or absolutes, identities are fluid sites that can be understood differently depending on the vantage point of their formation and function. .... Scripts of relational positionality construct a multiplicity of fluid identities defined and acting situationally. (Friedman 1995:17)

Because identities are fluid, so too is the flow of power, which means that "victims can also be victimizers" (Friedman 1995:19). As a result of this fluidity, the struggle for power becomes a central ingredient in positioning self and other (ibid:38; Somers and Gibson 1994:55). Identities are situated in particular times, spaces, and relationships of power. By using narratives to elicit identities, the fluidity of identity and how identities shift can be used to decentre categorical stability.

> [T]he narrative identity approach embeds the actor within relationships and stories that shift over time and space and thus precludes categorical stability in action. These temporally and spatially shifting configurations form the relational coordinates of ontological, public, and cultural narratives. It is within these temporal and multi-layered narratives that identities are formed; hence narrative identity is processual and relational. (Somers and Gibson 1994:65)[19]

Subjects are constituted through a multiplicity of possible identifications, some of which become salient in certain contexts" (Scott 1992:19; see also Maré 1993[1992]; Williams 1989).[20] History then, is an ongoing process of repetitive differentiation, "subject

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[19] Somers and Gibson identify four dimensions of narratives: ontological, public, conceptual, and "meta" narrativity (1994:60). Ontological narratives are the "stories social actors use to make sense of their lives" and "are used to define who we are", making "identity and self something that one *becomes*" (ibid:61, emphasis in original). Public narratives are "attached to cultural and institutional formations larger than the single individual" (ibid:62). Conceptual narratives are the concepts and explanations constructed by social researchers (ibid.). Metanarratives are "master-narratives" (1994:63).

According to this approach, the stories the participants told me are ontological narratives. Public narratives (such as "race") limit the possibility and potential of the ontological narratives. This chapter is part of the conceptual narrative used to interpret the ontological and public narratives. For the most part, I leave aside metanarratives.

[20] For example, "[t]he same individual of mixed ancestry may be considered 'white' in Brazil (provided that they are reasonably wealthy), 'coloured' in Barbados, and 'black' in Birmingham, Alabama (Hoetnik 1967; Pitt-Rivers 1973)" (Stone 1985:19).

to redefinition, resistance and change" (Scott 1992) in the meanings associated with social categories. Oscillating identity options are multiple and fluctuating processes, but identity expression is limited by broader political and social contexts, as well as by the social actors themselves. As the meanings of categories change, so too do the possibilities for thinking about oneself (Scott 1992a:35) and harnessing the flow of power. Accordingly, the question of identity must be contextualized (ibid.; Somers and Gibson 1994), because identity expression is both constrained and enabled by changing notions of differences that matter.

Although constructions of "difference" fluctuate, this shifting and repetitive differentiation according to problematic categories, such as "race", can be neutralized through "diversity" frameworks. Thus, adopting a diversity framework to analyze identity is also problematic in that although it accommodates a "plurality of differences", the production, history, and politics of the "difference" and identity itself remain intact (Scott 1992:14). Instead, "difference" must be conceived of as part of the process through which power is constituted, not as a "sociological fact", or as evidence of some preexisting category (Scott in October 1992:38). For example, the "fact" of "diversity" in Greater Vancouver neutralizes the power relations in the (re)production of "differences" that are perceived of as mattering, and the ways in which those "differences" are recognized.[21]

A diversity framework serves to naturalize taxonomies of essential difference, creating "false certainties" about "us and them" which further cloud relationships of power implicit in the construction of differences that matter. What is needed, suggest Gupta and Ferguson, is a critique of "the apparent 'given'" of a world divided into "ourselves and

[21] Ken talked of how in Vancouver's Punjabitown and Chinatown the street names are in Punjabi and Chinese characters respectively. "Now would the authorities grant these two communities permission to do that

others" in the first place (1992:16). "Difference-producing sets of relations" perpetuate "differences that matter" out of common, shared, and inter-connected spaces (ibid.). For example, how, out of the shared and inter-connected spaces contained within the border of South Africa was such a radical separation between "us" and "them" in thought, if not in practice, possible?

Again, this is not to say that taxonomies of essential difference are not entrenched social practices. Just as one may identify positively with a "racial" category, one may also rely on "essential difference" to communicate who one is and, conversely, who one is not. The likelihood of communicating one's identity through "essential difference" increases in interactions with those perceived to be non-members (i.e. "them"), for identity depends on "the other" for meaning.[22] Because notions of self-identity are continually (re)defined relative to ascriptions of otherness, identity must be analyzed as a social and political (and arguably economic) construct in the same way that social categories are.

In inter-group/personal interactions, identities and categories may be over-communicated through essentialized categories serving to naturalize the particular--or as is more often the case, the peculiar--as the general. The more the particularities of otherness can be essentialized and communicated as different (and distant) from notions of "us-ness", the more likely these defining characteristics are to be elevated to the level of definitive markers of otherness. Because there are two-sides to any boundary, a key aspect of boundary maintenance involves "the manipulation of perceived significant differences" between us and them (Jenkins 1986:175). It is not only what occurs within the boundary,

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if they did not wield economic power? It comes down to the mighty dollar bringing favours."

[22] "There are no mutually exclusive subjects/objects" (Dei 1998).

but also how the margins can be manipulated that is significant. By tugging at the margins one can alter the flow of power and thus alter the "fundamental experience" of being marginalized (Douglas 1966:121). Therefore, the analytical approach must "problematize the unity of 'us' and the otherness of the 'other'" by questioning "the radical separation" that makes this agonistic opposition possible in the first place (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:14). In other words, the question as to how "different" are the "differences" that separate us, is important in over-coming othering processes by re-connecting the linkages between us and them.[23]

Multiple and contradictory identities of the social actor are "always contingent and precarious" (Mouffe 1992), and consequently not fixed, yet at the same time, the fluctuating identities of the signified are limited to some extent by the signifier. Although Scott and Mouffe are careful not to fix identity as an object, the difficulties in applying this approach are not addressed. In practice, as soon as an identity is claimed it becomes fixed, if only for the particular context in which it is being described and claimed.[24] In turn, the "fixing" of identity through categories limits the potential identities one can claim and, as a result, the potential for expression.[25]

For example, being fixed as "Black" limits one to racialized representations of

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[23] Also essential in solidarity work.

[24] In the research, the participants' identities are fixed according to what they communicated during the interview and what I have included in the thesis.

[25] Aline related a story that illustrates this point.

> A guy phoned me and says to me, "Aline I don't want to be a South African". I said to him "It's not a matter of wanting. It's not up to you to decide, you are what you are. You may want to be Swiss, you can never be my boy, take it from me. You are not what you want, you are what you are, and whatever else you try to be you will always be a failure because it's going to be imitation and not the real thing. So better stick to your roots, because if you cut your roots you die. So stick to your roots and forget this nonsense."

Aline's story demonstrates the prevalence of categories, and the perception of their immutability. Her "root" analogy also serves to "naturalize" national "difference". The "guy" could, of course, choose to become a

Blackness. However, this "fixing of essential difference" in categories of "us" and "them" allows social actors to determine which role each is expected to play. The social dance is played out as each tries to "fix" the other and self in relation to one another and, in the process, delineate the ambiguous and shifting boundary between them. Because "the Other" has been pre-defined, one knows how to interact with "them" based on common sense knowledge of the "essential differences" between them.

"Essential difference allows those who rely on it to rest reassuringly on its gamut of fixed notions. Any mutation in identity, in essence, in regularity, and even in physical place poses a problem, if not a threat in terms of classification and control. If you can't locate the other, how are you to locate yourself?" (Minh-ha 1995[1991]:217). What is interesting to note is that neither "differences" nor social categories can be fixed for long in practice. Despite protracted efforts, even the apartheid regime could not definitively fix "racial difference". For example, in March 1987 Time reported that "nine whites became coloured, 506 coloureds became white, two whites became Malay, 14 Malay became white... 40 coloureds became black, 666 blacks became coloured" and so on (in Minh-ha 1995[1991]:217; see also Lamb 1987).

There is an inherent contradiction whenever an identity is claimed in that the "differences" being challenged are concomitantly being reaffirmed (Scott 1992:38). Deloria takes this idea a step further, arguing that as long as one rebels against categories, one continues to be imprisoned by them (1988:169).[26] In the example above, categories of "difference" were, on the one hand, challenged by racial reclassification, yet, on the other

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Swiss citizen and *be* Swiss.

[26] See also footnote 12.

hand, served to reaffirm the notion of "racial difference". The "cultural stuff" enclosed by the boundaries was challenged, not the existence and necessity of the categories themselves. So even though one could "rebel" against one's classification, reclassification perpetuated one's imprisonment in apartheid's racial hierarchy.

Scott posits that "difference" does not precede discrimination, but rather "difference" is "produced by discrimination, a process that establishes the superiority or the typicality or the universality of some in terms of the inferiority or atypicality or particularity of others" (1992:14-15; see also Dei 1998). In other words, "racial difference" is produced through the practice of discrimination, and not the other way around. As a result, "the autonomy and stability" of any identity (including "White") must be called into question (Scott 1992:16).

The Racial Bind: What does Whiteness have to do with it?

> *The irony [of the "one drop rule"] was that the very people or groups who deliberately created racial classifications in the first place often could not even identify correctly those individuals they wanted to classify; obviously skin colour was now a poor indicator of race.*
>
> Margaret R. Somers and Gloria D. Gibson "Reclaiming the Epistemological "Other": Narrative and the Social Constitution of Identity" (1994:68).

> *White solutions fail because white itself is an abstraction of an attitude of mind, not a racial or group reality. .... But the temptation has always been present to define groups according to their most superficial aspect. .... White has been abstracted into a magical nebulous mythology that dominates all inhabitants of our country in their attitudes toward one another. We are, consequently, all prisoners of that mythology as far as we rebel against it. It is our misfortune that our economic system reflects uncritical acceptance of the mythology and that economic movements tend to reinforce the myth.*
>
> Vine Deloria, Jr. Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto (1988:189, emphasis in original)

Although I have already mentioned "race" as an ascription of "otherness", it is

necessary to provide further comment given its significance in apartheid South Africa. The boundary processes are similar to those I have described above, but the key marker of these boundaries is skin colour,[27] making it more difficult to cross boundaries--though not impossible.[28] As Heribert Adam has so succinctly characterized it, "race" is a "figment of the pigment".[29] By this I am not asserting that there is a biological basis to "race", but rather follow Yanagisako and Delaney who argue that rather than conceiving of "race" as biological difference, it should be regarded as "a system of social categories *constructed in terms of biological difference*" (1995:20, emphasis in original). To put it another way, "race relations have little to do with any objective characteristics of 'race' *per se* and much to do with relationships between socially defined groups" (Stone 1985:19).

Although some authors have argued that to talk about "race" as a concept perpetuates the idea of ontologically real "races" (e.g. Miles and Torres 1996), it is difficult to speak of the effects of institutionalized racism in other than "racial" terms (Barkley 1998). Further, as Dei (1998) argues against Miles and Torres, if "race" "was merely a concept, we could abandon it". I follow Anthias and Yuval-Davis, who argue that "'race' denotes a particular way in which communal differences come to be constructed and therefore it cannot be erased from the analytical map" (1992:2). Further, as Dei (1998) states: "Rather than deny race, it is worthwhile to work to dismantle fixed and stratified constructions of race, and, to disassociate conventional meanings from race".

It is also important to emphasize that "White" too is a "race" and therefore a social

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[27] Dei (1998) writes "the permanence of skin colour as marker of difference cannot be overemphasised".

[28] As demonstrated by "Passing for White" (Watson 1970).

[29] I prefer this characterization to Stone's (1985) more ambiguous characterization of race as a "figment of the imagination".

construction that cannot be separated from "racial" dominance (Frankenberg 1997:9,21). In apartheid South Africa, this is more evident than in the North American context where, until recently, "White" was often "e-raced" from the analytical map.[30] Although "White" is the referent for "racial others", it is often neutralized and naturalized as a non-racial category. By naturalizing "White" as *the* "racial" referent, the reality of continuous variation in the human race is "e-raced" from the imagination. It is impossible; however, to ignore the ambiguity produced by this continuity in practice. The neutrality of the category "White" is juxtaposed against the significance attached to "racial others". To put it another way, while "White" serves as the referent for "racial otherness", it is at the same time often neutralized and, therefore, "e-raced" as a problematic "racial" category (Barkley 1998). "White" is "the unmarked category against which difference is constructed" (Lipsitz 1995:369)--difference "produced by discrimination" (Scott 1992:14).

Frankenberg argues that "white people often view themselves as nonracial or racially neutral" (1993:1). "In examining whiteness, in seeking to account for its variable visibility, one must recognize how continual processes of slippage, condensation, and displacement among the constructs of "race," "nation," and "culture," continue to "unmark" white people while consistently marking and racializing others" (Frankenberg 1997:6).[31]

Whiteness is differentiated from Blackness by more than colour (i.e. the difference between Whiteness and Blackness is more than pigment), in that it is unmarked privilege. Further, Whiteness is the "norm" against which "racial others" are defined, and in turn, "Whites" define themselves against. I rely on Frankenberg's definition of "whiteness" as a

[30] See Frankenberg (1997) for a history of the analysis of Whiteness.

[31] For example, "White" is unmarked in determining South Africa's "standards", now believed to be in

set of three linked dimensions. "First, whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a "standpoint", a place from which white people look at ourselves, at others, and at society. Third, whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed" (Frankenberg 1993:1).

South African whiteness differs from Frankenberg's third dimension in that whiteness as a set of cultural practices was publicly marked, named, and rigidly enforced by apartheid laws, yet still remained somewhat neutral. The first and second dimensions--a location of privilege and a standpoint--were arguably more pronounced in South Africa under apartheid than in the American context in which Frankenberg's work is situated (Barkley 1998); however, "racelessness" remains an exclusive privilege of whiteness (see also Dei 1998).

It is important to link the notion of Whiteness back to my earlier discussion of "passing for white" (Watson 1970). Although "White" was an elaborately defined and ever-prevalent category that guaranteed "racial" privilege in apartheid South Africa (Barkley 1998a), in practice the dividing line between "White" and "non-White" was ambiguous not only because of the arbitrary divisions based on "the figment of the pigment", but also because "White" too is a social construction. "Passing" was possible not only because of the ambiguity inherent in determining "race" on the basis of social characteristics--"constructed in terms of biological differences" (Yanagisako and Delaney 1995)--but also because "races" exist only because they are "imagined" to.[32]

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decline.

[32] I borrow loosely from Anderson's idea of the nation as an "imagined community" to argue that "races" are "imagined". He states that "Communities [races] are to be distinguished... by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson 1991:6). Because "race" exists only in the imagination, there is no way to consistently differentiate between the "imagined races". As the imagining of "racial difference" changes, so to does the

In sum, ideas of "race" and otherness, *including* "Whiteness", are fluctuating constructions that are dependent on the ways in which they are imagined, and the salience and/or powerfulness of a particular imagining. The centres shift as the margins are pulled or pushed in a particular direction, causing the boundaries between "us" and "thems" to slide along the continuum of human variation. The arbitrary divisions on the continuum result in anomalous spaces between categories (Douglas 1966) which can be used to challenge the boundary between "us" and "them", while perceptions of ontological boundaries between "racial categories" remain relatively intact.

Wallman's analogy of shifting ethnic boundaries applies equally well to shifting "racial boundaries". She writes: "An alteration of one shifts the boundary and impinges on its other side--like the change in air pressure in a balloon" (1986:231). "Political and cultural struggles over power shape the contours and dimensions of [race and] racism in any era" (Lipsitz 1995:371), just as differential air pressure alters the shape of a balloon.

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construction upon which "race" relies (Barkley 1998), and therefore so too does the way in which racialized "others" are imagined to exist as a category in opposition to "us". For a history of the ways in which "race" and "racial difference" have been imagined over time, see Hodgen (1964) and Smedley (1993).

CHAPTER TWO

THE "PUSH" TO LEAVE AND "START OVER"

CONTEXTUALIZING SOUTH AFRICAN EMIGRATION

> *I feel like less of a person than I did when I was in South Africa. I think every immigrant probably feels the same way--that you've got to establish yourself all over again--because nobody knows you, whereas back home, you've already had so many years of connections with everybody. .... Here you just have to start all over again, but the only good thing is we have the South African (pause) group of people.* (Lily)

The above was the response of one of the research participants when I asked her if immigrating to Greater Vancouver had any effect on her identity or how she sees herself. Although immigration means having to "establish yourself all over again", Lily found support from "the South African group of people" who also decided to "start over" in Greater Vancouver. So what push factors prompted South Africans to leave established lives?

In this chapter, I very briefly outline the effects of the rise and fall of apartheid in structuring peoples' lives, and thus affecting how they see themselves. This is followed by an outline of the three largest periods of out-migrations starting in 1976 and ending with the migration that coincided with the political changes in the "new" South Africa in the 1990's.[33] I then discuss South African immigration to Greater Vancouver, followed by brief descriptions of the research participants.

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[33] These periods are also significant in the narratives. Although none of the participants came during the second period, the experiences of "White South Africans" who left prior to 1994 are contrasted with the experiences of those leaving in 1994 by Craig and Aline--primarily in their ability to "be South African". I

The Rise and Fall of Apartheid

In South Africa in 1948, the National Party was elected on the apartheid platform to ensure the continuation of the "White/European race". From that point on, racial categories were used to determine access to differential political, economic and social resources that further entrenched the emerging overlap between "race" and class (Adam and Moodley 1986, 1993; Commonwealth Group 1986).

Eventually, Canada and other states joined in condemning apartheid through cultural and economic sanctions. The Canadian government conveniently ignored however, that the South African Bantustan/Homeland system was based on Canada's reservation system, and the many other parallels between the treatment of First Nations in Canada and "Blacks" in South Africa (e.g., pass laws). Nonetheless, the hypocrisy of Canada's international stand in relation to its internal policies was not lost on the more politicized research participants.

State administration of apartheid became increasingly expensive over the years as complex legislation resulted in multiple jurisdictions and overlapping authorities (Christopher 1994:49; Commonwealth Group 1998; Lamb 1987) to maintain the ideology of separate "racial" development.[34] In practice however, "Whites" were dependent on the labour of the "Black" majority (Adam and Moodley 1993:12). So although the economic system relied on "racial" inter-dependence, the ideology of segregation persisted for over four decades.[35]

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return to this point later in the thesis.

[34] For example, close to 20% of South Africa's national budget went to defense (Lamb 1987:317), while approximately two-thirds of budget expenditures were allocated to civil service salaries (Commonwealth Group 1986:35).

[35] The reasons for dismantling apartheid cannot be summarized here. To over-simplify, the apartheid state

In 1990 Nelson Mandela was released from prison, banned organizations were legalized and the repealing of apartheid laws began (ibid:39). In a 1992 referendum, over sixty-eight percent of "Whites" agreed to a power sharing agreement (ibid:2). In 1994, South Africa had its historic "all race elections" whereby Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, a formerly banned political organization, ended the reign of the National Party. However, because of the overlap between "race" and class, deeply entrenched through apartheid, to undo apartheid is to undo the effects of decades of legalized and overt class warfare (signified by "race") under the guise of separate development (Barkley 1998).

As Adam and Moodley predicted, although political power is increasingly vested in the hands of the formerly disenfranchised majority, the transference of economic and bureaucratic power lags behind (1993:3-4; see also Meares 1997). Even though ten percent of companies listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange are now run by "Blacks"--up from zero in 1990--the overlap between "race" and class continues "to an extraordinary degree", despite the rapid emergence of a small "Black" bourgeoisie (Adam 1998; also Meares 1997).

Along with the unprecedented political changes in the 1990's, there was an accompanying fear-factor among non-Africans about the effect the political changes (i.e. "African rule") would have on their lives. Political instability and nationalizing of "non-African-owned properties" in the rest of neo-colonial Africa, especially the front-line states, provided fodder for these fears. In both apartheid and post-apartheid years, there were a variety of push factors to leave South Africa. The "racial" compositions of these migrations

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became increasingly unworkable. For more thoughtful and detailed explanations, see Adam and Moodley

were inversely shaped by which "race" was seen to have, or about to seize, political power.

Leaving South Africa and "Starting Over"

Over the past few decades there were three numerically significant periods of emigration from South Africa. The first was in 1976 (see also Cohen 1996), when several thousand "Blacks" fled as exiles after what has been variously described as an uprising, rioting, or massacre, depending on which aspect is emphasised. On June 16, 1976, South African police opened fire on school children in Soweto who were protesting against the use of Afrikaans as the compulsory language of instruction. The violent actions of the state on that day lead to "disturbances" in other parts of South Africa and an international out-cry (Christopher 1994:163-165; see also Adam and Moodley 1993; IDAFSA 1983; S.A. Institute of Race Relations 1978).[36]

One of the research participants, Ken, was a part of this exodus. For Gord, another participant who had already left South Africa, the event was a catalyst in his politicization and public condemnation of the apartheid regime.

The next emigration wave began in 1986,[37] when South Africa experienced a net immigration loss (Polonsky, Scott and Suchard 1988; 1989),[38] losing emigrants who, as a

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(1986;1993).

[36] Of the 575 deaths reported during "the disturbances", nearly half were in Soweto (Christopher 1994:165).

[37] Canadian immigration literature abounds with water metaphors (e.g., streams, pools, floods, waves).

[38] Exact emigration numbers are hard to come by "because of the incomplete reporting of emigration statistics by the South African government" (Polonsky, Scott and Suchard 1988:1300). Further, official emigration numbers would be even higher if the number of those who left permanently but did not declare themselves as doing so were to be included (Heribert Adam, personal communication). These factors combine to make it extremely difficult to provide exact numbers. Therefore, numbers provided here are "official numbers" rather than actuals, but never-the-less provide indicators as to significant periods of

collective, were more highly skilled than the general emigrant population. For example, South African immigrants to Australia in the mid-eighties, on average, had higher earning capacities than the general population of "Whites" in South Africa (Polonsky, Scott and Suchard 1989:941).

Polonsky et al argue that these emigrants were not leaving because of crime and violence, which were believed to affect predominantly city dwellers and "Blacks"--not the "White", "Coloured", and "Asian" populations like themselves who lived in the suburbs. More of a push factor to emigrate was the fear of a possible decrease in the standard of living caused by changes in government, as with the transition to "African" (i.e. majority) rule in the front-line states (e.g. Zimbabwe) (ibid:1307). A further "push" factor was the significant decrease in the "White" share of income in South Africa during the 1980's (Christopher 1994:1).[39]

The tide of emigration appeared to turn in 1992 and 1993 when South Africa experienced a net immigration gain (Chimere-Dan 1995). In 1994, the year of the "all-race elections", South Africa experienced another dramatic increase in out-migration, as 3 837 more people officially emigrated than immigrated (ibid.; Buthelezi 1996; Cohen 1996).[40] However, it is important to take into account that "there is a large deficit in the number of *economically active* people arriving [in South Africa] compared to the number leaving"

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emigration.

[39] Between 1975 and 1991 the income of South Africa's richest "Whites" remained constant, while the income of the richest "Blacks" increased by forty percent (K. Adam 1997).

[40] In 1992 out-migration was 4 289, and in-migration was 9 824. In 1993 it was 8 078, and 9 824 respectively. In 1994, the number of emigrants jumped to 10 235, while in-migration dropped to 6 398 (Chimere-Dan 1995). The South African Communication Service estimates that between January 1 and October 31, 1994, 9 072 people emigrated and 5 430 immigrated to South Africa (McBlain 1995).

(Cohen 1996, emphasis in original).[41] For example, between 1994 and 1996 the emigration of skilled professionals increased by 800% (Business Day as cited by van Jaarsveld 1996). This is further compounded by the large number of economically active and/or educated people leaving who do not declare their intention to emigrate (Cohen 1996). Emigration and the "drainage of experts" continued into 1995 and 1996, with a slight decline in the net emigration loss (Buthelezi 1996; Cohen 1996). The majority of South African emigrants, in descending order, went to Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, and Canada (Krikorian 1996; Poalses 1996).[42]

As the preferred destination of South African immigrants to Canada, 1994

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[41] Nearly two-third of immigrants to South Africa are "declared not to be economically active" (Cohen 1996). Ken said:

> ... what's happening is, people from all over Africa heard how prosperous South Africa is and so they believe that if they are to make it, they've got a hope there. .... It's almost like here in Canada back in the eighties when everybody was moving back east you know. .... Now, that's also causing resentment towards, towards other Africans. .... Mandela is in a difficult position Lori, in that it's payback time now, okay. By that I mean, it's time for the Mandela administration to return the favours that were accorded us during our years of exile because we are talking of people who, who sheltered, clothed and fed us for about, for more than (pause) thirty years.
>
> So the first batch of Black South Africans to flee South Africa was around, I don't know, 1962 and we all pledged to, to the newly independent African countries and these people harboured us as late as what, 1991, or '92 when Mandela was released. So it's time for us as Black South Africans to say "thank-you", and unfortunately you cannot (pause) ah, only say that verbally. You've got to do that, say that by action too, like letting them come into the country and compete for, for work, or job opportunities.
>
> Now the other thing, the other thing that Black South Africans tend to miss is that most of those guys, are highly educated and highly qualified, okay. Ah (pause) we were denied some opportunities by apartheid, okay. Yes, we do have some highly educated Black South Africans, but not like countries like say Ghana or Nigeria. So these people are occupying high positions simply because of their qualifications, and to me it would be wrong, it would be wrong, of say [the] Mandela government to deny Lori a position simply because Lori is not a South African, even though they have all the qualifications as compared to a native South African. I mean if we claim to be an open society, then we've got to put that in practice and not just yap about it, you see.

Stan and Lily expressed a similar view to Ken in that South Africa is now in a position where it cannot refuse to help or re-pay those who helped the ANC in exile.

[42] A significant pull factor to immigrate to Canada is the offer of accelerated immigration status to foreign doctors who will work in rural areas (Cohen 1996). "A newly-founded organization for South African doctors in BC has over 300 members" (Bell 1996). Further, Alberta recently recruited twenty doctors from South Africa to address the shortage in rural areas (Kenny 1998; see also Canadian Press 1998; Saunders 1998).

immigration levels to British Columbia (BC) increased by four times those of the early 1990's. During the early part of the decade, fewer than 300 South Africans a year emigrated to BC. In 1993 the number doubled, and in 1994 (the year of the election), 1 300 South Africans immigrated to British Columbia (Bell 1996).

According to a 1996 Vancouver Sun article titled "Vancouver city of choice for South Africans", unlike previous years, the vast majority of this latest wave of South African immigrants were "non-Black". The article went on to argue that this dramatic change was because "blacks can't afford to leave and don't share the same concerns as whites about the end of apartheid" (ibid.).[43] South African emigration lawyers cited "rising crime and fears among some whites that black rule means a descent into chaos" as the most significant factors in deciding to emigrate (Krikorian 1996; see also Metelerkamp 1997).

In newspaper editorials the debate about the "descent into chaos" in the "new" South Africa went back and forth. "Yes, crime is a frightening reality of post apartheid South Africa", stated one letter to the editor, "it was also a reality of apartheid South Africa, only whites made sure they were insulated" (The Globe and Mail May 24, 1997:D7). "Blacks will tell you that crime is the same as it ever was, perhaps a little better. The difference they see is that the formerly protected white community is being exposed to the terrible violence blacks have always lived with" (Drohan 1998). "If you take a million whites and you subject them to the same process of uninterrupted poverty, the same poor schooling facilities, the same school dropout rate, the lack of occupational skills and the unemployment rate, you will certainly have a murder rate just as high", stated a black social

[43] When Ken and I were discussing his perceptions of current (i.e. 1996) immigration trends, he said "no

worker in Soweto (in Lamb 1987:319).

There is a striking similarity in the reasons given by "non-Whites" who left under apartheid and non-Africans who left in the post-apartheid era: that the colour of their skin (i.e. "racial" category) determined their life chances. In the 1990's, non-Africans are concerned that their future will be determined on the basis of their skin colour rather than any objective characteristics. They are concerned about being "victimized" by violence, and differential access to educational and employment opportunities because of their skin colour--often referred to as "declining standards".[44] In other words, they will no longer receive disproportionate advantages over Africans, and "the ("White") standards" will have to be "down-graded" to enable "Africans" to compete.[45]

So unlike the emigrants in the mid-eighties who Polonsky et al (1988, 1989) described as not being afraid of crime, those emigrating in the post-apartheid era are. Like those who left in the mid-1980's, they are also fearful of a decline in their standard of living--so much so that they are willing to risk a decline by emigrating in order to prevent the risk of a decline by staying.[46] Primarily this is out of concern for their children (Bell 1996;

South Africans [are coming] because South Africa is now regarded as stable".

[44] A 1996 survey reported that forty-five percent of "White" respondents felt they lived better under apartheid. Over twenty-five percent claimed to live "a lot better", while almost forty percent felt their situation had not changed significantly under majority rule (Gibson and Gouws 1997:186-187).

[45] However, the difference is that privilege now comes at a cost to the individual, rather than the state (Heribert Adam, personal communication). In a 1997 speech, South African President Nelson Mandela chided "Whites" for consistently expecting continued "privileged positions in the economic sphere" for relinquishing political power, yet not working to eradicate the inequalities caused by apartheid rule (Meares 1997). In his 1998 State of the Nation speech, Mandela urged "White" South Africans to feel a moral obligation to recognize their debt to the country and pay it off, "especially those whose past privileges had afforded them skills that were in high demand in public service" (Daley 1998).

[46] For example, potential South African immigrants are warned that: "Canada does not suffer the same skills shortages that were common in SA. Don't despair if no-one is particularly impressed by your qualifications and experience. In most cases scores of people--mainly Canadians--with equally impressive resumés are also in line for the job you want" (Soft Landings Network 1996:3).

Polonsky, Scott and Suchard 1989:943).

Aline said:

> I will not stay there for any amount of wealth and any amount of money, and you know what our motto is here? Better poor in Vancouver than rich in Johannesburg! I still don't know how people stay there. It's the number "A" worry of everybody that their children will be raped, that their old parents will be raped, they will be raped and killed. .... I mean these stories, you don't read in the newspaper, you don't hear on televisions. You hear it one-to-one. You go to work and then you get the telephone call that says: "you know who has been killed? Do you know who has been raped?" I mean it's nerve-racking. I promise you it's nerve-racking.
>
> Education, the standard of education is very, very low. Look most probably this is (pause) temporary, most probably one or two generations the gap will close, but I'm not going to sit there and wait for the third generation. I mean my children and my grandchildren suffer. I cannot plan for my grandchildren's grandchildren to have an equal education. You know, why must I wait there for two generations?[47]

Four of the nine people I interviewed in the spring and summer of 1996 left South Africa during this latest emigration wave (Lily, Aline, Rose and Stan) and cited "declining standards" and crime, among others, as reasons for leaving. Three (Craig, David and Gord) came during the late 60's and early 70's, two of whom (David and Gord) left because they could no longer live as racialized subjects under apartheid. As previously mentioned, Ken left after the "Soweto uprising", and one participant (Aster) left in the early 90's because her parents feared political change would never come. In sum, the reasons for emigrating were

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[47] Aline's account is strong on rationalizations for leaving. It is ironic that she cannot wait "for my grandchildren's grandchildren to have an *equal* education", when the root of the problem is that education is now more "equal" than under apartheid. Aster said: "a man who is fifty years old... that man has no chance of his life improving without an education, or with an inferior education that he got from the apartheid regime.... Of course white people have better qualifications. .... We will still be at the back, it will take many years."

David said:

> South Africa has got a long, tough time ahead of them, but you know it's very easy for these, Whites coming out of South Africa now, they decry the crime. They're responsible for the crime as far as I'm concerned, maybe not them personally, you know what I mean, but the regime in which they lived with, which met their needs, which they were vary happy with and they'd love to have continue, is no longer there, and so now all of the sudden... "Come I'd better take my family and run, get out of here".

as diverse as the group of participants, but cannot be considered in isolation from political circumstances in South Africa that they feel "pushed" them to leave. Below I provide brief descriptions of the participants and their reasons for leaving.

The Participants[48]

The participants are listed according to when they immigrated to Canada. I include how long they have been in Canada and the date and location of the interview in order to situate them within a temporal as well as spatial context. As much as possible, I use the participants' own words in the descriptions in order to more accurately represent them. This is not always possible; however, because of confidentiality as well as the need for brevity. Names have been changed to protect anonymity.[49]

David (immigrated 1967, interviewed August 1996 at his home)

David refers to himself as "dark-skinned" and was officially classified as "Coloured" in South Africa. He and his family left South Africa "very bitter" because of their experiences as "Coloureds" under apartheid. They arrived in Montréal by ship, then drove

[48] It is important to note that the research participants are not statistically representative of the South African population as a whole. No "Afrikaners", who are politically dominant, are included. "Chinese" had "no clear status in the apartheid system" (IDAFSA 1983:16) and are a minority in every sense (numbers, and political and economic power). No "Indians" are included, and Africans are under-represented. Therefore, the data is representative only of the group of research participants.

In addition to those described in this section, I also spoke with the South African High Consul to Greater Vancouver and the publisher of the South African Canadian Business Directory.

[49] Participants were given the opportunity to pick a pseudonym for themselves, but as all declined I have done so myself. Other identifying features, such as occupation or location, have also been generalized or omitted to protect anonymity.

across Canada to settle in Greater Vancouver. David is a self-employed business owner in the same field he was in when in South Africa. David and his wife had visited South Africa once about ten years after they emigrated. David would be somewhere in his fifties. I was put in contact with him by another research participant.

Craig (immigrated 1967, interviewed August 1996 at his office)

Craig "grew up in white-only areas" as the son of "Dutch immigrants" to South Africa. His father wanted him to leave South Africa, so he bought him a one-way ticket to Europe as a graduation present. He lived there for a year and a half before coming to Montréal for Expo '67 and deciding to stay in Canada. He then lived in Central Canada for a number of years before moving to Greater Vancouver. He pursued a professional education in Canada and is now employed in that capacity. He has been back to South Africa to visit several times. I would estimate Craig to also be in his mid-fifties. I contacted him through a friend of mine.

Gord (immigrated 1971, interviewed August 1996 in his home)

Gord identifies himself as a "Canadian-Chinese-South African". He too left South Africa because of his limited opportunities under apartheid, and lived in Asia before immigrating to Greater Vancouver. He became a "self-imposed exile" as a result of his involvement in the anti-apartheid struggle in Greater Vancouver. Gord had been back to

South Africa a couple of times in the 1990's and was planning another extended trip. We did not discuss his occupation, but he owns his own home, which in the context of Greater Vancouver real estate indicates that he is not likely to be under-employed. Gord is somewhere in his forties. I was put in contact with him by another participant.

Ken (immigrated 1986, interviewed July 1996 at his home)

Ken variously identifies himself as "African", "South African/Canadian", "South African", and "Canadian". He left South Africa as an exile after the student "uprisings" in Soweto in 1976, and came to Canada via a refugee camp in east Africa. Ken had returned to South Africa in the mid-nineties for a visit, his first since immigrating to Greater Vancouver. He is somewhere in his late thirties or early forties. Ken is self-employed in the service sector, stating that he now feels much more control over his life after many years of frustration at being "the last hired and the first to be laid-off". I contacted Ken through one of the associations.

Aster (immigrated 1991, interviewed May 1996 at my home)

Like Ken, Aster's identifications are also multi-stranded, describing herself as "African", "South African", "Masotho-Tswana" and "Sowetan". She is in her late twenties. Her parents sent her, their only unmarried child, to Greater Vancouver in an attempt to keep her exiled brother from returning and endangering his life. In addition, they hoped it would provide her with opportunities unavailable to her in South Africa. She worked in several retail stores in Greater Vancouver, but was frustrated with the difficulties she faced in

finding meaningful employment at a living wage. She left a couple of weeks after our interview to visit South Africa, hoping to find a job and stay. I was put in contact with Aster through an Association I contacted.

Lily (immigrated 1993, interviewed May 1996 in her home)

Lily also relied on numerous identifiers: "Chinese", "Cantonese", "South African", and "Canadian". Lily emigrated with her teen-aged daughter after her husband died, to join her parents in Greater Vancouver who had previously immigrated from South Africa. Lily was living in an area known for its "large Asian population" and working in the same profession she had in South Africa. She has been "back home" for a visit once since immigrating. Lily is somewhere in her mid-to-late forties. I contacted Lily through a friend of mine.

Rose and Stan (immigrated 1994, interviewed April 1996 at a cafe)

Stan and Rose are "South Africans with Lithuanian-Jewish heritage".[50] They wanted to immigrate somewhere where "there was a large number of Jews in the community because part of both families had been eliminated in the last [world] war" (Stan). They were also looking for something "more European". Stan looks to be in his mid-fifties, while Rose appears to be about ten years his junior. At the time of the interview, both were under-

[50] There was a large-scale immigration of Lithuanian Jews to South Africa between 1880 and 1914 (Maré 1993[1992]:16).

employed yet optimistic. Contact was initiated through Stan, and this is perhaps why he dominated the interview. I contacted Stan through one of the Associations.

Aline (immigrated 1994, interviewed July 1996 in her home)

Aline is a "White" South African, who is originally from Southern Europe. She and her family left South Africa because they were not willing to "wait generations for things to be different" after the 1994 elections. She owns her own business and is a grandmother. Aline returned to South Africa once since immigrating. I contacted her through someone whom I was referred to by an Association.

CHAPTER THREE

ASKING STRANGERS PERSONAL QUESTIONS

> *... interviewing requires one to go out and ask personal questions of strangers and, even before that, to approach unknown people, ... by telephone, and ask them for an enormous favour--to give time, and to share personal history, for the most part taking entirely on trust that their time and, more importantly, their words will be treated with respect.*
>
> Ruth Frankenberg White women, race matters (1993:23).

In this chapter I set out methodological framework to address the following research questions: How and in what ways did a group of "South African immigrants" communicate their ethnic, "racial", and national identities? What did they communicate about themselves and in what ways was this affected by immigration? How did their identities shift and in which contexts? How did they differentially experience the immigration process depending on their identities and how they were categorized?

I begin by outlining why I chose to conduct research with "South Africans who immigrated to Greater Vancouver", and how I contacted the participants and collected their narratives. I end the chapter with some reflections on the research process.

Why Immigration and South Africans?

My research grew out of a desire for an analysis of immigration that went beyond a particular ethnic group in a specific location (i.e. ethnic group X in location Y).[51] I wanted

[51] The idea actually began much earlier, in another context, when I returned to the once small, agricultural-based prairie town near where I grew up and realized how much it had changed. There were now cappuccino bars next to the decades-old ranch supply store. I felt different parts of my multiple identities being invoked in

to explore if, and how, a multi-ethnic/"racial" group of "immigrants" to Greater Vancouver differentially experienced the immigration process and what effect, if any, this had on their national, ethnic and/or "racial" identities.

As the research was not limited by ethnicity, it was limited by geography. In part I chose South Africa and in part it chose me. By this I mean that I started looking for participants who were from Southern Africa, and the first couple were South Africans. The task simplified as I narrowed the geographical field to South Africa.

Contacting Participants

My first point of contact for participants was the Burnaby Multicultural Society (BMS),[52] followed by other relevant immigrant and cultural service organizations/associations. In all, I contacted twenty-three associations/organizations,[53] and

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order to "fit in", a strategy I had unwittingly perfected when I was sent from the rural school (literally in the middle of a field with farming all around) to school in the small town.

I attended the rural school up until grade nine when we were sent to the small town for high school. At that time, the "farm kids" were somewhat stigmatized as we were "integrated" with the "town people" and the "acreage people" (i.e. relatively wealthy professionals who lived on small parcels of land and worked in the near-by big city). "Farm kids" were often teased because they "smelled funny", didn't have the same fashion sense, and were "different" because of their isolated experiences. I was accepted because "my peers" believed I had come from the city (i.e. moved to the town or an acreage), and when the "truth" later came out, I had already established a network of friends.

This all came back a decade later as I walked around town. My multiple selves had never been so clearly demarcated as when I walked from the cappuccino store to the western store. I noticed how by opening a door and walking inside, a symbolic door also opened as I tried to communicate "who I am" from store to store. I could relate to all, yet not entirely to anyone. If this is what I felt like in familiar, yet unfamiliar, surroundings what would it be like to try and communicate one's identity in unfamiliar surroundings, where the "turf" and markers of identity are less well known? Immigration provided the context to further explore how one communicates who one is.

[52] I had previously done research with Burnaby's "African community" for the BMS Centennial History Project (see Rich 1992).

[53] In addition to the BMS, these organizations/associations included: The Vancouver Multicultural Society, the Vancouver and Lower Mainland Multicultural Family Support Service Society, the African Women's Outreach Program (run through the Multicultural Family Centre), the African Canadian Association of BC,

talked to many more people in locating the participants.[54] Contacting these organizations/associations illuminated some of the difficulties "newcomers" may face in Greater Vancouver. Some organizations were very helpful, while some never returned my calls. Others I was in contact with for months, only to hit a dead-end.[55]

In talking to these organizations, I found that popular perceptions linking "race" to place were often reinforced. When I stated that I was looking for "people who had immigrated from South Africa",[56] this was most often interpreted as "Black", occasionally "White", and only once were "Chinese" included. One "Chinese" cultural organization I contacted, asked why I was calling them, stating that "we don't know much more about this group than you would". Another was not aware of a South African-Chinese presence in Greater Vancouver (Barkley 1997).

Eventually, I contacted one participant through the BMS, one through the Vancouver Multicultural Society, one through the Association for South Africans in BC, two through friends, another through a contact at the Jewish Community Centre, and two

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MOSAIC, the Association of South Africans in BC, the Immigrant Services Society of BC, the Inland Refugee Society of BC, the Pacific Immigrant Resources Society, Citizenship and Immigration (Vancouver office), Multiculturalism BC, the Immigrant Settlement Office, the Chinese Cultural Centre, Oxfam, the Africa-Canada Development and Information Services Association, the Afro-Jazz Drum and Dance Ensemble, the Centre for International Students at Simon Fraser University, the Association for Students of African Descent at Simon Fraser University, Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of BC, the Jewish Community Centre, the Protea Club, and SUCCESS.

[54] Over 140 phone calls, facsimiles, and E-mails (both made and returned) resulted in interviews with nine individuals.

[55] I believe this is the result of chronic under-funding to immigrant and multicultural service organizations, rather than a lack of desire to provide services.

[56] When looking for participants I asked for "people who had immigrated from Southern Africa" (later South Africa) rather than "Southern African immigrants", because, as previously stated, "immigrant" is a loaded term and not all who immigrate consider themselves to be "immigrants". Some also find the term meaningless in the context of Greater Vancouver. One participant said: "The whole of Vancouver except for two per cent are immigrants. A lot of people here are from somewhere else, whether another country or another part of Canada" (Stan). This is also a useful strategy to neutralize the implicit outsider status of "immigrant". I pick up on this theme later in the thesis.

more from one of the participants.

Methodology

The method of data collection included interviews as well as articles from The Vancouver Sun and The Globe and Mail. The interviews were conducted using a combination of standardized open-ended and informal conversational interview methods. Participants were asked questions based on a standardized set of questions,[57] but rather than following a strict order, questions emerged from the context and the natural course of the interview (Green-Powell 1997:198). Often my questions were anticipated and addressed through the course of the interview without me having to ask them directly. Thus the interviews were conducted in an informal manner, allowing participants greater freedom to discuss broader issues than in a structured, close-ended interview questionnaire.

Questions were grouped around a number of themes: identity, ethnic/"race" relations, and the immigration process. Questions about "coming to Canada" were purposely left until the later part of the interview. This was to avoid "othering" the participants as "immigrants" (i.e. "not Canadian") so as to find out more fully what they had to say about their identities in general, rather than setting it within the context of immigration for the entire interview.[58]

I also did not want to structure the interviews or questions in a way that participants would be forced to either confirm or deny pre-conceived research assumptions. I wanted to

[57] The interview questions can be found in the Appendix.
[58] See also foot note 56.

hear what they had to say and allow them room to elaborate on their responses (see also Chase 1995). For example, because the interview was held more as an informal conversation than responding to a list of questions on a five-point rating scale, the participants could identify as an immigrant in one context and not in another. In other words, they could shift identifications depending on context. This approach meant that the interviews were quite long, but I also found that the participants were prompted to speak to the issues that I was interested in through different questions.

As one of the motivations for conducting narratives was to include voices of immigration experiences rather than producing another study where the researcher writes "about them", devoid of their voices, the narrative approach is also useful. I became even more committed to this somewhat contentions approach of including voices when I was having a conversation with another presenter at the "National Symposium on Immigration and Integration" in Winnipeg (see Barkley 1996a). I asked him how one could understand what it was like to be an "immigrant" without talking *and listening* to "immigrants". The response: "as long as the numbers are large enough, I don't have to talk to anyone". What I found most disconcerting about this experience was that the papers presented by those who had the ear of the state, and thus the power to influence policy, invariably excluded the voices of those they professed to know.[59] Although narrative *is* a form of knowledge (see also Rosaldo 1993), it is often marginalized as such.

[59] This was a stark example of the disciplinary chasm that can result at an inter-disciplinary conference--especially an ethnographer presenting narratives in the midst of demographers! The papers and the "the voices" were, however, well received, even though the paper was included in a session titled "Demographic Impact" with three papers from Statistics Canada. Ironically one of the papers discussed "immigrant integration" by country of origin (Ram and Shin 1996), without acknowledging "racial" diasporas in those countries. In short, I presented Lily and Aster's narratives and de-centred notions of "race" and place while the other presenters in the

The narratives ranged from forty minutes to three hours, depending on the amount of time and information each participant was willing to share. Nine people were interviewed,[60] and all but one interview (with two participants) was recorded.[61] All of the recorded interviews were transcribed in their entirety, yielding between twenty and sixty-five pages per interview.

It is important to state at the outset that I do not intend for nine people to be statistically representative of forty million "South Africans". Nor are their accounts complete stories of their lives. All that can be included here are excerpts from stories told to me at a particular time, place, and space. Following Krygsveld, "this thesis is a partial account of particular ["South African immigrants"] speaking in particular terms about their identities and experiences" (1996:3). Some material will resonate with others who have had similar experiences (e.g., experiencing racism in employment), while some may not (e.g., living a life of leisure). When presenting the research at conferences, for example, I have heard people say "I know several South Africans who do not think/do that!", as well as "You know, that is so true" and the speaker will go on to tell me of a similar experience. As with any research there are points of departure and points of convergence again dependent on the receiver's knowledge base. Therefore the conclusions apply to the participants in the research (see also Green-Powell 1997:214), but this is not to say that there may not be similarities to other "immigrants" to British Columbia--South African or otherwise.

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session went on, unaffected, reproducing "races" rooted in other places (see also Ng and Nault 1996).

[60] Thirteen people agreed to share their stories with me, but for numerous reasons four people cancelled their scheduled interviews. I left it to them to contact me in case there were other, unstated reasons for not wanting to participate. None of the four called to reschedule so they were not pursued.

[61] The interview was not taped at the request of the participants. This was the first interview and it was conducted in a South African owned and operated cafe in Vancouver. Both husband and wife participated, and

Refelections on the Research Process

The methodological approach was both constraining and enabling.[62] It was constraining in that there was no neatly demarcated group of participants, other than by having lived in South Africa. However, certain possibilities for analysis were "opened up" by not focusing on a particular ethnic or "racial" group, which also "constrained" my ability to speak of "groups". This was, in part, the intention, to move away from groupness to explore individual experiences and how these may be similar or diverge depending on one's identities and how one is categorized. The research was enabling in that it allowed for experiences to be compared across "racial" and ethnic boundaries, which was the major motivation for this approach. Comparisons across the "White-Other" divide necessarily lead to an analysis of Whiteness as well as Otherness, which further opened up possibilities for interpreting the data (Barkley 1998, 1998a for example).

I had intended to interview people from South Africa's major "racial" and/or ethnic groups (i.e. Afrikaner, British, Jewish, Indian, "Coloured",[63] African, and Chinese). I wanted to include a broad range of people, but I did not expect that individuals would be able to "speak for" a group. Although there is great variation between groups, this variation was limited by legislation imposed on "racial groups" during apartheid. Because South

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all of these factors combined to make this one of the least useful interviews.

[62] I borrow loosely from Giddens' structuration theory in describing this approach as both constraining and enabling. He states: "Each of the various forms of constraint are thus also, in varying ways, forms of enablement. They serve to open up certain possibilities of action at the same time as they restrict or deny others." (1984:173-174)

[63] "Coloured" is used here, as in apartheid South Africa, to denote "mixed heritage". This included primarily people of "European heritage" (i.e. "White") who were excluded from the category "White", but also included Malays, and descendants of the KhoiKhoi or San peoples (Christopher 1994:21-22; IDAFSA 1983:7). Patterson defines "Coloureds" as "those who had failed to pass for white" (1953:361), meaning they were unable to have their racial classification changed to "European"/"White" (see also Watson 1970).

Africans were officially designated according to "race" once apartheid was introduced in 1948, more so than in other contexts, participants could speak in terms of their common experiences as racialized subjects. For example, Lily said that South African Chinese "just kept to ourselves.... We grew up together, we married each other and our parents always had parties together and we went to school together. .... In the end everybody is related to everybody else" (she laughs).

In the end, I decided it was what the participants had to say, rather than the "racial" or ethnic category from which they were saying it that "mattered" as far as the variation of participants. In other words, the narratives were so rich that I chose to focus on the data that I already had, rather than seek out more participants in a failed attempt to "represent" South Africa's main "group" designations.

Regarding my own subject position, I cannot deny the possibility that my being "White" influenced what the participants shared with me. I believe this influence was offset somewhat by my knowledge of South African history and politics, especially for non-White participants. In some contexts participants would endeavour to "teach me" about South Africa during the interview. At other points they were surprised when I responded in a way that indicated prior knowledge of events.[64] I believe this is in part because of their experiences in Canada with people who are not knowledgeable,[65] but also because of my status as a "White", young-looking "Canadian", who therefore would also not be knowledgeable.

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[64] For example, when Aster and I were talking about the myth of Jan van Riebeeck "discovering" South Africa and I was able to provide the date, she replied "1652, yah, oh you're good."

[65] This point is re-visited in the section on "Ken".

I also base the assertion that my "Whiteness" may have influenced the interviews on the findings of Moeno's (1981) research with "Non-White" South Africans in Toronto. She writes:

> This leads us to an important consideration--the extreme status-consciousness and the awkwardness experienced in inter-racial contacts when they are overlaid with cultural and class differences and bitter memories! This led to extreme anger when certain questions relating to race were asked. .... The situation might have been different, we feel, if the researcher had not been a Black South African, because respondents might then have felt comfortable answering these questions. However, since they (respondents) knew that the researcher knew 'where they come from', it still hurt. They could not disguise their feeling by patronizing someone who they felt did not know about or understand the real situation in the Republic of South Africa. (1981:259)

It is important to note that Moeno's study occurred during apartheid, at a time when the African National Congress (ANC) was a banned organization. The political changes in South Africa provided me with greater liberties than in Moeno's research with South Africans in Canada. Unlike her participants, who were often concerned that she was acting as a "spy" for the South African government (1981:146), the participants I spoke with did not have to fear repercussions from the South African government for "speaking out". After-all, my research was conducted during the arrival of the "new South Africa" under the "Rainbow Coalition" led by the ANC.

Seemingly, less anger was directed towards me than Moeno when asking questions about "race", although questions about identity still generated some reaction, particularly if the participant felt I was reinscribing "racial difference". For example, the statement "this is what we were trying to get away from when we left South Africa" (Moeno 1981:146), was very similar to David's response to my question as to how he would describe his identity. He said: "the niche in which we are has no particular niche as any racial group, it's just as a

Canadian, and that's what we want it to be".

I found that the "White" participants made sure I knew that "there is no animosity, there is no hatred" (Aline).[66] "There is a lot of good will between blacks and whites" (Stan), and "Black South Africans are excited to see us" (Rose). During the interview with Stan and Rose in the cafe, I felt that they heavily censored anything that they felt might suggest they were less than liberal in their attitudes towards "Blacks". For example, when Rose started to talk about the gardener, Stan cut her off and said "that is enough". He also cut himself off when he started to talk about the maid.

As an immutable aspect of my research, my "Whiteness" was also constraining and enabling. In my interview with Aline, I sensed that she was telling me things because I was "White" that she may not have shared with a non-"White" interviewer. She went to great lengths to make me understand why things happened the way they did, and how they "did not know, really, what went on under apartheid". Although I did not personally agree with her rationalizations of apartheid, she did help me to understand why and how it lasted for as long as it did.

In sum, my "Whiteness", gender, age, educational status and perceived class position may have facilitated the communication of certain information in the interviews while other knowledge may not have been communicated. I believe this to be an unavoidable consequence of doing ethnographic research because, as is often over-looked, both the analyst and the social actors display markers perceived as mattering while simultaneously

[66] Aline went on to say: "I don't know what your, your, your experience is, but did you meet the South African White who hates the Black? I haven't, I promise you I haven't. .... I mean, I haven't seen any South African to speak badly of the Blacks. I haven't, because on the everyday level there was no animosity I promise you."

occupying a variety of social positions (see also Rosaldo 1993). Just as I interpreted what the participants said about who they are, the participants interpreted who I am and responded accordingly through the interview process--albeit without a list of prepared questions, transcripts and time to reflect. I too was a social actor whom the participants positioned themselves in relation to and; therefore, influenced what they communicated about themselves.

CHAPTER FOUR

NARRATING IDENTITY

> *My first discovery [in "examining white consciousness and how it operates in my life"] was the absence of awareness of white consciousness, in spite of the endless white fascination with "How do you identify yourself--are you African-Canadian, black or just Canadian? Where are you from?" This confidence, this centredness, the presumption of belonging within white consciousness fascinates me.*
>
> Joanne St. Lewis "Identity and Black Consciousness in North America" (1996:22)

The primary focus of this chapter is the narration of identities by the participants. I begin by setting out some considerations regarding the "telling" of the narratives. I then draw on the framework of relational positionality to organize the narratives around notions of identity, boundary processes, and differential experiences of the immigration process. The narratives are presented to show what and how the participants communicated about who they are and how their identities shifted through-out the narratives according to context.

Situating the Narratives

As previously stated, the interviews represent a slice of time in the participants' lives. Necessarily then, the narratives are situated within a particular time, space, and place. The accounts of the participants are partial representations which have been frozen in time through the process of telling and being recorded. Going back to Somers and Gibson (1994), the telling of a narrative account is a simultaneous process of becoming and making sense of one's life. The recording of this "becoming" fixes identity at an arbitrary moment in

the process.

It is also important to note that the narratives are limited by what Somers and Gibson (1994) refer to as "public narratives"[67] on immigration, "race", place, South Africanness, and so on (see also Chase 1995). The "standpoints" of the participants also influence their interpretation of events and, as a consequence, shape how the story is told (Frankenberg 1993; Gubrium and Holstein 1998). Although "local and broader cultural resources... provide familiar or conventional guidelines for how stories unfold... they do not determine individual story lines" (Gubrium and Holstein 1998:166). In other words, these factors are mediating, but not determining.

The narratives are a means by which participants give coherence to their lives (Chase 1995; Denzin in Gubrium and Holstein 1998:165; Rosaldo 1993). At the same time they were telling me their experiences, they were also telling themselves. Through the process of telling their stories, the participants were establishing not only coherence, but also difference (Gubrium and Holstein 1998:166). In other words, there were a number of processes occurring at the same time. The participants were giving coherence to their lives at the same time as they differentiated themselves from ascribed categories and pre-conceived notions of who they are, and what they perceived I, as recorder of their stories, wanted to hear. As Gubrium and Holstein suggest: "As texts of experience, stories are not complete prior to their telling but are situated to meet interpretive demands. ... Storytelling [is] an ongoing process of *composition* rather than a more or less coherent reporting of experience" (ibid, emphasis in original; see also Chase 1995).

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[67] See footnote 19.

On the later point, I do not agree that storytelling cannot be an "ongoing process of composition" *and* "a more or less coherent reporting of experience" (i.e. co-implicated processes). The narratives provide an accurate representation of how the participants interpreted their experiences and regarded themselves at a specific moment in their lives, through the mediating discourses available to them at that time. On another day, with another researcher, in another context, the composition of the stories may have differed. Relational positionality must be considered because experience and composition are influenced by context and with whom one is interacting. The accounts of the participants and the interpretations of their experiences were influenced by my questions, by my Whiteness, by public narratives on immigration and South Africanness and so on, all of which are situated in a particular time, place and space. The fact that I conducted the interviews in such a loosely structured manner meant that the participants did not have a clear sense of "what it was that I was getting at" (Gord). As a result, they were not always able to determine motive and tailor their responses to what they thought I wanted to hear.

Regarding "experience", as Scott (1992a; 1992) points out, subjects are constituted through "experience" (i.e. the lived realities of life). So rather than experience being taken as *evidence* of "difference", the analysis must include how "difference" is established, how it operates, and how, and in what ways subjects are constituted through their experiences (see also Chase 1995). For example, being racialized is not *evidence* of "naturally" occurring "racial difference", but rather a means through which "racial difference" is *established* (i.e. socially constructed as mattering through social, economic, political and legal processes). In other words, one is not a racial subject without racializing processes.

Through the narratives, the participants connect their experiences as a means of constructing self-understanding (Gubrium and Holstein 1998:167), in addition to communicating to me, and my perceived audience, an understanding of who the participant is and is not. As Scott suggests, the narratives are "discursive productions" of knowledge about self (1992a:35-36). The participants limited their stories according to pre-conceived notions of what "kinds of stories are typically told" (Gubrium and Holstein 1998:173) in a research interview, as well as the questions that I posed (Chase 1995). As a result, the meanings of their experiences were "both artfully constructed and circumstantially conditioned" (Gubrium and Holstein 1998:177) to meet these demands. Therefore, their narratives are interpretations of experiences in need of interpretation as productions of knowledge (Chase 1995; Scott 1992a).

As contexts shift, so too do the meanings and understandings of identities and categories. For example, in some contexts Aster refers to herself as a Sowetan, in others as a South African, while in others she positions herself in opposition to the category South African. Because of this, the "how" becomes as important as the "what" in analyzing the processes by which one communicates who one is. The participants constantly made decisions not only about what to tell me and what not to tell me (Chase 1995), but also *how* to tell me. Therefore, contradictions and "editing errors" or "omissions" in the narratives are also analyzed. Gubrium and Holstein refer to these as "narrative slippage"--the "play or elasticity" in how shared understandings shift according to context when interpreting events (1998:176).

> As much as the storyteller can be the author of his or her narrative, he or she is also an editor who constantly monitors, manages, modifies, and revises the emergent

> story. Invoking shifts in footing--such as referring to the position from which an account is offered--is one prominent type of "narrative editing" through which storytellers attend to the perspectives of personal stories and to the ways they will be heard. Editing confirms that storytellers are never narratively "frozen" as authors of the text that they produce (Gubrium 1993). (Gubrium and Holstein 1998:170)

Although the storyteller is never frozen, through the process of recording the narrative, the story is. To a certain extent, however, because the participants did not have the opportunity to "edit" the text they produced by telling their experiences,[68] they also became fixed.

Communicating Identity

The general research objectives were to examine the ways in which the participants communicate their identities and how they may differentially experience the immigration process depending on their identities and the colour of their skin. I wanted to explore how the participants communicated who they are, sometimes while being categorized according to essential difference. What did they communicate about self and other and in what contexts? How did their identities shift, and in what ways did they describe themselves (i.e. become) and others according to context and/or whom they were interacting with and the story they were telling?

As the "transmigrant" paradigm suggests (e.g. Glick Schiller, Basch, and Szanton Blanc 1995), the mere act of migrating does not remove one's presence from "there" and re-inscribe it "here" as easily as moving one's body and belongings from there to here (Barkley

[68] One of the participants requested and received a copy of the transcript, but did not "edit" it.

1996). "There" is not only the site of emigration, but also the context in which categories and identities are (re)formed and lived there as well as here (Barkley 1996a). By migrating, different sets of difference-producing relationships are encountered and, concomitantly, differences that matter also change.

As Mythili Rajiva has suggested, in the research "different discourses of white [and other] bump up against each other"[69]--discourses South Africans use to describe themselves, discourses in Canada about South Africans in particular (including what it means to be "Black" or "White" in South Africa) and immigrants in general, notions of apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa, and so on. As a result of these discourses "bumping up against each other", and the complex ambiguities that this can create in social interaction, notions of "difference" are often produced along a single axis ignoring complex and multi-stranded identities (see also Mouffe 1992). For example, as I stated in the previous chapter, cultural and immigrant service organizations most often interpreted "people who immigrated from South Africa" as "Black".

Further, the potential for identity expression is limited to some degree by whom one is interacting with--in other words the signified is limited to varying degrees by the signifier. Identities shift, dependent upon the point of reference (Friedman 1995) and with whom one is interacting, because no-one can be all of one's identities in any particular moment.[70] Although there is the potential for multiple identities, some become salient in certain

[69] Personal communication (prompted by Barkley 1998).

[70] One of my students was conducting research on identity and related the following, which illustrates this point. A participant told him about a party to which she invited people she knew, but who did not know each other. She explained the party to him using a metaphor of a pile of masks in the middle of the room, to which she was continually running to find the right mask for each person. Because each person at the party knew her as a "different person", her fear was that she would be "caught wearing the wrong mask" (Morgan Reid,

contexts while others remain unstated in the process of becoming (see also Scott 1992).

Constructing Self: Who are you?

As stated previously, the data is presented intra-participant to the extent that this is feasible and logical. Within the individual narratives, material was then selected around the main themes by which participants expressed their identities. This approach also gives the reader a better sense of identity shifts and slippages in the narratives.

As much as possible when including the voices of the participants I employ the present tense in order to remind the reader that they are fixed in a specific moment in time (Hastrup in Krygsveld 1996). This is juxtaposed against my use of the past tense which also serves as a reminder that I, unlike the participants, have had the time to reflect upon and alter my account many times. Although I endeavour to include their voices, unfortunately, from the incredibly rich stories the participants shared, only small fragments relating to how they communicated ethnic, "racial", and national identities can be included here.

I began each interview by asking the participant how he or she would describe his/her identity--who are you? All of the responses were telling, albeit in different ways. Not surprisingly, as the interviews went on, definitions of self (i.e. identities) were further delineated and often shifted or "slipped" as participants manipulated the elastic parameters of their being.

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personal communication).

LILY[71]

Being "Chinese" *and* "South African"

Lily, along with Aster, showed the most identity shifts during her narrative. When I asked Lily how she would identify herself, she said:

> Actually I find [it] difficult to identify myself because being South [she corrects herself] Chinese and South African and then now coming to Canada. You know like my sister she has been, well she has the same problems as me, right, and um (pause) when you want to identify yourself you can't say (pause) I think we first of all say we're Chinese. We always say we're Chinese and then somehow at the back of it we fall South African and now we are Canadian, but (pause) the longer I think you stay here then the long (pause) it's easier to identify yourself as a Canadian, but at the moment I think of myself first as Chinese and then South African. You know I still think of South Africa as home. ... I think (pause) um (pause) an identity crisis I have (laughs). I really don't, (pause) don't know where I fit in.
>
> You know I mean um (pause) it's hard because... like for my daughter, she has been here only two years, she speaks like a Canadian, thinks like,[72] you know, all her friends do so it's very easy for them to change over,[73] but me, I think um, I don't know how long it is going to take. I think I will always be Chinese first and then South African second. I think it will take me a long time to find (pause) to probably confess I am a Canadian, I don't know.

There are interesting slippages in Lily's account as she struggles to identify herself. In the first passage, she begins by describing herself as South African, but before completing the phrase changes to Chinese. She then tentatively asserts that she "thinks" it is Chinese, followed by the more definitive "we always say we're Chinese". Her South African identity

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[71] Brief descriptions of the participants are included in Chapter Two.

[72] Had I done follow-up interviews, I would have asked David and Lily what they meant by "thinking like a Canadian". At the time, it was beyond the intended scope of the interview.

[73] When I asked the publisher of the South African Canadian Business Directory if she noticed any gender differences in adapting to Greater Vancouver, she said no, but commented on generational differences. She said that teenagers have the most difficulty adapting. Lily's daughter may be the exception, or rather it may be a matter of difficulties specific to "White" South Africans whom with the publisher has more contact. Further,

becomes secondary and her identification as "Canadian" is tentative at best. In the second passage, she moves even farther away from identifying herself as a "Canadian," yet there is an underlying tension that she *should*, at some point, "adopt" a Canadian identity, even though she doesn't "know how long it will take".[74]

As the interview progressed, Lily became more certain in defining herself as "Chinese". She said, "I think generally though we always feel that we are Chinese... because we have been brought up fairly Chinese by our parents. You know we always feel Chinese first you know so, ah in that way um, I am Chinese".

A significant part of Lily's Chineseness comes from her identification with the category "Chinese", and experiences of racial segregation under apartheid. She contrasted this to Canadian society, but also commented on how these boundaries persist in Greater Vancouver.

> I think it is more difficult here to keep the culture because now it is all free, and um, you become Canadians, right. I mean you live the Canadian way of life, there is no such thing as "I'm Chinese".[75] I think that is why it would be easier for my daughter to adopt a new identity than for me, because in South Africa I was always made to know that I am Chinese, right. And I am not African because I am not Black and we don't actually mix with the Africans because they have their own lifestyle which we are not, you know, used to as well. So we don't have any African friends, we don't have any European friends, so we just kept to ourselves. So it was very easy to keep our identity. We married amongst ourselves, I mean, we only saw each other! (laughs)[76]

Lily's daughter is in a community where she is no longer a minority. I elaborate on this point later.

[74] It is difficult to attribute cause here. A couple of possibilities do, however, come to mind. Lily could have been influenced by public narratives which criticize immigrants for not being "Canadian first", or by what she thought she should be telling me.

The irony of being "Canadian" is brought to the fore when considering that only on the 1996 Census was "Canadian" included as an identity option (Day 1998), although on the previous Census one could have written "Canadian" in the space for "other", prior to that "Canadian" was not an option (Ellen Gee, personal communication).

[75] However, "Chinese" *is* an option on the Canadian Census form.

[76] Aline said, "because of apartheid, people didn't mix. So the Chinese stayed pure Chinese. ... We did have very little intermarriage and that was, I feel, that was the reason of apartheid, because they wanted to keep the

> So we grew up together, we married each other, and our parents had parties together, and we went to school together and at the same time we actually, because of the apartheid system, we couldn't even bring in other Chinese people from the outside world. So it was always like just us. .... In a way, it was a fantastic way of keeping the Chinese people together. We never lost our culture because um, we just stuck together. We never mixed with anybody else. We hardly, you know, mixed with any other race....
>
> We just keep to ourselves still here. You know we have such a big community that um, we don't need, in a way, we don't really need anybody else, because, well, when we get together we talk about things back home, we feel very good.

In this passage, Lily infers that Chinese is a "race", even though "Chinese" had "no clear status in the apartheid system" (IDAFSA 1983:16). Further, the "we" in the passages above is used to signify South African Chinese, to be determined from context. What is particularly interesting is that when I asked Lily what it means to "be Chinese", she grappled with the question. She describes it as "a strong family bond", with family and "roots" comprising a very important part of "who we are and how we relate to each other". "So um, being Chinese I suppose is keeping the Chinese customs and you know having the closeness of family and um (long pause), I never really thought about it". She pauses again and then laughs. "Now you are making me think!" She laughs again and we move on to the next question.

Marable's (1992) distinction between "Black" and "Blackness" can be applied here to distinguish between notions of Chinese and "Chineseness" whereby "Chineseness" denotes shared cultural and social experiences--a "cultural umbilical cord" to China. For

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races pure. That's why an Indian, although he's in South Africa for six generations, he is still an Indian. He's a pure Indian."

example, when Lily defines "Chinese" as an important part of "who we are and how we relate to each other", in essence she is talking about Chineseness. When she refers to the attitude of the apartheid state towards "Chinese" it is as a category of otherness, which ignores "Chineseness".

Lily reproduces the boundaries between "South Africa's racial groups", especially Africans, who are distinguished by "their own lifestyle". She spoke of how separating people reinforces stereotypes 'because you do not get to know them', but at the same time, people separate themselves anyway "because you feel most comfortable with yourself".

> I think maybe ["all people are"] (pause) ... discriminatory... by nature I think, right. I mean in certain ways we discriminate people by nature until we actually get to know the person. So until you actually know the person you sort of keep away from each other, right. I mean, that is the unfortunate thing. Because like the Black people, we always kept away from them because somehow we already had this perception, our parents gave us this perception, or you know certain things about them and then you grow up with this perception. You never get to know them and then you just keep this idea with you all the time, but I am sure that once you know them they are very similar to all of us. I mean they just want a decent living and you know that type of thing, be at peace with everybody (laughs).

The boundary between "Black" and Chinese is marked and maintained through ignorance of the other. Further, Lily naturalizes the boundary and the discrimination that (re)produces notions of "racial difference" by stating "we discriminate by *nature*". "False certainties" (Somers and Gibson 1994) based on "immutable essential differences" (Jenkins 1986) were perpetuated not only by the apartheid state, but also by Lily's parents. The lack of contact between "racial groups" served to reinforce these false certainties about "us and them", rather than exposing "racial difference" as a mechanism by which the state entrenched power (Scott 1992).

I then asked Lily if she found her multiple identifications as Chinese, South African, and Canadian difficult for others to understand. She replied

> Well like at work, when we talk to people, we haven't seen these people right? So I say I'm from South Africa, like there is this manager that I work with and he says "oh, so are you black?" So I said "no, I'm Chinese". You know and I mean he couldn't get over it because (pause) like (pause) anybody from Africa would be like Black so it is very difficult to say "oh, I'm Chinese", you know.

In the context of being marked (i.e. categorized) as "Black", Lily's identity shifts to Chinese. Although she identifies with Chinese, South African, and, to a lesser extent, Canadian, these are constructed by her manager as mutually exclusive categories (Barkley 1996). The example she tells of the manager illustrates the problem of "common sense knowledge" (Maré 1993[1992]) gleaned from bound typologies as fixed notions of "them" collide when the manager attempts to categorize Lily. Her overlapping identities challenge fixed typologies based on "races" rooted in specific places, because she spans racialized categories commonly perceived as exclusive. Lily's multiple identities serve to counter perceptions of South Africans as "Black" and of "Chinese immigrants" as coming from Asia. The reality of Lily being *both* South African *and* Chinese--being both "black" *and* "yellow"--serves to de-centre both categories of "racial difference" (Barkley 1996a).

Further, using audible distinctions to mark categories, Lily's South African accent can also be "deceptive" when she is not in sight.[77] For someone with "yellow skin" to speak with an Afrikaans accent further destabilizes pre-conceived notions of otherness. Language not only unifies, it also establishes boundaries (Maré 1993:28). The same can be said for

[77] South Africa is one of the few "plural societies" where "racial group membership" can be determined by accent; likely a product of segregation (Heribert Adam, personal communication).

accents which are one of the most salient and long-lasting markers that one is "new" to Canada. Lily's South African accent, in addition to marking her as an "immigrant",[78] places her on different sides of the "racial" boundary depending on whether those being spoken to can see that she is of "Asian descent". Through Lily's alterity being compounded by bound and incongruous notions of "race", place, and language (Barkley 1997a), the apparently contradictory relationship between these determiners makes it difficult to locate her within a rigid framework rooted in essentialist categories (Barkley 1996a).

Being Cantonese, Being Chinese

Lily and I talked a bit more about language, and in this context she refers to Cantonese as "*our* national language", and uses "we" when discussing which languages are spoken in different parts of China. For example, she states: "once *we* are out of *our Province, we* go north, nobody can speak to you and *we* can't speak to anybody, but because, I think with *us from Hong Kong*, there's many people that are all over the world" (emphasis added). Lily's identity shifts with another implicit construction of "home", this time marked through references to "we" and "us", situated within China.

Lily introduces a new identity to her repertoire, adding new meanings to her Chineseness. She is a Cantonese speaker who's family (at some point) came from Hong Kong--compatible notions of language and place. Lily ties the "cultural umbilical cord" (Marable 1992) to China and Hong Kong ideologically, if not in practice. As Ng suggests,

[78] Craig states that his accent that marks him as an "immigrant". I return to this point later.

the category "Chinese" is nebulous in that it signifies a wide-range of diverse heritages with little in common "save a culture" left behind generations ago (in K. Anderson 1991:214).[79] The meanings of "Chineseness" are diverse in the diaspora, however, the "umbilical cord" of Chineseness ideologically connects those in the diaspora--whether South Africa or Canada--to the "homeland". The strength and meanings associated with this connection wax and wane depending on context.

Within the context of a discussion on Vancouver's Chinatown, Lily's identity shifts slightly as she describes herself as Cantonese--"here all the people are *Cantonese like myself*" (emphasis added). This represents a subtle shift from defining herself according to place (Hong Kong) and language (Cantonese) to context-specific definitions of Chineseness determined by language. Lily spoke of how "Chinese" has different meanings in Chinatown. To "fit in", someone who "looks Chinese" must also speak Cantonese. She said her sister-in-law, who speaks a different dialect--Hakka--doesn't even go to Chinatown anymore because "she feels very insignificant because they ignore her". Lily goes on, stating that

> Actually that's quite a bad thing because somehow they seem (pause) they are quite (pause) arrogant about it too. If you can't speak the language, they actually look down on you. So I think it's worse, I think that if you are a Caucasian they can understand that you can't speak the language right, but if you're Chinese and you don't really speak the language then they can be pretty arrogant and my sister-in-law gets quite mad. .... She says she just gets ignored and no-one takes notice of her, so she doesn't bother to go anymore (laughs).
>
> So I suppose um, if you're Chinese, it's still, it's a matter of like, do you fit in? Are

[79] "With the changes in [Canada's] immigration policy, the term "Chinese" in Canada came to signify an ever-increasing range of heritages earned in such diverse places as Britain, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Taiwan, the United States, Vietnam, and the West Indies" (K. Anderson 1991:214). Lily said Chinese South Africans are "so Westernized" that they have no problems "fitting in", which she contrasted to Hong Kong Chinese.

> you the *right group* of Chinese? It's yah, I never thought about it until we were just talking about it, you know. You're Chinese, but are you *Chinese*? You know you're still not quite Chinese. You're a different group.

Within the context of Vancouver's Chinatown, Lily adds another layer of meaning to "being Chinese". Although she lived her entire life in South Africa prior to emigrating, she is accepted in Vancouver's Chinatown because of her ability to speak Cantonese. Going back to Maré's point, language not only unifies, it also establishes boundaries (1993:28). So although language provides a sense of groupness for its' speakers, as with any boundary the converse is also true, it excludes non-speakers like Lily's sister-in-law in Chinatown. The example also illustrates the association between not only "race" and place, but language as well in defining "Chineseness". Within Vancouver's Chinatown, "Chineseness" is limited to those who speak Cantonese. In other words, within the category "Chinese", the centre of Chineseness is reserved for Cantonese-speakers, with those who speak other dialects existing on the margins of essential Chineseness.

"Back Home"

The idea of "home" for Lily also shifts during the interview. When I asked her where she considers home, she replies "well here now, I would consider here home". I then asked her about her use of the word "now", and she grappled with the notion of "home", clarifying first what home meant to her before determining where home was.

"Until I actually went home this last, ah went back to South Africa. I mean um, I

still called that home, yah (we both laugh), but I really don't have a home now. I mean I have a place, so I suppose you can't really say it's *home* (pause) as such, right." When I pressed Lily further on her use of "back home", she replied:

> It's just a phrase. I think just "back home". When I say "back home" I suppose I keep thinking of South Africa, but um (pause) all my family is here now so (pause) I can't say that I can go--it's more just my husband's family. I still have family there, and my daughter is very close to her cousins so we will always be going to visit and everything, but home I would think is here now because, um, all my family is here. Um, Canada is my home now.

Lily is telling herself what home is and what it means as much as she is telling me. She attempts to give coherence to her life, composing notions of home while concomitantly telling me where home is. In the process, she equates home with family. Perhaps because of this, home for Lily is two places, having family in both South Africa and Canada. Grappling with determining where home is, she chooses Greater Vancouver because *her family* is here and home is where one's family is. Yet, in the course of the interview, she frequently uses "back home" when referring to South Africa. For example, as stated previously, in response to how she would identify herself, Lily said "You know I still think of South Africa as home".

Context is important in discerning "home". Often the phrase "back home" indicates a link with the past, rather than an indication of the present state of affairs.[80] As stated earlier, there is an underlying tension as to the degree to which Lily identifies with Canada. I was not sure whether this tension arose from feeling that she should identify with Canada

[80] This is in recognition of the fact that people often refer to "going back home" when visiting a place where they lived a significant part of their lives, family resides, etcetera. So even though an individual has a current home, "back home" refers to linking up with one's past.

because that is what she was supposed to say, or whether it was a part of her identity crisis. Perhaps it was a bit of both.

Strangers and Immigrants

I asked Lily if she considers herself an "immigrant", and she replied: "I think if you are an immigrant you feel strange and everything, right. I don't feel strange. So I think because we are so comfortable with all our support group and everything, I don't feel like an immigrant. I feel like I belong."

For Lily, "immigrants" are people who are not fully rooted here. "Immigrants" are people like those from Hong Kong, who maintain a life "there" as well as "here"--in other words, transmigrants[81] (Barkley 1996). Yet, later in the interview when we were talking about whether or not immigrating had an effect on how she sees herself she said:

> I feel like less of a person than I did in South Africa. I think every immigrant probably feels the same way, that you've got to establish yourself again. It is like starting your life all over again because nobody knows you, whereas back home, you've already had so many years of connections with everybody. Here you have just got to start all over again, but the only good thing is we have the South African (pause) group of people.

What these two passages indicate is that, like identity, home is a process of becoming. Lily differentially positions herself within and outside of the category "immigrant" depending on the context. When she speaks of being comfortable, she does not identify as an "immigrant". However, when she speaks of the difficulties in adjusting to life

[81] I rely on Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc's definition of transmigrants as "immigrants [who] build

in Greater Vancouver compared to "back home", she identifies with the category "immigrant".

It is also interesting how, in the passage above, she employs the "South African group of people" to signify Chinese-South Africans. The meaning of South African is implicit in the way it is used as well as the meaning she associates with "we".

Later in the interview when I asked Lily about her perceptions of "immigrants" in Greater Vancouver and where they come from, she replies "who were they? Ah, the Hong Kong people. ... I always think of them because *they* don't consider ... *they* are not fully here" (emphasis added). In this context, she once again positions herself as a "South African", contrasting experiences of Hong Kong transmigrants with her own. She shifts from identifying with being "from Hong Kong" to "South African". Lily's identification with "us from Hong Kong" in the context of language, is replaced with a categorization of "them" ("the Hong Kong people") as "immigrants" as she defines herself outside of this category. In the process of excluding herself from "immigrants", she also constitutes "them" as transmigrants, by not being "fully here", nor feeling "like they actually belong here" because of multiple linkages to their homeland (see also Glick Schiller, Basch, Szanton Blanc 1992; 1995). Yet, Lily also struggled with "belonging", not knowing where she "fits in", and where "home" is.

> I think to them it is a completely different way of lifestyle. As for me, I'm so Westernized I think it's easier for me to adapt than for them. So, um, they are truly immigrants I think. ... I think that they don't feel like they actually belong here. ....
>
> I think with a lot of the Hong Kong people they are, like with the South Africans we

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social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement" (1992:1).

> are so um, sort of like laid back and (pause) that type of thing. Whereas in Hong Kong it's so competitive there's so many people. You just have to be so, resourceful and hard-working. So, I think with us we're a different type of immigrant group. I don't think we're that forward going. I mean we're accountants. We come in as accountants, we stay accountants (we both laugh).[82]

Once again, Lily uses "South African" to signify South African-Chinese, whom she differentiates as more Westernized (and arguably more "rooted") than Hong Kong-Chinese. Although when discussing language Lily makes reference to "us from Hong Kong", she now contrasts Hong Kong-Chinese to South African-Chinese. The former signified as "resourceful" and "hard-working", while the later is signified as "laid back", "not that forward going", and accountants.

There is an irony to Lily's multiple identifications when compared to categories of otherness. Outside of South Africa her accent marks her as "other". In both South Africa and Canada her skin pigment sets her apart as "other". Yet, at the same time, she feels comfortable in the Vancouver suburb where she lives because 'there are so many Chinese' there that she 'doesn't feel like a minority' (Barkley 1996a). Further, because of the recent increases in "Asian immigration" to Greater Vancouver, Lily's exclusion and minority status were much more pronounced in apartheid South Africa where "Asian" immigration was restricted. Whereas in South Africa she was "very noticed because there are so few of us", in the suburb where she now lives she said "there are so many of us that I think you have to pick out the Caucasians". "Here we just become nobody (laughs). We just blend in with

[82] Accountants are one of the top four sectors in which South Africa is experiencing a brain-drain (in descending order: education and related, engineers, accountancy, and medical and dental). The professional association of Accountants in South Africa reports that some Johannesburg firms "are having difficulty recruiting articled clerks" (Cohen 1996).

everybody else"[83] (including the Hong Kong immigrants).

GORD

South African, Chinese, Canadian: "which ever one you want"

Gord describes himself as "Canadian-Chinese-South African, Chinese-South African-Canadian, which ever one you want". When I asked him what he considers more predominant, he replied "more South African". This is interesting in that of the two options he gave me to choose from, he places South African last, or in the middle, but never first, yet says he is "more South African". When I asked him what these identities meant to him, he said, "Well it meant that I'm of Chinese ancestry, but I'm South African by birth, and I settled in Canada as my new home".

Gord's experiences can be contrasted against Lily's.[84] For example, I asked him if had similar experiences to Lily regarding perceived incongruence between "race" and place--being Chinese and South African. At first he replied, "No, not at all", but then went on to say that when he would speak on behalf of a predominantly African political organization in Greater Vancouver that "people would be surprised that I'm Asian and not Black, but I always found it quite easy to fight in that I just explained, that's all." In other words, Gord was able to explain the incongruence between bound notions of race and place--'it was an

[83] In this context, Lily does not differentiate between "Asians".

[84] It is difficult to know what factors (e.g. length of time in Canada, gender, marital status, personal characteristics) to attribute to the differences in experiences between Lily and Gord, so I leave the question aside rather than attribute false cause.

easy fight'. It became apparent very early in the interview that Gord had a strong sense of who he is.

Becoming Politicized: "an illegitimate government"

Interestingly Gord's self-esteem and politicization increased after emigration--the former caused by the later. He said this had more to do with leaving South Africa than coming to Canada.

> To understand that, you have to understand the type of background I came from when I left South Africa. People of Chinese descent were not regarded as free citizens of South Africa, nor were people of Indian descent. As a matter of fact, the South African government's policy in the early days was to repatriate Asians back where they came from, and (pause) that government didn't regard us as South African. We didn't have the vote, they didn't regard us as being indigenous to the place and so a lot us didn't feel that we were South African.[85] We felt rather that we were Chinese. We came from China, even though we were born and bred in China,[86] but had no real ties to it--to the country--and having come to Canada after living in [Asia] for four years, I began to realize that I was South African and it was merely an illegitimate government that denied me my right. So my identity as a South African increased when I was in Canada.[87]

Gord's comments offer a possible explanation for Lily's identification with Hong Kong. For Lily and Gord, their identities were more bifurcated in South Africa than in

[85] This can be contrasted against Aline's idea that "you were supposed to become South African faster and quicker than here". Obviously it was more difficult for "Chinese" than for "Whites" to become "South African", and although Lily and Gord did identify as South Africans, there is a tension between state recognition of belonging and identifying on an individual level. South African identity may have also been enhanced by my research interest (i.e., I made it a salient identity).

[86] I think Gord meant to say South Africa instead of China here. This "slippage" is, however, telling.

[87] Gord became a self-imposed exile because of political choices he made after immigrating to Canada. The Soweto uprising was the turning point because "so many people were killed that I finally decided that I wasn't going to allow that government to stop me speaking out forever". I come back to the Soweto uprising during Ken's narrative. See also footnote 113.

Greater Vancouver. Being "Chinese"[88] they were constituted and excluded in different yet similar ways. In both geographical contexts, Chinese may be regarded as "foreigners," despite being Citizens of the country by birth right (i.e. the "umbilical cord" is given precedence over soil).[89] In Greater Vancouver, however, the processes are much more subtle than those of apartheid where Chinese were denied the potential for civic and political belonging.

I then asked Gord what he meant by "becoming better politicized". He said:

> Many of my generation who left South Africa in the 60's and late 60's, had no identity of being South African, or being, they thought they were Chinese, but yet they were not Chinese, they did not really, but ah, having come here I felt better politicized to understand that I was South African and I also had been denied it and I set myself a goal of fighting against the South African government of the day. That's what I mean by politicized.

Gord's politicization resulted from the awareness that being marginalized through racialization was a central ingredient in maintaining state power. He realized that the lack of politicization and categorization as "Chinese"--and not South African--was an important part of the struggle to redirect the flow of power and thus his exclusion as a "South African".[90]

Again there are similarities and differences when comparing Lily and Gord's experiences of "being Chinese" in Greater Vancouver and South Africa. There is a common

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[88] Here I use "Chinese" to denote a categorization based predominantly on skin colour.

[89] One of the most public displays of the association between "race" and place as mis-marker of citizenship was a 1979 episode of W5 (a CTV prime-time news magazine) which reported that "Canadian students" could not get into Canadian Universities because "foreigners" were taking up too many spaces. The faces of the "foreigners" that accompanied the commentary were "Asian"; however, their citizenship was "Canadian". "Only some months later... was the real issue--that of assuming that "Chinese" were foreigners--finally brought home to the network" (K. Anderson 1991:242-243.)

[90] There is a parallel here to Gilroy (1987; 1992). He argues that in Britain one cannot be both "British" *and* "Black" because these social categories are constructed as incompatible through being ascribed different statuses according to hegemonic notions of Britishness.

ambiguity expressed about what it means to be "Chinese" in both places--"they were Chinese but yet they were not Chinese".[91] The difference however, is that in South Africa it was "an illegitimate government" and the "Chinese community" that (re)produced notions of "Chinese from China", whereas in Greater Vancouver "the Chinese community" marked the boundary predominantly through language as the "defining characteristic" of Chineseness.

Differences in politicization between Lily and Gord may also be linked to when each left South Africa. Although they would be of approximately the same age, conditions for "Chinese" improved after Gord left.[92] Both Lily and Gord said that "Chinese people in general don't like to meddle in politics" (Gord) because they felt they would gain more through co-operation than opposition. For example, when I asked Lily if she always knew she was Chinese, she answered by describing how the apartheid state constituted Chinese subjects and related the following experience. When she was in University, her parents discouraged her from participating in demonstrations. They told her,

> "Look, you are going there by the grace of, you know like, they're doing you a favour. Do you want them to revoke your permit?"[93] You know, things, things like that. So you know all of the time that you have to keep quiet. Don't do things that will take away your privileges, because this is a privilege that they gave you, you know. So you do anything you go to jail or something and they will revoke all your privileges. So, oh no, we knew we were Chinese (laughs).

Gord said:

> In the case of South Africa *most* Chinese people (pauses and sighs) stay away from politics firstly because it was threatening and ah, they felt that if (pause), let me see how I will put this ah (pause). A lot of Chinese people felt that if they got ah, if they

[91] This also relates back to my earlier point about the diffuse meanings of Chinese in the diaspora. See also footnote 79.

[92] Lily said "we had a lot of freedom, so we were not subjected to what our parents were subjected to." It is important to consider this "freedom" relative to previous repression--it was a change in the degree of repression rather than actual freedom.

[93] Lily had to "get a permit from the government" in order to attend University in South Africa.

> went along with the previous [National Party] government, that gradually they would get more rights, and they did.

It is also noteworthy that Gord and Lily define South African-Chineseness as non-politicized. "The Chinese experience" was shaped by the ways in which the apartheid state (re)enforced notions of "racial difference". By being othered as Chinese and not South African, South African-Chinese played the classic role of a middle minority. Gord, and especially Lily, saw their plight as being better than that of Africans, and the constant (implicit or explicit) threat from the state and their parents of being "treated like Africans" served to stifle challenges to "White" power, even though that power was vested in the hands of an "illegitimate government". A key difference in their accounts is that what Lily saw as a matter of protecting privileges granted by the state, Gord came to see, after emigrating and becoming better politicized, as a denial of rights by the state.

ASTER

Being "South African through and through"

Aster's account was the most riveting of the interviews, perhaps because of the passion with which she identifies with South Africa. When I asked Aster to describe who she is, she replied "I still see myself as a South African. I think I always will.... I don't think I could live anywhere else in the world and feel that I belong to that country."

When I asked her what it meant to her to be a South African she replied with a

number of things: it means roots--her people, her culture, people who believe in the same things, and her family.[94] People are warm, friendly and "never cried", and "if one thing that I have realized" Aster said, "we love music a lot. We sing everywhere. .... To us, probably a song was what kept us going."

Aster vacillates between a number of "identity options" (Mouffe 1992) in her narrative. As with Lily, depending on the story she is telling and whom she is interacting with, she will identify with a category in one context yet position herself in opposition to it in another. Another parallel to Lily's narrative was how the implied meaning of who is included as a "South African" shifted during Aster's narrative. For example she said: "If I have to die and be born again, I don't want to be born anything else. I want to be born a South African, and particularly in Soweto. In those dusty streets we liberated that country with a stone and the lid of a dustbin. I'm so proud to be a South African." Yet, Aster locates herself outside of the category South African when she talks of how racism is expected from South Africans. She told me of how, as a South African, she "had one bad experience with another South African, an Afrikaner". Like Lily, Aster's use of South African is very elastic in that she attaches different meanings to the category by privileging one interpretation over another depending on the context.

At some points in Aster's narrative, her multiple identities over-lap, while at others one is emphasised and others may be "hidden"[95] and, in the process, imbued with different meaning for that particular context. For example, in the excerpt below, although Aster

[94] Note the similarity to Lily's response that "Chinese" means roots, customs, and family.

[95] I borrow from Siverts' (1969) notion of under-communication or over-communication of ethnicity. I choose to use terms; however, that are not as value-laden.

previously identified herself as South African ("I'm so proud to be a South African"), in this context she constructs Masotho-Tswana and South African as incompatible categories, separated by a wide chasm of colour and language. Her South African identity is latent, as she emphasises her Masotho-Tswana identity (Barkley 1996a).

A "White" South African[96] manager demanded that Aster go to the back of the store to "speak her language", even though the store was closed and other staff[97] had been speaking "their languages" on the phone. When Aster refused, the manager "came and hung up the phone". Aster said to the manager,

> I am speaking my language and I can speak it anywhere. When I came to Canada, when I applied, they didn't tell me that, you know, make sure you don't speak, you don't even hear that language here, except within the four walls of your house.[98] .... I felt so insulted because that language is not only my language, it's my father's language, it's my uncle's language, it's my people's, the whole nation.[99]

Aster's identities shift in relation to her store manager. Although in other contexts Aster signifies "South African" as "Black" or African, in this context it signifies "White". Aster becomes first and foremost Masotho-Tswana when contrasting herself against the discriminating actions of the ("White") South African manager (Barkley 1997a).

"Immigrant, where do you come from?"

When I asked Aster if she considers herself an "immigrant" she said, "I never

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[96] Aster referred to the manager as "South African". After she related her experience, I asked her if the manger was "White". Aster answered "yah" in an "of course" tone.

[97] The examples of "other staff" were "Asian".

[98] I heard of an interesting exception in that those working in Federal Immigration offices are not allowed to speak languages other than French and English at work. The rationale is that if an employee speaks another language, people will come to expect it and the offices are only required to provide service in the two official languages.

[99] Aster speaks eleven languages--"all the South African languages."

thought of that up until now--like an immigrant. I am an immigrant, oh yes. What I mean is like, you know, as I say, they make you a citizen. You go there and you sing to the Queen--which I don't know why. You sing Oh Canada and (pause) I will always be an immigrant."

Aster spoke of how frustrating it is to constantly explain "where she comes from", a question that serves to mark her as an "immigrant" and marginalize her as well.

> I think as an immigrant you just get sick and tired of people asking you where [you come from], well if they are asking to be friendly (she trails off). I mean it's tiring. Can you imagine explaining, like I deal with like one-hundred customers a day, all of them they ask me where I'm from. It just annoys me. ....You can imagine, for the past four-and-a-half years I have tried to explain [that we're] not starving. I mean South Africans who are here... they are not economical refugees, we are political refugees. Well not in my case, but you know, most of them. .... Yes, we were oppressed, but I don't think there is any Black South African who can say to you "I went to bed with an empty stomach". Never, never. I don't think so. ....
>
> With my accent, some people think that since I am bald,[100] I'm supposed to be from Jamaica. .... Now you can imagine if I have kids, my kids, even if they are born here, they are still going to be asked. I mean I just don't think it's fair. Well, there are lots of Chinese here... why don't people ask them? Well they are all from Asia. Chinese, Japanese, they can tell that they are different. Well we are different too. (Aster starts speaking very quickly.) We are Black yes, but I think I am different. If you look closely, if you really want to learn, you will realize that I am different from Somalians. Their features are different. .... But people keep on asking, you know like they don't ask those Asian people. Well, this, it just gets into you. For Christ's sake I have a country where *no one* will ask me where I am from.

Aster's account illustrates an often over-looked aspect of "immigrant integration" in that "immigrants" can be set apart as "other" in such a multitude of ways, often so subtle and entrenched that the individual or organization doing it has no idea of the effects (Barkley 1996a). Aster is othered by being asked 'where she comes from', which often serves to fix the person asking the question as "Canadian" in opposition to Aster's perceived "immigrant

[100] Aster's hair is very short.

status".[101] She is also distanced from notions of "us" through the essential difference of starving. Perhaps even more curious is the association between hair length ("bald") and place (Jamaica).

Aster was leaving shortly after I interviewed her for South Africa and I commented on how she would not be asked "where do you come from?". She replied "For once, and people who say "where have you been? We missed you!" For Christ's sake I would love to hear that, for once (sigh)."[102]

Aster said that she was "so miserable" when she arrived in Greater Vancouver. She was told that "after two years you'll be better". She said she only became "more desperate". She felt very mislead about what Canada had to offer, in part due to her expectations, but also because of how the state presents itself internationally. The main points of contention were the difficulties in finding meaningful employment, experiences of discrimination, and her standard of living (a product of the first two points).[103] She was also lonely, missing her family and the strong sense of community in Soweto.

Later she said: "this was the worst mistake I have ever done in my life, by moving

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[101] Wally Alexander, one of the participants I interviewed for the "African Heritage" section of A Tapestry of Cultures, expressed a similar view to Aster, though he is not an "immigrant". "As a fourth-generation Canadian, but also a member of a visible minority, I, and others in my family, have had to cope with comments and questions based on skin colour. Often those commenting have less Canadian heritage than I have, but I've had to explain that my great-great-grandparents were among the pioneers in this province" (in Rich 1992).

[102] Aster was upset that she was unable to return with presents for her family, especially her nieces and nephews, and that she would have to rely on her father for money. "I used to plan that when I go to South Africa--when I was in South Africa--I was thinking I'll go to America, I will come back as soon as I have enough. I won't even tell them that I'm coming. I will rent a car and they will see me coming, and like I will be having you know, Canadian money. .... I didn't know that I will go home with fifty bucks. Fifty dollars!" (It is interesting to note her reference to "America".) As evidenced here, Aster had mixed feelings about "going back home".

[103] I come back to this point later.

here. I just, my life just went down". "Don't advise anyone, well Africans, to immigrate."[104] Not surprisingly, although she is a Canadian citizen, Aster does not identify Canada as her home. "No matter where I go", she said, "South Africa will always be home". She follows this up by saying that she does not know any South Africans who are happy here. In this context, South African signifies African as opposed to other cultural groups.

Aster said she often hears "how nice it must be to be in Canada now". When I asked her if it was more difficult to feel a part of Greater Vancouver or Canada when people are constantly asking "where are you from?", she said "How can you be a part of that?" She then went on to tell me of "this Japanese lady" who said to Aster and her sister-in-law: "I guess you are glad that now you are here [in Canada] you can eat potatoes." Aster said:

> I swear to God I wanted to punch her. I mean really, no. I don't know whether she was foreign Chinese, I said probably she is from mainland China, they have nothing else to eat, but you know. Now I have to be happy that I eat potatoes? For Christ's sake we have potatoes. Now you know you find yourself defending things like that. I have potatoes where I come from and beef too. You know? You understand? Oh, it's just so annoying. I know it may sound petty, right, to someone who is intelligent, who says "Oh come on Aster", but if you get that question [about where you come from] every single day, by the end of the week you are just crazy.[105]

Aster's words demonstrate the relational positioning of identities and categories and how othering processes are not an exclusive domain of "Whites". By relating her experience with "the Japanese lady" in this way, Aster re-directs the flow of power by

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[104] Near the end of the interview Aster softened her stance somewhat and said: "I'm glad that I came I suppose, whether it was nice, bad, or good."

[105] Later in the interview, when Aster and I were discussing multiculturalism, she said: "Well it's great that you meet these people, in the street, you know, '*where are you from*'. You know these people that I never dreamed that I can see" (emphasis added). This illustrates how difficult it is to avoid asking "where are you from", which is perhaps why Aster commented on how it might be less offensive if it was an "attempt to be friendly". There is also a differentiation to made between context in being asked on the street, or being asked while at work where Aster felt more obligated to address (though not answer) the question in order to get them

reversing the othering. The struggle for power becomes a central ingredient (Friedman 1995) as Aster re-directs its flow by othering at the same time she relates how she was othered. She also implies that "Asians" and "Blacks" differentially experience the immigration process--'no-one asks them where they are from, and then they ask me where I'm from!'

In Aster's account she others "Asians", as well as someone like Lily who is "Chinese" but does not come from Asia. Moreover, the "Asian other" in her example shifts from Japanese to Chinese. This is especially interesting given her previous comments about being able to tell people apart--Chinese, Japanese, "they are all from Asia". Although "common sense knowledge" (Maré 1993[1992]) perpetuates notions of ethnic and/or "racial" groups as distinct and homogeneous, this serves to marginalize those who exist outside of these neatly bound typologies, as well as those who are mis-categorized by them (Barkley 1996a). The "Japanese lady" constitutes the category African according to the essential difference of "not eating potatoes". Aster signifies Asians as "newcomers" in the same way that she is signified, even though she finds it personally offensive. Out of the shared experience of being perceived as "newcomers", Aster marks the boundary between herself and the "Japanese lady" using the same terms that she does--diet ("*they* have nothing else to eat").

Racism: "A devil in the pocket"

Aster and I discussed racism and the difficulties she faces in securing meaningful

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"to buy".

employment in Greater Vancouver. She said:

> I have a degree from South Africa. Yes, I'm not saying, well recognize it, but for Christ's sake... I went to school for, phif! You come here, you work in a mall. I had to sell [items] with people who finished grade eight, grade ten, and that person is my manager, and I should be happy that I'm in the so-called first world and my life is better? No it's not. No it's not. ....
>
> The employers, they don't really care [about South African credentials]. Do you really think that if it is me and a Canadian girl, who is like grade twelve and me with my degree, do you really think they will take me? Hell no! They won't. They will take her. Right? First of all they will tell you about Canadian experience.[106] Well, if they don't hire you, how are you going to have that experience? I got fortunate that I was hired by a person who owned a store who was a South African.

We then discussed racism. She said the only bad experience she has had in Greater Vancouver was with another "South African--an Afrikaner". She told me the story and then said: "Well that's kind of expected, from South Africans, but it's hard from people who claim that "oh no, no we don't do that"". Once again, Aster places herself on the other side of South Africa's agonistic "racial divide" when she talks about ("White") South African racism. I asked her why racism was expected from South Africans (thinking that she had previously identified with the category).

> Well, phft, for Christ's sake, there, racism is, it was law. It was written in Parliament. You know... that's the difference. I find that there is racism here, right, but it's not, you know people don't say it. That's hard. They say no, no, no you are just so--thinking about it all the time. .... They think it is all in my head. Well, and it's not. I mean, but in South Africa (pause) it was there. It was by law and, everybody kept his distance, you know? White folks kept, stayed where they were and I stayed where I am and they wouldn't come and mess with me, and, but now here, you don't know. You are probably sleeping with a snake. You have a devil in the pocket.

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[106] Stan and Rose also spoke of their difficulties finding employment without "Canadian experience". This demonstrates that requiring "Canadian experience" is not covert racism, as some have argued (e.g. Ralston 1996). It could, however, be xenophobia (Barkley 1998), or "simple monopolistic exclusion regardless of race" (Adam, personal communication). I come back to this point later in the thesis.

There is a consistent pattern to Aster's narrative, in that when she speaks of discriminatory or racist actions by "South Africans", she signifies the category as "White". The "Black-White" agonistic binary is used to explain this "essential difference" within the category South African.

As evidenced in the excerpts above, Aster would associate accounts of exclusion or domination with the assertion of a marginalized identity which she empowered. In some of her accounts, such as her experience with the store manager, a Black-White binary has some explanatory power. Yet in other situations, a binary framework is too simplistic to capture her "oscillating identity options" (Mouffe 1992) at the shifting cross-roads of multiple stratifications. For Aster, categories like "Black" or "African" serve not only as markers of exclusion and domination, but also foster a sense of belonging and inclusion. Although Soweto was a racially segregated township intended to exclude Africans from South African society, this exclusion served to empower those who lived there, giving Aster a positive sense of identity--as with bell hooks' experiences in a segregated "Black community" discussed in Chapter One. The irony lies in the fact that Soweto came to be South African society more so than any other part of the country.[107]

As Adam has stated, "ethnic [and arguably "racial"] identity frequently shields the individual from a hostile environment" (1995:464). It provides a "source of self-respect against the denigration by the dominant group" and "furnishes the psychological strength to resist and not adopt the victor's definition of reality" (ibid.). For Aster, her identities as "Black", Masotho-Tswana, Sowetan and South African provide not only a shield, but arm

[107] Heribert Adam, personal communication.

her as well (Barkley 1997a). She felt empowered enough to quit her job when her store manager hung up the phone when she was "speaking her language". Although the manager had the structural power to prevent Aster from speaking her language, a few days later she sent Aster a box of chocolates and an apology asking her to come back to work (it helped that she was the top sales person in the city). Aster refused the apology and found another job--"it was not the first time".

In this case, the power flowed in complicated ways (Friedman 1995). The manager had structural power over Aster, but Aster had power over the manager as the top salesperson. Out of their multiple identities, certain identities took precedence over others depending on the specific context. The identities that Aster communicated as "important" in the context of the manager's apology were different from the salient identities that gave rise to the situation in the first place (i.e. "Black" Masotho-Tswana, versus "White" South African). However, it was the positive sense of Blackness that gave Aster the strength to resist the manager's imposition in the first place. As this example illustrates the flow of power is so complex and multi-stranded that it is difficult to present in a linear form.

Maturing: "Seeing differently"

Aster said she had matured as a result of immigrating, and like Gord, went on to explain this in political terms. "I've grown up a lot since I came here and I see the world differently now. Even South Africa, I see differently." She went on to comment on the notion of legitimate ownership of South Africa and how to reconcile the notion that "South

Africa belongs to all of us". Once again comparing her plight to Chinese. "It's funny that China belongs to the Chinese. Nobody says it wrong".

This lead her to comment on how difficult it is to speak of "forgiveness and reconciliation" when "Whites" have "enjoyed what I didn't for the past 346 years". Aster said because of this "we will still be at the back--it will take many years." Aster struggles to reconcile what she feels in her heart and what her political party suggests she should believe.

I want to believe that South Africa belongs to all. I want to believe that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. I want to, I want to say I'm not angry. I want to say that because I'm being, you know, I want to be saying let's be realistic... but at the same time I can understand the frustration of other people. But for me, I don't, personally, I don't believe that like, do I maybe, deep down I believe that? I don't know. I really don't want to find out down deep in my soul if I do believe that. I'm afraid what I'll get there.

Earlier she said:

> Oh no, I think differently now. I see that as a Black person we will always be oppressed. In South Africa I was oppressed, I came to Canada, I am still oppressed somehow. Where is this going to stop for Christ's sake? There is nowhere where a Black person will ever be equal with a White person. Never! I don't think it will happen for the next 1 000 years.[108]
>
> Now I am happy that I came to Canada and that I can see, because what you, what they preach when you are in South Africa, oh Canada... and everybody is equal. For Christ's sake it's not! It's not and it never will be, and now they shouldn't even dare go and push that. ....
>
> They show the Rocky Mountains. They show people walking in Pacific Centre Mall, laughing, ha, ha, ha, eating ice cream. You think "wow". Wow, what a way to live, yes? No. They should be showing Hastings and Main.[109] .... They should

[108] In retrospect, I wonder if Aster includes Africa when she says there is nowhere "Blacks" will be considered equal.

[109] She is referring to an area of Vancouver called the Downtown East Side. It is the poorest urban region in

> go to the Reserves and show those Native people. They should show immigrants who live here who are like scrounging like in one room.... They should be showing that. They should be showing reality, but they don't.[110]

Here Aster uses the agonistic "White--Other" binary to explain how non-Whites are marginalized. She struggles with the contradiction between what the ANC[111] tells her she should believe, and her personal experiences and feelings. She grapples with the idea that she should forgive the apartheid state for its actions, but also realizes that "all race" elections and abolishing racist legislation will not erase inequality.

As Marable noted of the American Civil Rights Movement, a change in legislation does not serve to fundamentally empower the oppressed (1992:292). There is a very clear sense in Aster's narrative that she feels mislead by both her expectations and the promise that Canada held--'her life was not better in the "so-called First World"'. Aster saw Canada as presenting an alternative, but in the end offered only a more ambiguous hierarchy of "racial difference". There is an underlying tension that to forgive in South Africa could result in a society like Canada, which is not "what we preach", as evidenced on Hastings and Main and on the Reserves. Although Canada professes equality, Aster's experiences lead her to believe otherwise.

Canada, with high instances of homelessness, prostitution, substance abuse, etc. In short, it is "home" to Canada's most marginalized urban dwellers, a large number of whom are First Nations.

[110] Aster went on to say: "there was someone who said, 'well, why don't you get out?' You know, once you are here, trust me, it's hard to get out. It took me four-and-a-half years to organize money to buy a ticket" to South Africa.

[111] ANC is the African National Congress. They were elected to replace the National Party during the first "all-race" elections in 1994.

KEN

Being "South African/Canadian": "torn loyalty"

Ken identifies himself as a "South African/Canadian" which means that

> I'm a Black South African first and a Canadian second. It means that my loyalty, if you will, is torn between two countries that I love somewhat equally. In that I love South Africa as my mother and as the place where I was born, and I love Canada for the fact that they gave me refuge when no-one else ah, wanted me. So I've always considered Canada as my second home. It's my home of, of sorts.

As with Lily, Ken's loyalty is somewhat split between two countries--one of origin and one of refuge (though the circumstances for leaving were much different). Unlike Aster, he has no plans to go back and "settle there". When I asked Ken if finds it difficult to be both South African and Canadian, he said he can easily "juggle between the two identities". I then asked him if other people could.

> Well I always encounter that. I mean almost daily people expect that since I'm from South Africa, um, you know I'm prepared to pack up my bags here in Canada and go back to South Africa--forgetting that I'm someone who left South Africa almost twenty years ago.[112]

> This may sound a little bit bizarre, but South Africa is not something, like that goes through me. Yes, all my relatives are back there, but as someone who, who grew up in exile, ah, home is, is Canada now. I don't see myself settling in South Africa anymore. I may just go back there for a visit, but not to settle. I don't know what it will take to make me settle there.... South Africa is still close to my heart, I mean, that doesn't mean I no longer care about what's going on in South Africa. I care deeply. I care deeply.

Within the context of talking about misconceptions of South Africans that he encounters, Ken said:

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[112] Aster was the only participant who had plans (and hers were immediate) to go back to South Africa "for keeps" (Ken).

> Yah, well ah, they [Whites] always seem, seem to want to pit us [Africans] against each other. In that you know they will tell us... how developed South Africa is, how better we are from say, I don't know, Nigerians, or Mozambicans, you know. All the, all the ah, mumbo jumbo, but still some Whites, expects us to, to be bitter, and very bitter in that they expect us not to, to befriend Whites, following what the Afrikaner did to us in South Africa. They expect us, you know, to totally hate Whites. This is why some of them, you know, are taken aback when say Ken has a White partner, that surprises a lot of what you call, of, of ah, Whites. They expect that you know, that since we were oppressed you know we will be stuck together and treating Whites as, well I don't know.

I then asked him if it matters to African South Africans that his partner is not "African". In answering, as with Gord and Aster, Ken spoke of how he and "particularly people that I left the country with twenty years ago" were "bitter", but have 'matured politically' in Canada.

> When we left South Africa back in September of 1976[113] we were bitter, okay? We were bitter. Yah we were very bitter, but as time went on, you know (pause), you tend to learn that in politics things are not always what you are made to understand better. Things are not always how they are portrayed in the tube, okay here, things that were in the background.

He declined to comment further on this point, but there are parallels to Gord, who also has a partner who is not "Chinese".[114] While he was in Asia, Gord said "I went through a stage of um (pause) disliking White people." He became involved with the Black Power movement, but "eventually I decided that that was not the right place, that was wrong. One doesn't imitate an enemy one despises." My hunch is that Ken may be alluding to similar

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[113] Ken is making reference to the 1976 Soweto uprising (discussed in Chapter Two) which prompted a large exodus of young Africans from South Africa, of which Ken was a part. He "advisedly" refers to it as an "uprising" rather than a "riot".

> It's not a riot, as many people tend to call it because I believe that when an oppressed people take the streets, or rise up in arms, they are not rioting, but ah, rising against a system that they deem is oppressive to them. So what we did as students back in 1976, is we rose up against a system that we believed was a system that will hold us back. .... We did not riot. Okay? Yes, a few individuals may have been too excited to go about destroying property. .... They were destroying these institutions that they deemed as oppressive to the propertyless.

[114] I would guess that this was also a factor in deciding to emigrate. Though he did not specifically state this,

sentiments as political maturation.

Stereotypes: Shaka Zulu, gorillas, and starvation

We then went on to further discuss the perceptions he encounters as a South African. Again there are parallels to Aster's account, and like Lily and Aster, Ken is othered through notions linking "race" to place.

> When you tell someone that you are from South Africa, okay, someone who thinks that they know quite a bit about South Africa you know, they'll tell you of the Shaka Zulu thing, okay. They expect that where you live, there are always, you know, gorillas roaming around. They tend to think that (pause) Black South Africans, since they were oppressed, lived in worse conditions than say, Somalis or Ethiopians.
>
> I find most people... in North America... think they know quite a bit about Africa– have images of what they saw on television, say around the famine of 1984 in Ethiopia.... Now for them to see a Black, I don't even use that word I prefer to call myself African.[115] For them to see an African like Ken who tells them that, you know, I'm from Soweto, Johannesburg, blah, blah, blah. Whenever they ask me what I did, what my parents are doing, they are taken aback. Okay? Because... my parents are both professionals....
>
> So (pause) in as much as we were oppressed, I did not have it as rough as my other friends. There was always food in the house, always clothing to wear. I would be lying to you if I say that I went to bed with an empty stomach.[116] I've never experienced that. I've never experienced that. .... Now for someone to think that, I may be from worse conditions due to the stereotypes that he or she may have of Blacks,[117] you know at first it used to take me aback, but now since this is one

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we did discuss other difficulties with South African authorities abroad regarding the relationship.

[115] Note how this contradicts Ken's response that "I'm a Black South African first", when I asked him how he would describe himself.

[116] For a compelling account of those in the townships who did have "empty stomachs" see Mathabane (1994).

[117] I am unsure as to why Ken used "Blacks" here instead of "Africans". I see two possibilities: one is that he is making a political statement and using "Blacks" to emphasize the stereotypes and distance "Africans" (and the reality) from it, or it is an example of "narrative slippage". My hunch is that it is more likely the later.

Heribert Adam identified a third possibility (personal communication). Ken's use of "Black" can be

> question I am asked almost weekly, almost weekly. .... I come across a lot of people who are impressed by the fact that, you know, I'm from South Africa, but then the experience that I've had [in my work] has exposed me to how ignorant some people are.

Aster and Ken touch on common themes of "essential difference". Hunger is marked as the "cultural stuff" that, in part, marks the boundary between us and them. Donation campaigns and media images of starvation in Africa appear to have perpetuated the image of all Africans as starving. Aster and Ken counter this equating of African with hunger, by stating that neither they, nor other South Africans here, could say that "they went to bed with an empty stomach".

It is also important to keep in mind that Ken and Aster are of a higher economic status than "starving Africans", in that both come from semi-professional families.[118] This relates to another theme that both of them touched on, the variety of experiences as "Africans". Both Aster and Ken talked of how they are confronted with the sameness of "Black" people because the colour of their skin is privileged over their social and cultural experiences (see also Marable 1992). What matters is that they are "Black", not the variations of their Blackness, nor their South Africanness (see also St. Lewis 1996).

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attributed to the Black Consciousness generation of 1976 who used "Black" to emphasize the unity of South Africa's "non-white groups" (Africans, Coloureds, and Indians) as well as in opposition to "racial" classification as "non-White". I have been unable; however, to discern a consistent pattern in the narrative, and believe that it could be for any number of reasons, though narrative slippage seems the most consistent.

[118] All participants were of a certain socio-economic status by the fact that they were educated and could afford to emigrate. Although Ken was a refugee and "landed here penniless" after ten years in a refugee camp, he still came from a certain socio-economic background. He said he mentioned his arriving penniless "because I laughed at myself when I was going home. I mean I travel like anybody else, a typical tourist, with lots of dollars in my pocket and a few thousand dollars in traveller's cheques. You know so like I'm my own person and not like a refugee I was when, when coming in."

It is interesting to note the phrase "going home" which supports my earlier assertion that the phrase "back home" indicates a link to one's past. Ken's experience also bears stark contrast to Aster's return "home" "with fifty bucks" and the hope of staying.

When I asked Ken about how "non-South Africans would describe South Africans", he asked me if I meant "White" or "Black".[119] I said either. From the content, it is apparent that he answered for how South African Blackness is constituted among "Blacks".

> Well I would describe us as being a little bit arrogant, in what sense I don't really know (long pause and sigh). I don't know whether to say, maybe, let me put it this way, some Blacks,[120] as much as they respect us, they resent us to a certain degree, in that, in that, ah, yes, during the era of apartheid they helped us quite a bit. They helped us. I mean their help is immeasurable. You can't measure it. You can't measure it.
>
> So during that era we were harboured by some of those people, by some of those countries. Now we tend to, or rather we tended to think that, that since we're from South Africa--yes South Africa is more developed than other African countries, but then we seem to have exaggerated South Africa's development. Some of us, you know, thought we were somewhat better than other Africans. More sophisticated, more this and that, and this is why I know some people, in as much as they sympathize with us, you know hate the arrogance that, that some of us, ah displayed. But overall, overall I'll say most people, you know, respect us. Respect the resistance that we put up to apartheid.[121]

Although Ken did not explicitly state it as such, I believe that the account above also speaks to his "political maturation", in that things were not what they were made to seem. Aster said that Africans outside of South Africa "just don't know. They think that, well, you know, there was apartheid. Automatically you have to be, you know suffering or something. I mean compared to them, they think (pause) they had a better life, which I don't think so."

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[119] This reinforces my earlier assertion that "Black" represents a narrative slippage in Ken's account, in that although he prefers "African", he sometimes "slips" and uses the term "Black". Ken was the only participant who made a "racial" distinction in answering this question.

[120] Again, note the use of "Black".

[121] Aster and I also talked about how "South African Africans" were better off than "the rest of Africans". Sadly our conversation on this issue was in the car and therefore, was neither taped nor part of the formal interview.

Lamb writes that "The irony of all that is sad and wrong in South Africa is that the South African black is, on the whole, the best educated, best dressed, most prosperous, most literate black on the African continent" (1987:319). A Vancouver Sun editorial titled "The next challenge for South Africans" referred to South Africa as "the envy of other African nations: democratic, stable, enterprising, relatively prosperous with

By this I am not suggesting that "other Africans" should know about South Africanness, but more to differentiate between notions of what it means to be African and the ways in which African South Africanness is constituted. Aster and Ken's accounts also demonstrate that within the context of recognizing different experiences of Blackness, South African Blackness was used to differentiate between self and others, even though both us (South African Africans) and them (other Africans) were "not always what you are made to understand".

Discrimination: "New Canadians, last hired, and ever suspected"

Ken was "not bothered that much" by being asked where he comes from, but more by the subtle ways in which "people of colour" are marginalized.

> I mean we are all from somewhere.[122] You know, except for the First Nations. It only bothers me when someone says, you know, "Canada is my native land" and he'll be saying that simply because he's White, you know, he was born here. He'll say, you know, "Canada is my native land. You know we did so many people a favour by bringing them here, taking them out of poverty",[123] you know ... forgetting that there are native Canadians you know like us.[124] This is a White guy, who told me, and that White guy tends to forget that his ancestors from somewhere found people living here.
>
> It's almost like what Boers were saying about Black[125] South Africans in 1652--the country had no people. They just found a big empty country and they occupied it, until some Blacks descended on South Africa from the North. Which is a lie and unfortunately though it's a lie, that was somewhat worsened because some people

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a per capita income of about $8 000 a year, and with a firmly grounded rule of law" (July 13, 1998:A14).

[122] Note the striking similarity to Stan's response that "a lot of people here are from somewhere else, be it another country or another part of Canada."

[123] Again the notion that immigration to Canada "saved" (non-"White") people from starvation.

[124] Also "forgotten" is the impoverishment of First Nations in Canada.

[125] Again Ken uses "Black". Perhaps it is because it is less awkward than African-South African.

> believed that.[126] Some people believed that when Whites came to South Africa that there were no people. Whites were the first to get there. Now yah, it bothers me... when someone says, claims Canada to be his native land. You know, try to trick me. ....
>
> Now that's the only time you know, when the old oppression bothers me. .... In as much as I may be a new Canadian, I don't have as much rights as, as you do. But then, on the other hand he is right. He's right, because I'd be lying to you Lori, if I said there is no discrimination in Canada. Discrimination is there, okay. What hurts the most is that, is that ah, discrimination here is covert. Okay? It's covert, whereas in the States, or South Africa it was out in the open. ....
>
> I said earlier on that I'm [self-employed in the service sector]. Why? .... With the little bit of Canadian education that I have, is something that's beyond me. Okay? Because when I first came here I was told to get Canadian work experience--which I did. Went to school part-time. .... I worked in the field [I majored in] for about three years. So, I had everything that could be asked for--first of all Canadian education, Canadian work experience--but then I got tired of being the last one to be hired and the first, you know, to be, to be laid off. This is why today I'm [self-employed], because in a way I felt, I thought, work for myself. Okay? I bought myself work in that--and I'm sure--there's no one who can fire me.

Ken's experiences in securing employment are consistent with research in Toronto. In Henry's work with Caribbeans, questions regarding employment "inevitably led to stories of racial discrimination", especially among men (Henry 1994:102; see also Henry and

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[126] Here Ken is referring to the myth of discovery. In 1652 Jan van Riebeeck, forefather of the "Boers", and his party landed at the Cape to establish a "colonial presence". According to the myth, the land was empty except for the "Hottentots" (KhoiKhoi or San peoples) (Lamb 1987:323; IDAFSA 1983:9). Van Riebeeck's diary indicates that the KhoiKhoi voiced protest to the colonial presence. They "strongly insisted that we had been appropriating more and more of their land, which had been theirs all these centuries.... They asked if they would be allowed to do such a thing supposing they went to Holland" (in IDAFSA 1983:9).
The myth of discovery is alive and well. Aline told me of a woman who said to her "my family is there longer than most of the African tribes, because they were the first ones that landed" in South Africa.
When I told David about the notion that Canada's aboriginal peoples were "immigrants" he said:

> Now that is what the South African--White South African--says. He says that the Black African came down, into Cape Province at the same time as van Riebeeck arrived with his Voertrekkers... (laughs). In the meantime the indigenous people, the White South African killed them, completely, being the Bushmen and the Hottentots. Treated them like animals and then wiped them out of the whole process. Anyway, that's that (laughs).

A project is now underway to "reclaim history" and "re-examine the past from a black African perspective", including van Riebeeck's arrival (Schuler 1998).

Ginzberg 1992; and Walker 1985). In Henry's research as with Ken and Aster, racism in finding meaningful employment was one of the most significant obstacles they faced in the immigration process. Ken was able to overcome his marginalization in the work force by becoming self-employed and knowing that "no one can fire me".[127]

I asked Ken if racism would be easier to deal with if it was less covert. His response was similar to Aster's. "Oh yah, oh yah. At least, you know what to do. You know what to do, but if, if it's underground then it's hard. Then it's hard." I asked if other South Africans had similar experiences and he replied that it wasn't just South Africans, but "people of colour in general".

It is interesting that "people of colour", a term intended to be inclusive, had the opposite effect.[128] In Aster and Ken's narratives, "people of colour" functioned as another marker of exclusion. Aster said" I hate that word, but I have to use it". She said she "didn't even know that word" until she came here and a Mary Kay lady told her they have started "dealing with make-up of people of colour". "Oh, I am a person of colour am I? I mean I don't get it, where does that come from? Don't you have colour? I mean I don't get that. Are the Chinese, considered as people of colour too?"[129] Aster marked me as having "colour", temporarily e-racing the significance of my "White" skin and her "Black" skin by reconnecting the interconnected and shared spaces of the infinite gradations in colour between us. By doing so, she drew the arbitrary way that the "racial" separation between "us" was possible in the first place, onto centre-stage.

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[127] The majority of business people interviewed by Henry said that "escaping workplace racism was the primary motivation for becoming entrepreneurs" (Henry 1994:107).

[128] Ken also used "vis-mins" (i.e., visible minorities) in a similar way.

Ken said:

> We may all call ourselves Canadians, but the fact remains that we are still not equal, okay? ... because of the complexion of my skin I am still regarded as a new Canadian, more so because of my distinct accent. Someone will always ask me "Where do you come from?", simply because of the first word that I utter. The person will go "oh well, he came. You are not born here." Someone will never make the mistake of regarding me as (pause) a Black Nova Scotian, because as you know the first Blacks who landed in Canada landed in Nova Scotia, right.[130] ....
>
> Some people think that I am from Trinidad or Tobago. I don't know why. I don't know why. Don't know why. It's hard for them to believe when I say "I'm from South Africa". So you know that's a question that (pause) African-Canadians will be asked time and time again.

When I asked Ken who was most discriminated against in Vancouver, he said African-Canadians, followed by East Indians and Chinese.[131] I asked him why this was.

> Simply because, ah (pause) some people tend to associate Black with crime. Okay? Why? I don't know. I don't know whether it is because of what they see on the tube, you know, African-Americans always involved in crime in one way or the other. So, it's the same view that some people take of, of African-Canadians out here. East Indians and Chinese, I think they're discriminated against because of the economic power that they have in the world. Okay?
>
> I'm sure you know that (pause) in the United States as well as Canada, I'll say both these countries are what they are today because of, of, ah immigrants. .... Here in Canada it was the Blacks ["who did jobs that Whites would not even think of doing"] although Blacks are not--what is the word--respected for that. They are not deemed as among the first immigrant groups to set foot in Canada. Whenever people think of the first immigrants, they think of the Chinese who came here to

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[129] Again, Aster's referent is Chinese.

[130] Ken is making reference to the 3 500 free Black Loyalists (former slaves who earned their freedom by joining the British in the American revolution) who settled in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia starting in 1783. Ken did not mention the other major influx of "Blacks" to Canada when 400 "Blacks" fleeing increasing persecution in California settled on Vancouver Island in the late 1850's (Walker 1985; Rich 1992).

[131] Aster answered in a similar way "Blacks. I think, of course the Whites are safe", and then Asians. "Between Black men and Black women I know it's (pause), I won't say that Black men have it better than us. No, I wouldn't say that."

This raises another point in that none of the participants had much to say regarding gender. I asked several times about the differences, if any, between men and women, but answers were very brief and non-committal. Because of this I have not "gendered" the thesis, which is not to say that a different group of participants would also not emphasize gender. I come back to gender later.

construct the rail line, or whatever, disregarding Blacks.

Black men are essentialized as criminals; not as contributors to Canada, or as a source of economic power, but as a criminal threat to society. Ken's comments about racism and the role of the media in perpetuating stereotypes appeared again when I asked him about some of the obstacles he faced in the immigration process. He made reference to our earlier discussion about employment, and then said,

> It's that (pause) and, (pause) and the (pause) sense of, of being (pause) ever suspected. (pause) By ever suspected I mean, you know, being suspected by the police because Blacks here do face some, (pause) some hostility from, from the police. .... Although out here it's somewhat better than in Toronto or Montréal, okay. .... But you know a police officer will always give you, you know, a suspicious look, you know. At times, you know, they want to always produce your, your identification--which they have a right to do that--but it hurts when say, there is a skirmish between say, a White person and a Black person, and the cops come, and the first person that is handled is the Black guy. Okay? I've seen that happen, whereby the Black guy, who was not in the wrong, was put on the ground, okay, and had a boot to his neck. I've seen that several times and the White person, you know, will be asked politely as to what's going on. Even when witnesses tell the police officers who is in the wrong, they will still treat the wrong part--that is the White guy--you know, with kid gloves if you will. You know, and then just... apologize to the Black guy for mishandling him you know. That's it, "take care".

Ken said the situation is "somewhat getting worse" with the "influx of other African-Canadians, particularly from the East" (i.e. Toronto and Montréal).[132] Apparently, the equating of "Black man" with "criminal" is also spreading. Ken talked a bit about crime spreading from East to West. He concluded with: "at least out here the police officers still have the decency to arrest you first and then question or shoot you later!" We both

[132] "Without exception" Frances' Caribbean participants "were able to relate stories of police harassment" (1994:216). Aster did not mention police harassment, but I did not ask her about it either.

laughed.[133] The potential for expressing multiple identities as a "Black man" are telescoped through fixed notions equating "Black" male with "police suspect".

Like Aster, Ken's experiences were mediated through his Blackness, which exposed him to racism and discrimination. However, his differential experiences of the immigration process were compounded by the categorization of "Black" males as criminals.

DAVID

Being a South African-born Canadian

David describes himself as "dark-skinned", categorized as "Coloured" under apartheid. When I asked David to describe his identity, and whether he would identify with a particular ethnic or "racial" group, he answered by saying,

> When I came here I came away from a racialist society, which was one of the main reasons why I left South Africa. I came here prepared to meld into the community. .... I was just wanting to come to a country that would accept me for who I am, what I am. .... Naturally there was that percentage, which is in human nature, that sort of either feels that once you're of a different colour you are of an inferior intellect or whatever.

David's answer focuses primarily on situating himself outside of apartheid categories, rather than describing 'who he is and what he is'. He defines himself outside

[133] I must comment on my laughter here, in that some readers may find it inappropriate. In both Ken and Aster's interviews I would laugh when they made a statement like the one above. I would then apologize and explain that I was laughing at the situation, not at them. Both responded that they did not find it offensive because this is how they reacted to situations like that in South Africa. For example, in response to my laughter and apology Ken said, "you see this is one thing people don't (pause) understand is that, you know the South Africans, you know, some people think that, you know, we tend to laugh at serious issues. I guess maybe that's ah, that's another way of us, of, it sounds like therapy, you know? .... So at any rate you know,

categories of ascription (especially those associated with apartheid), without including himself within any particular category.[134] His answer also parallels Lily's assertion about the "naturalness" of discrimination and racialization--'a certain percentage of the population are racist by human *nature*'.

I then asked David to tell me about being a South African in Greater Vancouver. He replied that after being here twenty-nine years, he and his wife regard themselves as Canadians. By asking David about being South African, this had the effect of placing him outside of the category "Canadian" (i.e. I othered him). "No matter where you are, your place of birth is always there and I, as an individual, am very proud of being born in South Africa. .... So being a South African is there inside of me, you know the South African born. My roots are also in South Africa, but I think as a Canadian, and I regard myself as a Canadian."

David avoided hyphenating his identity as a South African-Canadian (or vice versa), and instead agreed with my suggestion that he was "a Canadian who was born in South Africa". As he privileged his Canadianness, I asked what it meant to him to "be Canadian". He responded by discussing his bitterness around leaving South Africa and then came back to my original question by stating that:

> Canada offered me what my country at that time could not, or refused to offer. .... When we came here we were very grateful for the country offering what it did, freedom of choice, freedom (pause) in so many different ways. My idea was to become a Canadian and be proud of being a Canadian and that's it. South Africa, I'm proud of being a South African born and what have you, but my allegiance is with Canada.

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you can laugh about it. I don't feel offended, not at all, not at all."

[134] As stated previously, David said "the niche in which we are has no particular niche as any racial group, it's just as a Canadian, and that's what we want it to be."

The primary identity David communicated through-out the narrative was "Canadian". When I asked him questions that he saw as a challenge to this identity, he re-affirms it each time because "that's what he wants it to be". This may also be because of the reasons why he left South Africa twenty-nine years ago. In South Africa, all of David's identities were 'telescoped into one and filtered through his "dark skin"' (St. Lewis 1996:22). Perhaps in response to this, David repeatedly asserts himself as Canadian--also a single identity, but one that is not telescoped by colour to the same degree.[135]

David's bitterness around leaving South Africa, was similar to that of Aster, Gord and Ken.

> I left South Africa very bitter. .... My country rejected me. My country, being now the [National Party] government and whatnot, rejected me as a citizen not because of my abilities, or lack of abilities, or my lack of intelligence. They rejected me as a citizen because I was dark-skinned, and so I left. I loved the country, loved the city, and ah, I left very bitter. In fact I was in tears. .... There were tears and there was anger, if you want to call it that. I came to Canada. Canada said to me "welcome. .... Go where you like and do for yourself. You have the opportunity. You can live where you like"--I couldn't live where I liked in South Africa--[136]"and you can produce and you can achieve, within the confines of your abilities", and for that I'm very grateful.

As with Ken, David contrasts the South African National Party government and his resentment regarding the political circumstances that caused him to leave to the "refuge" that Canada offered. David clearly demonstrates how being "dark-skinned" mattered more in

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[135] Although "Canadian" is marked by the hegemony of Whiteness.

[136] He is referring to the Group Areas Act (1950), the purpose of which was to spatially segregate urban areas by "racial groups", creating "racially homogeneous localities" (Adam and Moodley 1986:223). Land was set aside for specific groups, separated by "buffer zones". The intent, according to the Minister of the Interior, was to "preserve White South Africa". With limited exception, Coloured areas were "small and peripheral" (Christopher 1994:105-109).

South Africa than any other aspect of "who and what he is". Regardless of his ability or intelligence he was defined through colour. The thought of his children being subject to that experience was part of his impetus to leave. Although David initially experienced difficulties in securing meaningful employment, he once again owns his own company.

Canadians: "Stand on guard for thee"

When I asked David if he considered himself an "immigrant", he responded by stating:

> I suppose I can't get away from it, but I don't think in term, as an immigrant. I feel I think as, as part of a society here in my sphere and I'm Canadian. .... Ah, the fact that I am an immigrant, in that I came here from another country is there, but ah, it ah, I don't think like an immigrant. I think like ah, part of the ah, you know the community, and ah, so as far as I'm concerned anyway.

Later, he expressed a similar view to Ken when he said "you know we look at Canada as a bunch of immigrants, White or whatever colour you are. The aboriginal being, the native Indian being, the only true Canadian." He then went on to say something that shed more light on his identity as a Canadian.

> I feel as an immigrant who comes here, you come here and... to do well he should be assimilated into the society, but if he becomes a distinct group, he opens himself up to criticism and all kinds of problems, which he doesn't need and the country doesn't need. And so, I don't know, my idea was to become a Canadian and be proud of being a Canadian and that's it. South Africa, I'm proud of being a South African born and what have you, but my allegiance is with Canada. ....
>
> I'm proud to be a Canadian, and I feel that many Canadians have got very far to go to be, to appreciate being Canadian. I sometimes admire, often admire, the Americans because they are the flag, and their anthem, and when you sit in the same

group of Canadians, it's sort of ho hum, comme ci, comme ça.

> I feel as a Canadian group of people, whether they have been born here many generations ago, they have come to a point where they become proud of being a Canadian, or thanks probably, you know. 'Canada I stand on guard for thee', you know, and mean it. I think I've come to that point, and as an immigrant, because I know what I have given up and what I've come to.

Stan and Rose also do not identify themselves as "immigrants", describing the designation as meaningless within the context of Greater Vancouver. The "whole of Vancouver, except for two per cent are immigrants" Stan said. "A lot of people here are from somewhere else, be it another country or another part of Canada." Craig expressed a similar idea and took it a step further. He joked that his wife "should be stuffed and put in the museum of Anthropology as one of the few Canadians I've met that really comes from Vancouver!" When I asked Gord if he considered himself an immigrant, he replied "not anymore", but "it's taken me a long, long time".

In sum, David and his family came to Canada for the opportunity to become something other than "Coloureds", namely to be "Canadians". Although "some people" have racialized him here, Canada offered him the freedom of opportunity to be Canadian and "meld into the community" of his choice. He feels he has done that.

CRAIG: South African-Canadian: "Is that right?"

When I asked Craig how he would describe his identity he said: "If I was in the States I would probably think of myself as an American, but in Canada they seem to

encourage people to think of yourself as a something-Canadian. So, um, I guess I always thought of myself as a Canadian from South Africa".

When Craig took a high profile position as a "South African", his identity necessarily shifted somewhat. "So I guess right now... I'd say I'm a Canadian-South African, or a South African-Canadian, I'm sorry. Is that right? Yah, South African-Canadian." Craig went through an interesting process in trying to order his identities in that it seemed to relate more to his sense of duty and what he *should* be, rather than who he actually considers himself to be--much like Lily feeling that she should identify as a Canadian. He said he put Canadian first because "the Canadian is the more important of the two. I'm a Canadian, but I'm from South Africa".

Later in the interview, Craig shed more light on his struggle with getting it "right". "I think until the new South Africa appeared in '94, I'm not sure that there were very many South Africans who regarded themselves as South African-Canadians.... They just wanted to be assimilated into the population as quickly as possible, because it wasn't necessarily a great thing to be from South Africa."

Here, Craig uses "South African" to signify "White", as implied by the context, in the same way that the publisher of the South African-Canadian Business Directory does. She said that when she approached people for the first edition in 1994, "they said they felt intimidated and they felt insecure. So a South African whose background is from Ireland, he suddenly because an Irish-Canadian and the South African part [was] dropped completely." She blamed this on "un-South African propaganda" and related the following

story someone told her. In the apartheid years, people used to go to bottle stores[137] and "break the South African wines". "So then they felt next in line probably, so they felt intimidated (laughs). They wouldn't say they're South Africans. Everyone just dropped back to their European country of origin."[138]

The publisher said that when she first discussed the idea of a South African Canadian Business Directory, people told her to "forget it". They said:

> First of all we're too embarrassed... [and] scared to say we're South Africans. We're not like the other [immigrant groups who have Directories]. I said "we must become like the others". They said to me: "Anna, if you manage to get one person listed under the South African Directory we will take our hats off to you". And when they saw the book... I think for the first time they realized there's nothing wrong to say they're South African. The people didn't get their addresses and telephone numbers and phone them and really start intimidating and blackmailing them.[139]

The South African High Consul to Vancouver also said that people are starting to identify more now as South Africans. Again, the Whiteness of South African is implied through notions of being "unpopular" and one's ability to "blend in". He said, "South Africans have always tended to blend in because South Africa wasn't necessarily the most popular country in the world, but there's been a growing consciousness of being South African" (in Bell 1996).[140]

After all these years here, I'm really meeting South African-Canadians. Before, I

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[137] "Bottle stores" are the South African equivalent of Canadian liquor stores.

[138] She uses "South African" to signify predominantly--though not exclusively--"White". "European" also signifies "White", even though one could be from Europe *and* be "non-White". Apartheid signs also equated "European" and "White".

[139] In the "Message from the Publisher" Anna writes, "I thank you all for your strong encouragement and support. Without it nothing could have been accomplished especially having had some resistance and lack of enthusiasm of some of our members who thought it would be an impossibility for the ex-South Africans to produce a directory. Well, I managed to prove them wrong!!!!" (Zibarras 1996) (It is ironic that the publisher of the *South African* Canadian Business Directory makes reference to *ex*-South Africans.)

[140] There is a striking dissonance to Gord's politicization and "consciousness of being a South African".

> would meet them and we would be Canadians from South Africa. There's a growing um, desire, I think amongst the South Africans to at least recognize their roots and get together and I like that. I've made some new friends and it's a delightful time to be Consul. Ten years ago I would have been scared to put out my address because I would have been scared of bombs or whatever you know.[141]

The latency of one's South African identity is, in part, what Mythili Rajiva was referring to when she said that different discourses of Whiteness bump up against each other in the research. In the apartheid years, one's European country of origin or Canadianness was emphasised in order to "hide" one's South African roots. Going back to Frankenberg's (1993) analysis of Whiteness as a set of three linked dimensions, South African Whiteness in Greater Vancouver represented a location of structural advantage, a standpoint marked by guaranteed privilege, and set of cultural practices marked by apartheid. Given the negative connotations of South African Whiteness, it was preferable to be "assimilated as quickly as possible" into Canadian Whiteness.

Immigrants and Accents

Craig does; however, consider himself an "immigrant". When I asked him why, he said:

> Well, because I am. I, speak with a foreign accent. I have different values still. I find different things exciting and interesting. I'm an immigrant because I, I sometimes think that I prize this country a lot more than Canadians do.
>
> When I first got here I joined the militia, because I figured that it was such a great country and I should try and do something. I always had this fear that if--probably still do--that if the Americans decided they needed Canadian, Canada's water and

[141] I offer an analysis of this situation below.

> decided to move up here that the average Canadian who doesn't know anything else but Canada would probably say "Great, I don't have to watch the CBC. Cheap beer, cheap cars, what the hell."

Craig identifies himself as an "immigrant" through markers of "Canadian difference" that he regards as both mattering and defining: accent, values, interests. The degree to which he values Canada is contrasted against the apathy of the "average Canadian" who dislikes the CBC, and values cheap beer and cars. Like David, he believes that he values Canada more than most Canadians do. Yet, Craig still includes himself within the category "Canadian" when he later spoke of the concerns he has over the potential secession of Québec.[142] "We just don't have the mentality to go to war to stop provinces from seceding. We'll never do that in Canada, ever. We just don't have that mentality, we'll let them go. We'll complain and whine, you know, do the typical Canadian thing and try and tax the hell out of them just before they leave,[143] and then we'll let them go."

Discrimination: The threat of money

When I asked Craig who is most discriminated against in Vancouver, he also related this to Canadian apathy. He answered that the Chinese are most discriminated against because

> Part of it is probably fear, because they are successful and they have money, and

[142] David also expressed concerns over the future of Canada. "What distresses me, if anything, is that, when I came to Canada, I came to Canada and the idea of separation of Québec bothers me because I feel it's one country...."

[143] A few of the participants commented on Canada's taxation rates. Lily said: "Here in Canada they tax you to the bone!"

> they work hard. Usually, I think the people most discriminated against are the people that the majority of the residents fear most. So I suspect, East Indians were probably in the 80's, and I suspect it's probably Chinese in the 90's. They are coming here in large numbers, prepared to work really hard to get what they want. Um, I don't think Canadians are prepared to do it, typical, I'm being very general.[144] I mean they don't realize what a good country it is because they have always been here. They don't realize how important education is because they have never been without it. .... They've usually had almost everything they need, you know.
>
> I look at my son and there is no drive in him to succeed, and one of the reasons, I think, is because he doesn't have to, really. .... A lot of the immigration, workers who come here, didn't think that way. The Chinese still don't. You know, they all want to work and make lots of money.[145] In a way that's good... but in another way it's quite threatening.

Gord expressed a similar view. He said that in Vancouver, "economic power is swaying towards people from Hong Kong, Chinese people, and this amuses me to no end, because you find people are--white people--in Vancouver are threatened by it, and so [there is] constant talk of monster homes and all of this kind of stuff. It just shows an envy and a fear."[146]

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[144] Later Craig said "I like the opportunities in BC where if you want to work hard--which I don't--of getting ahead." It would appear that Craig does identify with at least some of the characteristics he describes as "Canadian".

[145] There are striking similarities to Lily's characterization of Hong Kong immigrants.

[146] It was surprising to me how often issues around Chinese and Hong Kong immigrants came up in the interviews--especially given my focus on South Africans. It is, of course, reasonable to expect the possibility of the answer when talking about discriminated groups, but it came up frequently in other contexts as well, such as when I presented the research at conferences. If the conference was outside of Greater Vancouver, I would be asked what 'the participants thought about all of the Chinese immigrants'. My usual preface to a response was to remind them that two of the participants were "Chinese".

Implicitly "White South Africans"[147]

It was surprising how often "White" was the unspoken modifier of "South African" in the narratives of the "White" participants. As Frankenberg states, "White" remains the unmarked category while "others" are consistently marked (1997). However, all of the participants, to a lesser degree (un)marked "South Africanness" as "their identity group" (e.g. "South African" was variously used to signify "African", "Chinese", or "White" dependent on speaker and context). For Aline, Craig, Rose and Stan, "South African" invariably signified "White" except when explicitly stated otherwise. For example, in the context of a discussion about "South African immigration", Aline said,

> It's different than immigration from the other countries because here the richest, the best educated, the best established are coming--not the other way around. Not people who are at a financial disadvantage in their own countries and they come here for a better life, no. People that had a very good life and now... feel that... the standards of their lives are deteriorating, are leaving.[148] So we get in people from the best economic, educational, and social class from South Africa. ....
>
> With all of these people their money goes... so the country is bleeding of currency all the time. .... The very people--I shouldn't generalize, but most of them very bitter--the very people that wanted to help South Africa... destroyed South Africa, and it's people and we feel very sorry for the South African Black... because most of them are very good people, and most of them were very happy. The Black South Africans suffered much more than the White South Africans did, because the White South Africans at least could leave. Every White person that leaves the country, more Black South Africans are out of work.

There are a number of key indicators in Aline's account that imply Whiteness:

[147] In this section I combine the narratives of Craig, Aline, Rose, Stan, and the publisher of the South African Canadian Business Directory. Aline spoke primarily about what she sees among "South Africans" in Greater Vancouver (predominantly "White") rather than her personal experiences, which does not fit into the format I have used for the other participants. I employ this strategy to be able to include her comments. The reader will also notice that the analysis shifts somewhat to a discussion around groups rather than individuals because of this.

richest, best educated, best established, best social class. The White-Black binary is given explanatory power--"the Whites destroyed South Africa for the Blacks", and the more "White" South Africans who leave, the less they leave behind for the "Blacks". It is also noteworthy that the people Aline describes share David, Ken, and Aster's bitterness about leaving.[149]

For "White" South Africans like Craig, and those Anna makes reference to when discussing the Directory, "South Africanness" is something that was not communicated during the apartheid years out of shame. South African identity was often latent, especially when compared to the post-apartheid era, because white skin was perceived as a marker of privilege and racism. "White" South Africans were constituted as beneficiaries of crimes against humanity through skin colour (even if one did not perpetrate apartheid, all still benefited from it).[150]

There is an irony in that the end of apartheid created a space for "White" South Africans to re-claim their "South Africanness", despite the fact that legislative changes did not result in the "fundamental empowerment of the oppressed" (Marable 1992) and for the most part, "the ill-gotten gains of conquest [remain] intact".[151] The political changes, voted in by "Whites",[152] enables them to be "South Africans" in Canada rather than Canadians

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[148] In other words, they are subject to the standards of those below them in apartheid's "racial" hierarchy.

[149] There is a web site called the "South Africa to New Zealand Support Page", run by South Africans who have emigrated to New Zealand. The web page called "Reasons for staying in South Africa" is blank (Metelerkamp 1997). The "Reasons for Leaving" page includes hijacking, "The Honey moon is over ... (sic) what now?", and "Education (or lack of it?)" as well as a rather distinctive image of a "White" man in a balaclava (the irony is that the face is "White"). There is an under-current of bitterness and (racialist) resentment through-out these web pages.

[150] Thanks to Heribert Adam for clarifying this in an earlier draft.

[151] Heribert Adam, personal communication.

[152] "Blacks" did not yet have the vote.

from South Africa. Further, Mandela's policy of reconciliation legitimized "Whites" as "South Africans".[153] In Greater Vancouver, this once simultaneously powerful and tainted identity is being publicly re-claimed under reduced fear of retaliation (Barkley 1998).

This does not mean; however, that "White" South African immigrants who left in the post-apartheid era are not chided for reaping the benefits of apartheid and leaving once their privilege was no longer legally entrenched (ibid.). As stated previously, during the period I was conducting the interviews an article ran in The Vancouver Sun titled "Vancouver city of choice for South Africans" (Bell 1996). Once again "White" served as the unspoken modifier of South African. The article contained stories of "South Africans" who had emigrated because of differential opportunities and crime in the new South Africa. One person quoted in the article said "it's apartheid in reverse"--however, it was not discrimination that was at issue, but the reversal of it (Barkley 1998a). In the same way that "non-Whites" left South Africa because they wanted to be acknowledged for who they are rather than what colour they are, "White" South Africans emigrating because of the political and social changes in the "new South Africa" cite similar reasons.

Ken, David, Gord, and Aster[154] all expressed a very similar view when I remarked that their reasons for leaving South Africa were remarkably similar to those leaving in the post-apartheid era whom I had either interviewed or who were quoted in the article (i.e. a future determined by skin colour not abilities).

For example, David said:

I beg to differ. .... *These* individuals have enjoyed the benefits in their whole entire

[153] Heribert Adam, personal communication.
[154] Keeping in mind that they all left South Africa during the apartheid years.

> lifetime. .... They were living in a regime that catered to their needs, gave them everything on a plate whether their abilities were good or not, whether they deserved it or not, because of the, the, the colour of their skin.
>
> Now you have a people who have been denied just basic human rights, now are having a few human rights because, you know the change over from government didn't change their lives all together, it's just given them opportunities. .... So the ones who are leaving can't handle that. .... Now they've got to compete for what *they* enjoyed for years. Before, whether they were able or not, they could get jobs. They could get positions, they could get advancement, but now the Black man of course, because of being ah, held down for so long, he's given perks which might be ahead of them and now so to allow them to maybe just come up. So now the ones that are leaving are those that can't handle that.

In response to the Vancouver Sun article, Gord said:

> Now the White people here are complaining because, they call it "affirmative action", but the truth of the matter is, they have got competition. For the first time in their lives they're living with reality, and every Canadian here knows, you can be out of a job. You could live poorly. You could be on skid row, and they [are] experiencing this for the first time, and they're having difficulties. Now they call this "falling standards". Call it "affirmative action". To me it's just a bunch of nonsense.

Again the agonistic "White--Other" binary has some explanatory power. It is also interesting how Whiteness is essentialized. The apartheid regime's pre-occupation with "racial difference" also constituted a category of Whiteness (in Frankenberg's sense) even though "White" was the category against which "racial difference" was marked. The tension between "White" as a neutral "racial" category and the significance attached to "racial others" is brought to the fore. Because "difference" is produced by discrimination (Dei 1998; Scott 1992), those discriminated against have little sympathy for those who benefited from apartheid and are now claiming to be "victims".[155] With the dismantling of apartheid,

[155] A "White" South African woman was seeking political asylum in Australia on the grounds that it was impossible to live under "Black" rule because of crime and discrimination (Daily Telegraph 1998). For a fuller discussion of South Africa's affirmative action and claims of "reverse apartheid" than can be offered

power is now circulating in more complicated ways. For example, "White" South Africans are emigrating because of differential opportunities in the post-apartheid era. Meanwhile "Black" managers are "are poached and head-hunted with remarkable inducements" even by "ultra-conservative firms" (K. Adam 1997:231, see also Russell 1997).

In sum, reclaiming South Africanness relies on severing the linkages between white skin and "racial" dominance, while concomitantly viewing themselves as non-"racial" or "racially" neutral (see also Frankenberg 1993). The three linked dimensions of Whiteness as privilege, standpoint, and cultural practices (ibid.) remain intact though altered through the political changes in South Africa. "White" South Africans are being imagined differently, and through this are able to present themselves differently as well.

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here see K. Adam (1997).

CHAPTER FIVE

CHANGING CONTEXTS, SHIFTING IDENTITIES

"Multi-racial" Voices

When I began the research I had a number of goals in mind. First, I wanted to add "immigrant voices" to the vast array of literature about immigrants. Although graduate students often hear that no one but their committee will read the thesis, I hope that whether the thesis is read by a broader audience or not, at least those who have heard the conference presentations of the research benefited from hearing the voices. Second, I wanted to conduct research with a multi-ethnic/"racial" group (as opposed to "ethnic group X in location Y") to explore if, and how, a multi-ethnic/"racial" group differentially experienced the immigration process. By including "Whites" in the research, there were a number of unanticipated findings.

Probably the most significant unanticipated finding was that "White" South Africans also face difficulties in finding meaningful employment because of their lack of Canadian experience. For example, I was told of one South African woman (unmarked as "White") who resorted to selling a specialty South African dessert out of the trunk of her car at an highway exit leading to a large settlement of ("White") South Africans. Neither she nor her husband were able to find work and, after a couple of months, had exhausted their savings.

As previously stated, some have argued that requiring "Canadian experience" is a code phrase for excluding "people of colour" from the work force (e.g. Ralston 1996). A publication by a "group of South Africans who got together... to assist fellow [South

African] immigrants", states that "some Canadian employers are almost obsessive about 'Canadian experience'" (Soft Landings Network 1996:3).[156] By comparing experiences among the participants, and based on information from the publisher of the South African Canadian Business Directory and the South African High Consul to Greater Vancouver, apparently this is more likely an "immigrant phenomenon" rather than solely a matter of colour. For example, Citizenship and Immigration Canada advises "newcomers" that employers "may not want to hire someone without Canadian experience or who *seems unable to cope* with Canadian ways" (1995:61, emphasis added). There is a sub-text of "immutable essential difference" (Jenkins 1986) in this passage, in that one may not be hired because of the *appearance* that s/he may be "unable to cope with Canadian ways", in addition to lacking "Canadian experience".

Further, as John Lundy commented,[157] research focusing on the brain-drain of emigration, often overlooks the brain-gain of immigration. Canada is acquiring South Africans from "the best economic, educational, and social class" (Aline). This allows Alberta, for example, to address its' shortage of doctors in rural areas (Kenny 1998) caused, in part, by the emigration of "Canadian" doctors drawn to the United States by research money (Abraham 1998).

Although "White" South Africans may face setbacks initially by immigrating, the "White" participants regarded this as part of the transition. Aline said, "give us five to ten years and we will be a very, very strong community, and of course we assimilate

[156] Unfortunately messages left for the network were never returned. Although the publication has "race neutral" text, there are numerous indicators that it was intended for predominantly non-Africans. For example, six of the seven people listed in the network immigrated to Canada in 1994, the year of the elections.

immediately, because I mean there's nothing to assimilate to", because they are "White" and come from a European dominated society. For example, Stan said, "we have a European heritage so we fit in here". When he and Rose were deciding where to immigrate, they "looked to where they would fit in best" and where they would "fit in with the logic". They chose Greater Vancouver.

All of the participants expressed a similar view that cultural adaptation to Greater Vancouver was not too difficult because it was so similar to South Africa. There were, of course, some difficulties, but these were considered to be minor by the participants. For example, Stan said it would have helped to know that you will not get a letter back when you apply for a job. Lily commented that Chinese South Africans are so "Westernized" that they have no problems "fitting in". However, as Aster and Ken's experiences of being othered demonstrate, they encountered problems because they are perceived as being more "culturally different" than they actually are. As a result, they are not as readily accepted as "Canadians", especially when compared to the other participants. Integration is also a relational process, as one cannot integrate if one is prevented from doing so. All of the participants faced challenges in various aspects of their lives, and these challenges were somewhat compounded by the darkness of one's skin.

Canada's ambiguous racial hierarchy was also made visible by conducting research with a "multi-racial" group of participants. Some aspects of differential integration were confirmed, as discussed above for "Whites". Aster and Ken, however, talked of covert racism and the difficulties "people of colour" face in finding meaningful employment. For

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[157] Personal communication (prompted by Barkley 1998).

them it was not a matter of there being "nothing to assimilate to", but rather having to overcome the barriers to adaptation caused by the differential opportunities for the "assimilation" of "Blacks" into Greater Vancouver (see also Henry 1994; Henry and Ginzberg 1992).

Further, the thin veneer of "equality" in Canada helps to perpetuate inequality because the fight is against more ambiguous and seemingly innocuous racializing processes than in South Africa. Yet, participants were able to limit the effect of skin colour on their lives because of this ambiguity and attribute cause to individuals rather than state-legislated inequality--the former being easier to over-come than the later.

I had not considered how the large "Chinese" population in the region could provide a greater sense of belonging and comfort than being in the country where one had spent most of one's life, as it did for Lily. She said, "I am very lucky because I can mix into both worlds, so it's ideal for me here. It's very easy for me to associate here", with "Chinese and Caucasians". Lily and Gord had multiple identity options open to them when compared to South Africa: Canadian notions of Chineseness, South African-Chineseness, Chinatown Chineseness, hegemonic notions of "Canadianness" (i.e. British-dominated), and so on.

Craig referred to "White" South Africans as "almost like white Chinese". "We're coming over here, we want to succeed". The "unity of us" ("White") falters when compared to them (Chinese) on this point. Apathetic ("White") Canadians are contrasted with "hard-working Chinese", as the over-determination of an essentialized "Chinese work ethic" in defining common "cultural stuff" impinges on the boundary between us and them. Craig constructs ("White") South Africans as more like essentialized "Chinese" than ("White)

Canadians with respect to their desire to succeed. However, according to Lily's account, South African Chinese are more like ("White") "Canadians" in that they are not that "forward going". "We come in as accountants, we stay accountants". The boundary shifts as the imagining of the "cultural stuff" that is used to mark it does.

Craig, Aline, David, Lily and Gord were generally able to hit the ground running and did not experience significant set backs upon immigrating. For those who arrived during the boom years, "if you wanted to work, it was difficult deciding what you wanted to do because there were so many jobs" (Craig). Ken and Aster, however, like other "Blacks" in Canada (Henry and Ginzberg 1992; Henry 1994), faced difficulties securing meaningful employment, but then so did Rose and Stan. Lily and Aster considered themselves "lucky" because they were both hired for their first jobs by people who had also immigrated to Greater Vancouver. This allowed them to overcome their lack of Canadian experience that may have disadvantaged them with a "Canadian" employer. Although "race" was a factor that inhibited Ken and Aster in finding meaningful employment, beyond that it is hard to draw conclusions.

I was not surprised that the "White" participants were doing well. I had not however, considered the stigma that would face them because of the linked dimensions of South African Whiteness as a location of structural advantage, a standpoint, and a set of (un)named and (un)marked cultural practices (Frankenberg 1993) under apartheid. This stigma was compounded as place-specific notions of Whiteness bumped up against each other. South African Whiteness was distanced as fundamentally different from *imaginings* of Canadian Whiteness as liberal and "racially tolerant". As with Blackness, there is an

over-arching set of experiences that are mediated through skin colour. However, this does not mean that there is not great variation between those with white skin. For example, although Craig, Aline, Rose and Stan all had white skin, their political beliefs varied widely. As with any category, there is infinite variation subsumed within it. The similarities and "differences" are dependent on where one looks and the questions that are asked.

The political changes in South Africa altered discourses about South African Whiteness somewhat. The ambiguity about what it means to be a "White" South African in the post-apartheid era creates a space to (re)claim one's South Africanness. It is also important to note that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings were in the early stages when the interviews were conducted. Aline's claim that "we didn't know really, what went on under apartheid" would be more difficult to make now, after twenty-seven months of hearings (Marais 1998) and press reports of "the truth". This may also affect what the participants would have said had the interviews been conducted in 1998 rather than 1996.

The stigma of South African Whiteness compared to Canadian Whiteness is also juxtaposed against what Aster and Ken saw beneath the thin veneer of professed equality in Canada. Aster, Ken, Gord and David all commented on Canada's treatment of Aboriginal peoples, and how they too are erased not only as evidence of Canada's own human rights record, but also as the original peoples.

There were a number of issues regarding incorporation into Greater Vancouver that were specific to non-African South Africans which are also part of a broader colonial legacy

facilitated by a supply of cheap labour.[158] I was most surprised by the fact that adults who could move from one hemisphere to another may not know how to cook or clean.[159] South Africans are advised by the Soft Landings Network to "be prepared also to take on your own domestic chores" (1996:3). Craig said that his sister-in-law could neither cook nor clean when she emigrated in the 80's. This was; however, neither limited to women, nor to "Whites".

Lily said, "the men have to help out a lot more here. Back home everybody has a maid right, so the men never did anything. So here the man has to chip in like everybody else. .... I think that mostly a lot of my friends are teaching the children rather than the men, because a lot of the men have been spoiled back home." She then told me how she is trying to teach her daughter to pick up after herself, because "back home" there was always a maid to do that for her. Lily went on to say that she misses her maid and her "life of leisure"--tennis, shopping, and committee meetings--that the maid enabled. "Here you go to work, come home, it's late, you clean the house, do washing.... Back home the lifestyle was (pause) very much easier. .... I must be honest, I mean my whole life I never ironed anything. I never really kept my own clothes, or, you know, the maid did all that for me. I never really knew how to clean anything properly. I had to learn."

Besides "having to help out" I was told of other challenges for the men in adapting to the relative gender equality in Greater Vancouver. Craig told me of a man who had to work for a woman and "couldn't take it. Never worked for a woman in South Africa,

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[158] Thanks to Susan Frohlick for drawing this to my attention.

[159] This not only says something about my own cultural bias, but once again challenges the imagined unity of "Whiteness" and the Otherness of them.

couldn't understand why he had to work for her. That's really old-fashioned". He went on to comment on how South African men are known to be chauvinistic. Apart from these two observations, however, I did not hear of any other significant differences between men and women.

Immigration appeared to have some impact on how the participants saw themselves. Lily, Rose and Stan talked of a loss of self-esteem, but they remained optimistic. Lily said that she felt like less of a person than she did in South Africa, but also less of a minority as well. She talked of how "great" it is to stand at a bus stop and be able to talk to the "White" person in English and then turn to the Chinese person and talk to them (presumably in Cantonese). "It's really (laughs) wonderful. It's really easy for me here, yah."

Gord became politicized and, through the process, gained a South African identity–though this had more to do with emigrating than Canada per se. His politicization was a compelling process. He went from being a member of a group in South Africa that he describes as unpoliticised, to becoming involved in the Black Power movement while living in Asia, to advocating on behalf of an African political/liberation organization in Greater Vancouver and becoming self-exiled because of his public fight against the apartheid regime. The catalyst of his politicization centred around the realization that it was the illegitimate National Party government that denied him his legitimate right to be South African *and* Chinese, to compete in his sport, and numerous other things. Through the process of becoming politicized he (re)claimed his South Africanness, which Canada/Greater Vancouver provided him the "freedom" to do. Like David, Canada provided Gord with the opportunity to "achieve to the best of his abilities" (David), and,

most importantly, to *be* South African and set himself "a goal of fighting against the South African government of the day" (Gord).

David was able to be who and what he wanted to be, regardless of the colour of his skin. Although he did speak of one incident where he felt that his skin colour did matter, he said that had more to do with that person than anything to do with him. This view was also expressed by Gord when we were discussing racism.

Ken saw that "things were not what they are made to seem", and implied that some things were kept hidden from him in South Africa--by African political parties as well as the government of the day. Aster came to the realization that perhaps the ANC's path of Reconciliation will not be the answer to South Africa's problems. If reconciliation leads to a society like Canada, "how will a Black person ever be equal with a White person?" The answer as to whether this is the right path for the new South Africa and if South Africa can and should belong to all is deep in her soul. By stating that she is afraid of what she will get if she searches for the answer, suggests that she already knows what it will be.

In general, emigrating enabled more identity options, but this was constraining as well. Although the participants could choose from more identity options, as with Gord and Lily being South African, they were also constrained by notions in Greater Vancouver of what it means to be South African--"Black". "Blackness" also has different connotations in Greater Vancouver than in South Africa, in that it is signified as Somalians, Ethiopians, people from the Caribbean, starvation, and so on. In short, there seems to be more ambiguity associated with Blackness because the diaspora as well as the imaginings of Blackness are more diverse, or perhaps just more ambiguous.

I expected that certain identity options would open up after emigrating, while others would become latent. I eventually dropped the question 'did you always know that you were X',[160] because apartheid meant that everyone knew how they were classified and what "racial" and/or ethnic group they *should* belong to--"we only saw each other" (Lily) and "the white folks stayed where they were" (Aster). It was not like immigration from other countries where people never thought about themselves as "Black", for example, to any great extent until they emigrated (e.g. Rich 1992). Aline and Lily commented on how apartheid was much better at "keeping cultures" than multiculturalism--"here everything is so free, you just blend in with everyone else" (Lily). In short, the limitations on identity expression and the availability of identity options under apartheid bears stark contrast to the relative ambiguity and "freedom to choose"[161] in Canada.

Identities as relational, processual, and multiple

In the thesis I have also demonstrated the importance of viewing identity as relational processes of multiplicity. Identity is something that one is continually becoming as some aspects of self are privileged over others, depending on context. As well, it is evident the more complex understanding that comes from analyzing identities as "fluid

[160] Although this question garnered an interesting response from Lily, for the most part it was a bit odd to ask "South Africans" because of the effects of apartheid.

[161] I borrow this phrase somewhat cynically from the Friedman's (1980) pro-capitalism book Free to Choose in which they argue that there is a crucial link between free enterprise and a free society. The Friedmans; however, down-play the role of structural inequalities in differentially limiting one's ability to benefit from free enterprise and thus "to choose". I see the parallel in that the "freedom to choose" one's "cultural identity" is differentially limited by the colour of one's skin. For example, St. Lewis' assertion that she has many identities,

sites" which can be understood differently depending on the vantage point of their formation and function (Friedman 1995). Identities are (re)constructed relationally and therefore it is important to analyze not only what was said and not said, but also how it was said (see also Chase 1995; Josselson and Liebach 1995)–how one becomes (Somers and Gibson 1994). By looking at the way power flows in relationships, identities can be thought of and (re)articulated in more complicated ways than agonistic binaries of self and other allow. Further, it allows for one to be *and* not be, by orchestrating the elastic parameters of their being, mediated through social context.

In the narratives of Lily and Aster, there were numerous identity shifts as they moved back and forth between vacillating identity options (Mouffe 1992).[162] As the sample size was small, it is difficult to ascertain if gender plays a role here or not. However, the men, Gord, David, and Craig, and to a lesser extent Ken, were very clear about who they were and, just as significantly, who they were not. Just as a "fifth-century Athenian was very likely to feel himself to be a non-barbarian as much as he positively felt himself to be Athenian" (Said 1978:54), David communicated that he is "non-Coloured" (i.e. his "dark skin" does not matter) as much as he communicated that he is Canadian. Again, this may also be attributed to defining himself out of apartheid categories which I re-emphasized through my focus on South Africans.

Aster's identity shifted in relation to whom she was interacting with and the story she

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but they are telescoped into one and filtered through her blackness (1996:22).

[162] The shifting boundaries between us and them were most apparent in these interviews as well. The research was designed in order to create a space for identities to shift, but I do not consider it a failing that not all participants' identities shifted numerous times through-out the interviews. Again, it was not about confirming or denying research assumptions, but listening to stories, and *creating the space* for identities to

was telling. When she spoke of racism and ("White") South Africans, her South African identity was latent. When she spoke of the struggle for liberation, she was "proud to be a South African". She also contrasted the experiences of African "immigrants" to those of Chinese "immigrants", employing her understandings of what being Chinese means as a reference point for inequalities or being othered as "non-White" or not belonging. This was a source of frustration for her in that she could see that it was not only a matter of colour, but more significantly, of being "Black". The commonality of the shared space of being perceived as a newcomer--"non-belonging" (St. Lewis 1996:22)--was over-shadowed by Aster's perceptions of differential experiences of Africans (not) being incorporated into Canadian society.

Ken also touched on the idea of differential experiences of the immigration process between Chinese and Africans when he spoke of how the historical presence of Chinese in Canada is acknowledged, while that of "Blacks" is erased (see also St. Lewis 1996). Ken used "Black" when referring to exclusion in this context, but there was no consistent pattern in his use of "Black" or "African" to be discerned in the narrative. Although Ken 'preferred to call himself African' rather than "Black", he nonetheless, referred to himself and "other Africans" as "Black" in the majority of excerpts included here. These narrative slippages are telling in that as a "Black"/African man, all of his identities were telescoped and filtered according to his being "Black" (see also St. Lewis 1996). The prevalence of public narratives of "race" permeated Ken's ontological narrative (see also Somers and Gibson 1994) to the extent that only once did he "edit" out this "error".

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shift.

Boundaries provided a space for negotiating context-dependent meanings of us and them. Victims became victimizers, as power circulated in complicated ways (Friedman 1995). Aster marginalized "Asians" using the same methods "Whites" used to marginalize her. For example, Aster was frustrated with being asked 'where she comes from', yet emphasised where "Asians come from". Ken spoke of African South Africans expressing some of the same attitudes towards other Africans as "Whites" held about them (e.g. being "better developed"). Lily spoke of how Chinese others were marginalized in Vancouver's Chinatown for not speaking the language, in the same way that Chinese are marginalized for not speaking the (English) language. By calling into question the cultural stuff that marked the boundaries in the first place, the flow of power could be redirected. The flow of power could also be altered as the margins between us and them are pulled in different directions--like differential air pressure changes the shape of a balloon (Wallman 1986).

Participants identified with categories of ascription, but also rebelled against them. Although "differences" were reaffirmed through this process, this was also indicative of the ways in which "difference" is created out of inter-connected and shared spaces in public narratives (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Somers and Gibson 1994). All of the participants communicated their identities through familiar and readily available discourses of apartheid classifications (and arguably multiculturalism as well), even if only by identifying against them. Because one is categorized in a particular way, does not mean that one has to identify oneself as such, however, categories become part of one's identity to the extent that one defines oneself outside of these categories. In other words, who I am not, also says a lot who I am. Nonetheless, as long as one is required to define oneself outside of categories of

otherness, one continues to be imprisoned by them (Deloria 1988).

To varying degrees the participants had some awareness of the ways in which "difference" is created out of shared and inter-connected spaces (Gupta and Ferguson 1992). They saw how the notion of "immutable essential differences" (Jenkins 1986) was used to justify domination and exploitation. Ken, Aster, and Gord were the most aware of the social construction of "difference", as well as the most politicized. This politicization also changed when they emigrated, albeit for different reasons.

A number of the participants commented on the "diversity" of Greater Vancouver--'there are people from everywhere', 'we are all immigrants from somewhere'. None of them were particularly impressed with multiculturalism as a policy and had little knowledge about it and, as already indicated, David was against it. Aster said: "multiculturalism doesn't feed me", which was a much more immediate concern for her than "keeping her culture". In other words, the "diversity" of Greater Vancouver was seen and appreciated, while multiculturalism was not.[163]

As Scott suggests, by acknowledging "diversity", the "history and politics of difference and identity itself" remain intact (1992:14). So although there was an awareness of how "racial difference" was an integral part of the process through which power was constituted in South Africa, by recognizing and commenting on the "diversity" of Greater Vancouver the participants re-affirmed public narratives of "diversity" and, in the process, re-confirmed hegemonic notions of "differences" that matter in this geographical context.

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[163] This view is consistent with a 1994 Angus Reid survey which reported that 57% of people polled thought that Canada should "encourage minority groups to be like most Canadians", while three quarters agreed that "Canada's multicultural make-up is one of the best things about this country" (in Adam and Moodley 1995:16).

As I discovered in writing up the research, this is a cyclical process in that because "differences" matter in people's lives, it is difficult not to (re)produce these "differences" through writing about them. However, I do not share Miles and Torres (1996) view that academics (or at least a Master's thesis) have such far-reaching influence on society that academics writing about "race" are able to perpetuate "the idea of race" in public discourses.[164]

The danger lies with public narratives of "race" and otherness in the media--which is part of the reason why I include media reports as research data. David commented on how "the general public is guided by the media".

> So if the media writes something derogatory ... it means in the minds of the people, that must be what South Africa is like, or whatever country it might be. .... Then you will have the pundits like the idiot... on the North Shore by the name of Collins. .... He starts from a racialist point of view; he's a racist through and through. .... If they hit on the racial (pause) issue, they get a big hit, or they're going to interest a certain segment of the society--no matter where they come from in the world. A certain percentage is going to agree. If they are controversial enough, they will be written about. There will be some kind of reaction and so their names become prominent. .... Misconceptions come about by ignorance and being led down the garden path by idiots that write about this and that, but not knowing the circumstances there [in South Africa].[165]

There is a tension here, for as Dei (1998) states, "race and difference provide the contexts for power and domination in society". To avoid speaking or writing about "race" does not mean that there is no abuse of power nor efforts to dominate "racial others". However, the mode of "race" discourse is crucial in measuring the effects. For example, Collins has a wide distribution (if not readership), whereas Dei has a much smaller audience

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[164] The exception being those academics who have the ear of the state.

[165] Doug Collins had a column in The North Shore News, the "Voice of North and West Vancouver since 1969" (see also Brook 1997).

but presents a much more nuanced and informed account of "racial difference".

David and Craig contrasted their pride in being Canadian against that of "the average Canadian" who does not appreciate Canada because they have never experienced anything else. Further, this lack of pride is contrasted against the patriotism of the United States.[166] They are both critical of multiculturalism and encouraging people to be a "something-Canadian" (Craig) in that 'it opens one up to criticism and all kinds of problems which the individual doesn't need and the country doesn't need' (David). In short, multiculturalism is regarded as a potential threat to Canadian society and Canadian identity, while "the three F's of multiculturalism" (food, festivals, and fashion) are regarded somewhat more neutrally. Both Craig and David looked to "the situation in Québec" for supporting evidence, of the "public problem" (Dyck 1991; Gusfield 1981) of bifurcated identities.

We are all "immigrants" from somewhere

As previously mentioned, all of the participants commented on how it is somewhat meaningless to talk about "immigrants" in Greater Vancouver, when the vast majority of people living here come from some place else. "Immigrant" too is a relational identity that the participants turned back upon itself, by redrawing the boundary between us ("Canadian") and them ("immigrant"). They focused on the boundary of Greater Vancouver in defining "immigrant", rather than on the borders of the state.

[166] The Soft Landings Network advises: "It is very important to remember that the average Canadian is not remotely like the average American and resents any suggestion that they are simply American clones" (1996:4).

In one sense, I have no more claim of belonging in Greater Vancouver than any of the participants do. This raises interesting questions. Because I was born in Canada, does that mean that I should have more of a claim on "belonging" in Greater Vancouver, than someone who has lived here much longer than I have? For example, Ken, Craig, Gord, and David have all lived here longer than I have, but as Ken pointed out, I have more rights because of my "birthright", in addition to the colour of my skin.

Conversely, do I have more of a claim on "belonging" in the area where I grew up (i.e., "back home") because I was born and raised there than those who have "immigrated" there in the many years since I left? Do the multi-generations of my family in that area "entitle" me to a greater claim on belonging than those who now live there, even though I have lived elsewhere for a number of years? The answers to these questions depend on which interpretation of "immigrant" one chooses to use in practice.

Furthermore, as Aster, Ken, Gord and David pointed out, "the white guy tends to forget that his ancestors from somewhere found people living here" (Ken). It is an interesting play on words as well as ideologies in that Ken suggests that even though some "Whites" suggest they "found" Canada, and the idea of two "founding nations" is prevalent, the role that "others" (i.e. Chinese, Africans, South Asians, etc.) played in "founding" Canada, is down-played.[167] The myth of discovery is perpetuated here as well. Perhaps most invisible of all is the role *First* Nations, who were "found", played in the survival of

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As Said (1978) suggests, "Canadians" feel themselves as much to be non-Americans, as positively Canadians.

[167] An interesting American example of this, compounded by gender, is Hambrick's (1997) journey to find "Black" women inventors. I have no doubts that such a journey in Canada would be even more difficult.

those who "found" them.[168] The irony and subtlety of this is not lost on Ken, Aster, David and Gord.

The argument 'we are all immigrants' from somewhere also serves to neutralize the outsider status implied by being categorized as an "immigrant".[169] By tugging at the margins of the boundary between us and them, it becomes blurred by the anomalous spaces in between. There are so many different kinds of "immigrants" in Greater Vancouver, perhaps the hegemonic notion needs to be critically examined (the official one, of course, will remain intact). Aline said: "I mean a South African whose parents arrived from Scotland to South Africa, and a Canadian whose parents arrived from Scotland to Canada, it's the same thing". When diaspora becomes the norm, what do you measure against? "If you can't locate the other, how are you to locate yourself" (Minh-ha 1995[1991]:217)?

For centuries, although skin colour and ethnicity have permeated public discourses on immigration, can immigration not also mean moving from one locale to another, even if both are contained within the borders of the state? As Lily suggests, are "immigrants" synonymous with those who maintain simultaneous links between here and there, in other words transmigrants (see also Glick Schiller, Basch and Blanc 1992; 1995)? Again, depending on where the boundary is drawn, I too am a transmigrant of sorts--maintaining many simultaneous links between "there" or "back home" and here. The fact remains, as Ken stated, that I have more rights than he has because I am "White", no matter where "back

[168] Champlain's statue over-looking Parliament Hill in Ottawa comes to mind. Champlain is much larger than the First Nations figure, who although credited with being "his guide" (or something to that effect) remains anonymous.

[169] To leave aside the argument used to counter claims of indigenousness that First Nations are also "immigrants" because they "immigrated" across the Bering Strait land bridge. This argument is also used to

home" is.

Revisiting Whiteness

I learned a lot through the research process and became more de-centred as well. I have thought a lot more about my own Whiteness. This was a process that first began when conducting the interviews and noticing how uncomfortable participants may get when talking about "Whites". This uncomfortableness was also dependent on the context, for had I conducted the interviews in South Africa, this would not have been the case.[170] For the most part, my role as researcher and listener countered this uncomfortableness. Luckily, "the impulse to narrate is such an integral part of human experience that interviewees will tell stories even if we don't encourage them to do so" (Chase 1995:2).

I also thought a lot more about Whiteness when I decided to turn the research upside down and write about Whiteness rather than Otherness (Barkley 1998; 1998a). Although I read Frankenberg (1993) well in advance of conducting the interviews, it was one thing to read about analyzing Whiteness and another to do it. It was then that I realized just how neutralized Whiteness as a category was; even in research among South Africans, whom I assumed would be more cognizant of Whiteness than "your average White Canadian" through the prevalence of Whiteness in structuring the experiences of all South Africans.[171] However, "Whiteness" was rarely criticized as a category in the same way that other "racial"

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neutralize prior claims of indigenousness and "legitimate" ownership.

[170] Heribert Adam, personal communication.

categories were--the exception being Aster's question as to whether or not I had colour too. Yes, "Whites" were criticized because of their privilege as "Whites", but the category itself remained virtually intact as a neutralized category of otherness and as a referent for "racial" otherness.

My regret is that although the thesis allowed for multiplicity and shifts of identities, because of the limitations of the interviews, a M.A. thesis and so on, the participants became somewhat essentialized by the snippets of information included here. In other words, they have "become" what I have written about them. No matter how many narrative slippages I include, they are still fixed according to my words and my selection of their words. Judith Abwanza calls this benevolent dominance. "Benevolence because I insist their voices remain. Dominance because I interpret their voices" (in Krygsveld 1996). This is the great challenge to be met by future research--how to put in to practice all the theoretical works which challenge the essentialness of categories and identities.[172] My hope is that my work may influence someone else to push the boundaries farther than I was able to do here and burst the balloon, not just alter the shape of it.

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[171] Heribert Adam, personal communication.

[172] Perhaps this is why theoretical works are just that, and not ethnography.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) How would you describe who you are--your identity?

2) Tell me about being _____.[173]
   a) What does it mean to you to be _____?

3) How do you think non-____ would describe _____?
   a) What are some of the misconceptions others have about ____?
      i) Why do you think this is? (Where do these ideas come from?)
      ii) Do these misconceptions affect how you see yourself?
      iii) Do they make life more difficult for you?
      iv) Have there been any positive results of this?

4) In your view, what are the main differences between South Africa and Greater Vancouver in how others see you?
   a) Why do you think this is?

5) Have you ever had a bad experience/s because of being _____?

6) Within _____, do you notice any differences between recent immigrants and those who have been in Canada for one or more generations?
   a) If so, what?

7) What languages do you speak/read/write?
   a) Did you learn any of these languages in Canada?

8) Tell me about immigrating to Canada (some early experiences in Canada that stick out in your mind).
   a) What are your thoughts on these experiences?
   b) Do you notice different reactions between young and old?
   c) Between men and women?

9) What surprised you most about Canada/Greater Vancouver?

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[173] "____" denotes racial, ethnic, cultural, national and/or religious groups according to the participant's response to question one.

10) Tell me about immigrants in Greater Vancouver.
    a) Who are they? (Where do they come from?)
    b) Do you consider yourself an immigrant? Why/not?
        i) Did you ever? When?

11) In your view, who is most discriminated against in Greater Vancouver? Why?
    a) Least discriminated against? Why?

12) When are you most unhappy? Most happy?
    a) Why?

13) How would you describe Canada's policy towards people of different origins?
    a) What do you think of it and why?
    b) Does it have any affect on your life (would it make a difference if it wasn't there)?
    c) What does it mean to you?
    d) To what extent has it helped or hindered your life in Greater Vancouver/Canada?

Coming to Canada.

14) How long have you been in Canada? Greater Vancouver?
    a) Have you immigrated to anywhere else (did you come to Canada after living in a country other than your country of origin/birth)?
        i) If yes, where? How long?
    b) Under what immigration category did you come (refugee, business class, entrepreneur, independent, sponsored/family class, investor)?

15) Where were you born?
    a) Did you live anywhere else?

16) What made you decide to come to Canada? (What attracted you?)
    a) Did you have other family members and/or friends in Canada/Greater Vancouver before coming here?
        i) If yes, expand
    b) Do you now?
        I) If yes, expand

17) What (or who) most helped your adjustment to life in Canada/Greater Vancouver?

18) What are your likes and dislikes about Canada? Greater Vancouver?

19) What are some of the biggest obstacles you face here?
    a) Can you give an example/s?
    b) Why do you think this happens?

20) Has immigration changed you? Tell me about this.
    a) How do you cope with the difficulties that you have experienced here and what were/are these?

21) Where do you consider "home" to be and why?

22) What kind of contacts and/or ties do you have in South Africa?

23) Would you like to return to South Africa to live one day?
    a) Why/not?

24) Some people are expressing concerns about declining standards (i.e., health, education, employment) in South Africa. What do you think about this?

25) Is there anything else you would like to add about your experiences of immigrating to Canada/Greater Vancouver?

26) Do you have any comments in general?

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