

**“Where Outreach Meets Outrage”: Racial Equity at The Canada Council for the Arts
(1989 – 1999)**

by

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**A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements
For the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
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Abstract

Where Outreach Meets Outrage: Racial Equity at the Canada Council for the Arts (1989-1999), examines the early formation of racial equity policies at The Canada Council for the Arts. In this research project, I am primarily interested in understanding the ways in which ‘culture’ is employed by the state, the Canada Council for the Arts and by black artists to articulate and communicate complex issues that pertain to notions of art, citizenship, solidarity, justice, multiculturalism, belonging and nationhood. The research places culture and cultural production centrally within claims and calls by racialized artists for the ethical redistribution of societal resources and participation in societal structures. I look at questions of how community is produced and struggled over in relation to claims for cultural resources.

This thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach drawn from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and critical cultural studies to allow the complex relationships between activities of the Canadian state, racial equity policy making at the Canada Council, and grass roots social activism to emerge. I argue that state practices of management are elastic and that racial equity policies at the Canada Council emerged out of a confluence of transformational activities simultaneously taking place at the state/institutional and grassroots levels.

The significance of this research project is that it fuses contemporary cultural production and art within contemporary social justice paradigms that seek to understand the processes and practices within liberalism that produce oppressions and resistance through an exclusionary politics of representation. This dissertation study will have both applied and theoretical implications in the Canadian context both within and outside of the academy in the fields of the arts, cultural policy and education.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My examination of the implementation of racial equity arts policies at the Canada Council for the Arts, an arms-length federal arts funding agency, is motivated by my own work as an art producer and curator. My work in the cultural sector as an emerging video maker and curator began in the late 1980s. The thesis builds on earlier discussions and scholarship pertaining to Canadian culture, race, and multicultural diversity that critically examines the role of the arts and cultural policy (Zemans 1996; Gagnon 2002; Gagnon and McFarlene 2003; Hamilton 2003; Philip 1992) in shaping articulations of the Canadian nation. These discussions became increasingly pertinent in light of the legislation that was introduced –the Federal Multicultural Act of 1988. Soon after the Act was implemented I began to draw upon funding that was made available through various art granting agencies that were directly and indirectly linked to the provincial and federal governments of the day. Most of the funding from these institutions was targeted at ethno-culturally defined communities. Over time I began to view the granting criteria of funding targeted toward specific ethno-cultural initiatives as limited in their definition of what it meant to be from a specific ethno-cultural community and what it meant to be recognized as an ‘ethno-cultural’ artist or artist of colour. The activities and artistic products funded through provincial and federal cultural funding agencies showcased ethnic and racialized cultures as non-white and static in form and content. Multicultural art at that time showcased folkways as expressed through music, dance, food and dress. These experiences led me to pose questions regarding *who* produces contemporary art in Canada as well as what art and cultural practices are recognized as activities worthy of funding.

This thesis sets out to understand the types of discourses on race, cultural production, nation-making, and multicultural citizenship that were called up by racialized artists and cultural producers, Canada Council officers and senior administrative officers in order to bring about institutional changes at the Canada Council for the Arts that placed racial equity on the institution's agenda. The formation of the Canada Council for the Arts, the Council's development of racial equity policies, the subsequent formation of an Equity Office at the Council, and community-based black cultural activism all serve as departure points for my examination of the Canada Councils' engagement with issues of race.

Although the struggle for racial equity at the Council was a multi-racial one, I am particularly concerned with tracing a genealogy of black cultural activism and the ways in which it shaped black cultural producers' engagement with racial equity in the arts. My motivation for focussing on black activist activities is twofold: to bring to light the role that black cultural activists played in shaping the management of culture in Canada and to make visible what some feminist scholars refer to as the "lived negotiations" of citizenship and the dialogic relations between counter discourses and institutions.

The title of the study is borrowed from a statement in the "Report on Racial Equality in the Arts" that was submitted to the Board of the Canada Council in 1991 by racial equity consultant, Chris Creighton-Kelly. Creighton-Kelly was hired to work with The Canada Council as well as with communities of artists of colour. In the report Creighton-Kelly described the engagement between The Canada Council and artists of colour as located at a place where outreach met outrage. Creighton-Kelly was hired by The Canada Council in 1989 to engage Council staff and

artists of colour in discussions on racial equity in order address issues and practices that systematically excluded racialized artists from fully participating in the Council's programs. The process of institutional change with regards to racial equity at the Council began with the formation of an internal multicultural committee whose focus was to develop long-range strategies to rectify exclusionary practices at the Council. The specific mandate of the work undertaken by the multicultural committee and Creighton-Kelly between 1989 and 1991 was:

1. to elaborate the issues as identified by the internal multiculturalism committee as they relate to the existing policies of the Canada Council;
2. to specifically identify barriers that prevent artists of colour from full access to Council programs;
3. to provide recommendations, suggestions to provide recommendations, suggestions and consultation to the Council and its various sections as they address access and participation from racial/cultural minority arts communities. (Report on Racial Equality in the Arts, 1991:3)

After engaging in a two year period of consultation with artists of colour Creighton-Kelly reported to the Council that artists of colour were disgruntled with the paradigm of multiculturalism that informed the Council's approach to racial equity in the arts. According to Creighton-Kelly, the artists consulted levelled a number of critiques of multiculturalism, ranging from the approach's evacuation of power from the analysis of citizen participation to the fact that the approach did not adequately describe their lived and negotiated experiences. Of the artists' responses to the Canada Council's outreach/consultation activities, Creighton- Kelly writes:

The responses ranged from curiosity to indifference to frustration to anger. Sometimes it seemed that the nature of the work was located where 'outreach' meets 'outrage'! In general though, most persons were forthcoming both with descriptions of their own experiences dealing with Council and concrete useful suggestions on how the Council should respond to more diverse artistic practices. (Report on Racial Equality in the Arts, 1991:3)

His statement “where outreach meets outrage” aptly distils and describes the juncture or confluence of activities that came together to precipitate the formation of racial equity policies at the Canada Council. The title of the thesis expresses the relational activities at play between institutions and subjects that elicit transformation of institutional policies and practices. To examine these activities, this thesis mobilizes theories concerned with nation-making, multicultural state formation, citizenship and governmentality to explore the relationship between state funding, race, culture and art.

Scholars in the fields of sociology, anthropology and critical cultural studies concerned with nation-making practices situate culture and cultural expression as objects of analysis (Gellner, Hobsbawm, Anderson) in order to illuminate practices of state and civil institutions that are deeply implicated in the reproduction of a cohesive nation and culture both at the level of the everyday as well as at the level of governance. More recent post-colonial, interdisciplinary scholarship on multicultural nation-making (Bannerji, 2000; Bhabha, 1994, 1990; Brand and Carty, 1988; Gilroy 2001, Hall 2000, Haque, 2005; Hesse, 1999, 2000; Walcott, 1993; Yuval-Davis, 1999) employ conceptual lens that acknowledge the workings of race, gender and class in the production and narration of the nation. These post-colonial approaches to nation-making implicate past colonial entanglements and offer a conceptual lens that enable us to see how race and culture operate to create hierarchies of subjects within the space of the nation. These approaches are especially useful in grounding my analysis in three key areas: the politics and practices of arts funding at the Canada Council; the production of narratives about the Canadian nation; and contestations over who participates in the creation of official narratives about the nation.

In this study I situate the Canada Council for the Arts as an institution developed in the 1950s by the state to further the project of shaping articulations of Canada as a nation distinct from Britain and the United States. The Council is viewed as a site of contestation that is shaped by Canada's settler history. I provide an overview of the history of the Canada Council for the Arts starting with its antecedents, the Massey Commission and the Massey Report, highlighting the ways in which Eurocentred and white understandings and imaginings of the Canadian nation are shaped. I argue that early state patronage of the arts and the establishment of the institution of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957, highlight a concern by the Anglophone and Francophone Canadian cultural elite to imagine and produce discourses, practices, and narratives of the young nation as white, modern, and European that would be later contested by racialized artists.

Underlining claims by racialized artists for arts funding from the Canada Council are demands for cultural self-representation and equitable multicultural citizenship rights. To examine these claims and the conditions in which they were made, I bring together literature from the area of citizenship studies (Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 2000; Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999; Gilroy, 1987, 1993; Okin, 1999; Stasiulis and Bakan, 1997) with scholarly work on liberal multicultural state formation (Taylor, 1992; Kymlicka, 1995, 2001; Hall, 2000; Hesse, 2000). This will set the stage for later discussions which focus on cultural activism and the development of racial equity policies at the Canada Council. My focus is on the early discourses on culture and race that shaped the evolution of the Canada Council for the Art's policies and practices around cultural diversity.

Foucault's concept of governmentality or the production of governable subjects through organized practices of the state and those external to the state is central to my discussion. My engagement with policy-making practices at the Canada Council for the Arts starts on the ground floor with the activities of black activist artists and cultural producers and highlights an approach to governmentality that embeds agency and notions of intervention and transformation that are generated at the grassroots level. I argue that the implementation of racial equity policies at the Canada Council was a messy *process* in which "the alternatives proposed in counter discourses" put forth by racialized artists and cultural producers resulted in reforming the practices of arts funding at the Council (Pat O'Malley, Lorna Weir and Clifford Shearing 1997:511). Following O'Malley et al's (1997) call to extend governmentality studies to include and account for the "productive engagement" that exists between contestation and rule, this study serves to illustrate that the governable subject and cultural policies are produced not merely through a 'mentality of rule' from above but are also constitutive of counter discourses in which social relations are equally implicated.

Methodology

The overall methodology employed in this study can be situated at the juncture of critical cultural policy studies and institutional ethnography. Sociologist Dorothy Smith's institutional ethnography approach to the investigation of problems of the social guides my analysis of the work on racial equity policy development that took place at the Council. Through the analysis of Canada Council documents and interview transcripts I attempt to understand the work produced by the Equity Office and Advisory Committees on Racial Equality and the ways in which their

work aligned them with activities and discourses occurring in the larger community and at the Council itself.

Methods and procedures

Various forms of cultural texts and documents are examined in this study. They include government documents, archival materials, newspapers, magazines, and the experiences of subjects. The documents examined over the course of the research can be categorized as belonging within three distinct groupings - public and official government texts, public organizational texts, and journalistic texts. A combination of archival research, semi-structured interviews, textual and social analysis was utilized to draw out the multiple perspectives, experiences, and voices involved in the project. I draw on qualitative methodological approaches from the fields of cultural studies and cultural policy studies. Cultural studies methods are interdisciplinary, cross-disciplinary, and sometimes counter-disciplinary. These perspectives support the use of multiple methods and texts, as well as the incorporation of the subject's personal experience into research design and analyses. I also take direction from Dorothy Smith's method of institutional ethnography.

Institutional ethnography "proposes an inquiry intended to disclose how activities are organized and how they are articulated to the social relations of the larger social and economic process" (Smith, 1987:152). It seeks to make visible the ways in which 'ruling relations' are mediated primarily through text. In her book, *Writing the Social: Critique, Theory, Investigations* (2004), Smith describes ruling relations as textually based systems that organize "communication, knowledge, information, regulation, control, and the like" (Smith, 2004: 77).

Institutional ethnography is grounded in “a sociology beginning in a world of activity, the doings of actual people, and finding the social as the object of sociology’s inquiry into how their activities are concerted and coordinated” (Smith, 2004: 74). It incorporates interviews, mapping, and textual analysis to highlight how our lives are organized through processes that exist in the everyday, in local sites as well as in locations outside of the scope of the everyday. The ethnographic component of this method involves allowing the standpoints of the participants/subjects to inform the inquiry. In this study, the subjects’ points of view or perspectives on their actions are elicited through the use of semi-structured interviews. Although institutional ethnography allows for the emergence of the standpoint of subjects it pays scant attention to accounting for the *histories* of institutions. This deficiency in the institutional ethnography method is rectified in this project by the incorporation of a Foucauldian genealogical or historical discourse analysis for examining the institutional history of The Canada Council and black cultural activist formations.

Data Analysis

The Foucauldian concept of discourse is central to my analysis of the textual material related to this study. Discourse refers to those allowable utterances or groupings of statements defined by institutions and cultural norms that can be attached to a given object or subject. Gubrium and Holstein (2002) state: “Foucault (1972), himself explains that discourses are not a mere intersection of things, and a manifest, visible, colored chain of words. Rather, they are practices that systematically form the objects [and subjects] of which they speak” (Gubrium and Holstein, 2002: 494). From this perspective texts are viewed as constituting practices across various related and seemingly unrelated sites of knowledge production.

In order to tease out, illuminate, and generate new meanings in relation to the multifaceted nature of social and political relationships; a diverse set of tools are used by the researcher to bring the objects of study under close scrutiny. Qualitative theorists Norman Denzin, Yvonne Lincoln, Peter McLaren, and Joe Kincheloe advocate for a bricolage approach or multidisciplinary, multimethodological, and multilogical approach to research and inquiry. Drawing inspiration from anthropologist Levi Strauss's notion of the bricoleur, these theorists call for the use of multiple and interdisciplinary methods and data in the research and interpretative processes as a way to tease out the complexities of social reality. In his article 'On to the Next Level: Continuing the Conceptualization of the Bricolage', Kincheloe expands on Denzin and Lincoln's earlier works and describes this multimethodological approach in the following manner:

On one level, the bricolage can be described as the process of getting down to the nuts and bolts of multidisciplinary research. Ethnography, textual analysis, semiotics, hermeneutics, psychoanalysis, phenomenology, historiography, discourse analysis combined with philosophical analysis, literary analysis, aesthetic criticism, and theatrical and dramatic ways of observing and making meaning constitute the methodological bricolage. In this way, bricoleurs move beyond the blinds of particular disciplines and peer through a conceptual window to a new world of research and knowledge production. (Kincheloe, 2005: 323)

The bricoleur is cognizant and reflexive of her subject positions and the relationship between power and knowledge. The bricoleur blurs disciplinary boundaries and is concerned not with one system of thought or relationships but with the web of complex relationships and meaning making practices that constitute knowledge.

The inclusion of multiple data sources enables diverse perspectives to emerge and is referred to in the field of qualitative research as ‘crystallization’. Laurel Richardson takes issue with the positivist concept of triangulation employed in the social sciences as a test of validity. Instead she proposes that the concept of crystallization is conceptually and metaphorically a more holistic approach to understanding partial truths. She writes:

I propose that the central imaginary for “validity” for postmodernist texts is not the triangle – a rigid, fixed, two dimensional object. Rather, the central imaginary is the crystal, which combines symmetry and substance with an infinite variety of shapes, substances, transmutations, multidimensionalities, and angles of approach. Crystals grow, change, and are altered, but are not amorphous. Crystals are prisms that reflect externalities and refract within themselves, creating different colors, patterns and arrays of casting off in different directions. (Richardson, 2005: 962)

Like bricolage, crystallization acknowledges the complicated nature of the social world and places power and subject positioning into discussions of how we view the world. Valerie Janesick (2002) writes that “crystallization incorporates the use of other disciplines, such as art, sociology, history, dance, architecture, and anthropology, to inform our research processes and broaden our understanding of method and substance” (Valerie Janesick, 2002:392). Crystallization sheds light on the subjective and fragmentary nature of knowledge as well as on the constructed nature of social reality rather than on an overarching universal truth about that reality. In the context of this study crystallization assists in widening the plane as to what counts as knowledge but more importantly positions knowledge and knowledge production as historically contingent.

Participants

Twenty-one interview participants were involved in this study: (a) a small group of ten (10) Black artists-activists and cultural producers from five regions of Canada; (b) five (5) past Canada Council Officers, including two Racial Equity Coordinators and a past Council director; and (c) six (6) members of Canada Council Racial Equity Committees (1990-1999). My activities as an administrator in the cultural sphere afforded me access to these individuals and a minimal amount of time was spent developing trust because of our mutual awareness of each other's work in the areas of cultural production and administration. Participants were selected to represent their experiences and understandings of their work in relation to the Canada Council's racial equity policy development and equity practices, as well as to represent the experiences of black cultural activists who were engaged in race and culture politics. In this study I am not seeking to document a generalized set of experiences, but rather, to learn as much as possible about the discourses that were mobilized around these particular issues. I am concerned with tracing how participants position themselves in or take up discourses of culture, art, identity and race. Therefore, the sample size is not to be viewed as representative of the experiences of all black cultural producers, artists of colour, or employees of the Canada Council.

Letters of invitation were forwarded to the participants to elicit their participation. The letter of invitation included a one-sheet describing the study (See Appendix II). I began my primary data collection process by conducting semi-structured interviews with three groups of participants. Informed consent was obtained in writing from each of the participants prior to the interview. The issue of which categories of participants could be assured anonymity in the study presented itself early on in the design phase of the study. Two categories of participants were

identified regarding the issue of anonymity: (a) participants who have not held public office and those who do not want to be identified; and (b) holders of public office as well as key players in art policy making and cultural production both at the Canada Council and on the national cultural scene. The identities of the participants in ‘category a’ have been kept anonymous in this thesis by the use of non-gender specific professional titles for example, ‘artist’ and ‘bureaucrat’, to minimize the possibilities of identification over the long-term. To further protect the anonymity of the participants, comments that name, or are about specific individuals are omitted from my thesis. It is impossible to maintain full anonymity of the participants in ‘category b’ as they have held key public positions in art policy making and in the cultural sphere. Many have made public statements about racial equity and have been documented in public archives and libraries. However, in conformity with the Privacy Act, full anonymity of individuals named in the Canada Council’s archival documents will be maintained.

Two types of consent forms (See Appendix III) were developed for the two categories of participants identified. One form guaranteed full anonymity and the other ensured only some degree of anonymity because of the fact that the participant had held public office over the period of the study hence certain activities and public statements may be attributed to them by the reader. The consent forms served as one of the ways to confirm that the participants understood the study and their participation in it. I also provided clear verbal and written information to the participants outlining their right to withdraw their involvement at any stage of the study.

Interviews were conducted in locations determined by the participants with the majority of interviews taking place in the homes of the interviewees. Because of geographical distance, three

of the interviews were conducted by telephone. The interview questions were forwarded to the participants well in advance of the scheduled interview. The interviews were approximately one hour in duration and the participants granted permission for me to audiotape the interview sessions. The audio-taped interviews were transcribed and the participants were provided with those segments I intended to use along with an invitation to provide feedback.

Semi-structured interview questions geared toward the three groups of participants – Canada Council administrators, Racial Equity Committee members, and black activists were developed (See Appendix IV) to gather data from the participants. The Canada Council officers were divided into four sub-categories based on their administrative functions at the Council i.e. Canada Council discipline specific officer, Racial Equity consultant, Racial Equity Officers, and Canada Council director. Although the semi-structured interview format utilizes preset questions it allowed me to dig deeper into the respondents' answers and left room for the participants to include new topics.

Holstein and Gubrium (2002) argue that interviews are active events or dramas in which both the interviewer and the interviewee contribute to the making of meaning. They state:

Both parties to the interview are necessarily and eluctably *active*. Meaning is not merely elicited by apt questioning, nor simply transported through respondent replies; it is actively and communicatively assembled in the interview encounter. Respondents are not so much repositories of knowledge – treasures of information awaiting excavation, so to speak – as they are constructors of knowledge in collaboration with interviewers. Participation in the interview involves meaning making work. (Holstein and Gubrium, 2002: 113)

The authors highlight the fact that the interview is not a neutral event that is devoid of context and flow in the creation of meaning. Rather, both the researcher and interviewees come to the table with predefined histories, contexts, and politics that put shape around who they are.

The collected interview data were transcribed and coded to establish meta-themes within each data group. A close textual analysis of the transcribed interviews was used to determine coding categories. The interview data was sorted and coded and cross-coded, using a basic word processing application, to establish patterns and exceptions within themes and across themes. During the collection of my interview data, I kept a journal of extensive notes that also provide pertinent data for analysis.

Research Sites/The Archives

My archival research activities took place primarily within four archival sites – the National Archives and Library of Canada, The Canada Council’s Reference and Documentation Centre, Metro Toronto Archives, and FUSE Magazine archives. I also accessed the online archives of the Globe and Mail newspaper and the personal archives of some of the participants. My archival research began in the fall 2005 at The National Archives and Library of Canada and The Canada Council for the Arts Library and Documentation Centre in Ottawa, Ontario. I gained access to the Canada Council archives by applying to the Council’s Information Holdings and Records Administrator for permission to research documents in their Library and Documentation Centre.

In the context of this study, the archive is premised as a practice of collection that has its own spatial structure and its own governing rules regarding the collection and privileging of documents. The archive is also premised as a field of activities that direct the production of social knowledge. Foucault refers to the archive as a set of rules and regulations that allow certain events and statements to be stated while simultaneously causing others to disappear. For Foucault there is a dynamic relationship between groups of allowable statements and the archive.

Foucault writes:

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time, but shine, as it were, like stars, some that seem close to us are already growing pale. (Foucault, 1972:129)

In this approach, the archive exerts control over ‘enunciations’ or what can be stated within particular temporal frames. It is not merely a passive repository of documents. The archive exists in an official or formal manner but is also dispersed throughout civil society as well as in the private sphere. It legitimates and valorizes certain types of statements or rules that materialize out of specific practices and serves as a primary site of knowledge production. Documents play a key function within the archive and its repertoire of statements as they can lay bare continuities and discontinuities in histories by illuminating rules and regulations governing the relevance of the document. Foucault charges that the document and history are intertwined in history’s quest for unity. He states;

The document, then, is no longer for history an inert material through which it tries to reconstitute what men have done or said, the events of

which only the trace remains; history is now trying to define within the documentary material itself unities, totalities, series, relations. (Foucault, 1972: 7)

There are clear demarcations or divisions between what records and documents are held in spaces called archives and those that they held in personal collections. By examining what is said within the context of different types of documents that originate out of dissimilar formations yet address ethnic diversity and racial equity, the rules of engagement and struggles over meaning and material practice become apparent.

The 'Personal' and the 'Community'

As I drew closer to the writing phase of this thesis I began to experience tension and anxiety about how I would represent the knowledges and activities of the participants. Much of the tension arose because of my position as insider to the arts community and as someone who was actively involved in grass roots activities around access to cultural institutions. My own work as a cultural producer began in the late 1980s at about the same time that contestations over the Eurocentric cultural bias of Canadian cultural institutions began to gain momentum. I became a participant in the struggle for ethno-racial equity in the arts. My politics were very much aligned with groups within cultural activist communities; hence questions and concerns arose for me as researcher about the types of analysis or interpretations that would be most helpful for understanding a critical decade in Canadian cultural race politics.

What types of questions should be asked to constructively shed light on the devices employed by artists of colour, black artists, and the institution of the Canada Council to address

and ameliorate exclusion based on race and ethnicity? How does a researcher who was closely tied to activities of the decade under study, engage with the real gains, possibilities, and limitations of that moment in the present? The overarching question driving my anxiety about community response became: how do I write the right story? This question surfaced again and again during my writing phase even though I knew there was no one right story. Although Richardson and St. Pierre caution the researcher that “there is no such thing as ‘getting it right’; only ‘getting it’ differently contoured and nuanced” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005:962); my relationship to a larger community of cultural activists surfaced as I approached my task of writing.

Richardson reminds us that “the writing process and the writing product are deeply intertwined; both are privileged. The product cannot be separated from the producer, the mode of production, or the method of knowing” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005: 963). In other words, the process of writing is a very personal activity that is shaped by the writer while simultaneously shaping the writer. Richardson also refers to writing and the dual working ‘on’ and working ‘out’ of the product as a form of inquiry. She writes:

Language is a constitutive force, creating a particular view of reality and of the Self. Producing “things” always involve value – what to produce, what to name the productions, and what the relationship between producers and the name of things will be. Writing things is no exception. No textual staging is ever innocent (including this one).
Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005: 960)

The emotional complexity of writing as self making and value production became overwhelming at times.

The analysis developed in the following chapters is located at the intersection between cultural theory and practices of cultural policy-making. It is intended to complement current theorizing on multicultural nation-building, arts funding and activism specifically black arts activism of the 1980s and 1990s. In the above sections I have outlined the various theoretical and methodological approaches that inform this research project.

Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I set out the broader context of nation making, highlighting the problems of multi-culture addressed by Canadian state legislated multiculturalism. I engage with a range of interdisciplinary scholarship concerned with contemporary nation making, citizenship, the multi-cultural and multiculturalism. The literature reviewed in this chapter provides the grounding from which I reflect on the role of the Canadian Multicultural Act of 1988 in quelling contestations over who belongs to the nation of Canada. In all the literature explored, ‘culture’ plays a central role in nation making. My engagement with the Multicultural Act and state policies for the inclusion of new racialized immigrants into the fabric of the nation, sets the stage for later discussions in Chapter 4 which focus on cultural activism and the development of racial equity policies at the Canada Council.

Arts funding, and the role of the Canadian state in nation-making is discussed in Chapter 3. I provide an overview of the history of the Canada Council for the Arts starting with its antecedents, the Massey Commission and the Massey Report while illuminating the ways in which Eurocentred and white understandings and imaginings of the Canadian nation are shaped. I argue that early state patronage of the arts and the establishment of the institution of the Canada Council for the Arts in 1957, highlight a concern by the Anglophone and Francophone

Canadian cultural elite to imagine and produce discourses, practices, and narratives of the young nation as white, modern, and European that would be later contested by racialized artists. My focus is on the early discourses on culture, race, and art that shaped the evolution of the Canada Council for the Art's policies and practices around cultural diversity.

Chapter 4 examines racial equity policy formation at the Canada Council for the Arts over the ten year period spanning 1989 to 1999 and the external and internal push and pulls that shaped racial equity policy formation. It is an attempt to understand how contemporary nation-making practices as exemplified by the implementation of racial equity policies at the Council engage with and operationalize the complex terms, 'race' and 'culture'. I also provide a chronology of key time-frames in which the issue of race made its way through the Council. The concluding chapter provides a discussion of number themes that arose out of the research and analysis on black cultural activism and the implementation of racial equity policies at the Canada Council between the 1980s and 1990s.

To summarize, the thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach drawn from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and critical cultural studies to allow the complex relationships between activities of the Canadian state, racial equity policy making at the Canada Council, and grass roots social activism to emerge. I argue that state practices of management are elastic and that racial equity policies at the Canada Council emerged out of a confluence of transformational activities simultaneously taking place at the state/institutional and grassroots levels.

Chapter 2 - Theories of Culture and Nation-making

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide a critical overview of scholarly literature concerned with Western 'modern' nation-formation and the liberal democratic state as a way to set up the broader context of Canadian nation-building; the establishment of the Canada Council; and the problem of multi-culture versus multiculturalism. The literature examined provides conceptual tools for unpacking ideas of nation, cultural difference, and the tensions that exist between the political ideology of liberalism and state legislated multiculturalism.

My discussion begins with addressing the question of why multiculturalism emerged as an ideology and practice in liberal democracies in the twentieth century. I then move on to explore a range of approaches that have been taken up in the study of nation formation in the social sciences and humanities as a way to engage with contemporary debates on how nations are constituted and who belongs to the nation. Each approach foregrounds a relationship between 'culture' and the concept of nation. They emphasize the symbolic realm as pivotal to the development and maintenance of nations and nationalisms. My purpose in reviewing these debates is to demonstrate that Western nations are inherently multi-cultured and that this is not a recent phenomenon. Rather, from the outset of their formation Western nations were multi-cultured as a condition of their existence.

I will then move on to explore literature that deals with questions of citizenship and multiculturalism in contemporary liberal democratic conceptions and practices of nation-making

in order to foreground the exclusionary and contested nature of these philosophies and practices. My overarching concern is to understand *why* and *how* notions of multiculturalisms have emerged as organizing philosophies and practices in contemporary western liberal democracies. In other words, I am exploring how nations that are inherently multi-cultured deploy the notion of multiculturalism as part of their evolution to liberal democracy in an attempt to make liberalism appear as a fair ideology and practice. This will allow us to see the work that these philosophies and practices produce in the context of my present study on arts funding and activism.

Throughout the following discussion, the role of culture is central as it is a marker of social distinction and underlines claims for recognition and redistribution. The debates and discussions that I trace disrupt commonsense notions of the nation as a monolithic construct and lay the foundation for my later discussions on contestations over state funding by racialized artists and cultural producers in Canada in the context of Canadian multicultural policies developed by the Canadian government.

Why Multiculturalisms now?

The terms ‘multi-cultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’ have been used to shape a number of arguments and claims about diversity, group rights and individual rights. It has now come to signify claims made in the name of, or on behalf of, ethnic culture. Critical scholars examining the problem of the multi-cultural nation-state, identity, and diversity suggest that these problems are best understood within the wider context of colonial expansion, neo-colonialization and globalization, as well as in the context of first, second and third world developments. The

suggestion is furthered by scholars who argue that we need to rethink the politics of difference and multiculturalisms within the context of constitutive elements – racism, migration, and slavery, post-slavery – associated with empire (Gilroy 1992, Loomba 1998, Scott 1999, Hesse 2000, Hall 2000). According to postcolonial scholars, multiculturalism as an ‘ism’ within liberal democracies may be viewed as an outcome of the disbanding of empire and decolonization processes. It must also be thought about as part of an ongoing global migration fuelled by labour and capital needs. Stuart Hall (2000) argues that a distinction is to be drawn between the ‘multi-cultural’ and ‘multiculturalism’. The multi-cultural describes “the social characteristics and problems of governance posed by any society in which different cultural communities live together and attempt to build a common life while retaining something of their ‘original’ identity”, while multiculturalism refers to “strategies and policies adopted to govern or manage the problems of diversity and multiplicity which multi-cultural societies throw up” (Hall, 2000: 209). Thus, Canadian state multiculturalism can be viewed as a form of governance that is dependent upon a context of global migration and labour needs to find its meaning and expression (Brand & Carty 1988, Bannerji 2000, Walcott 2003).

In his examination of British and US articulations of multiculturalism, Barnor Hesse points out that the concept and practice of multiculturalism serves to signify racialized notions of ‘otherness’ and the superiority of ‘western’ ideologies and cultural forms within the nation-state. His observation is equally salient within the Canadian multicultural context. Hesse argues that:

The multicultural is a signifier of the unsettled meanings of cultural differences in relation to multiculturalism as the signified attempts to fix their meaning in national imaginaries. The multicultural always refers contextually to the ‘western’ and ‘non-western’ cross-cultural processes involved in establishing the meanings invested in the

racially marked incidence of contested cultural difference (Hesse, 2000:2).

In other words, multiculturalism is merely a contemporary re-articulation of Europe's dominant position vis-à-vis other groups of peoples. Scholarly discussions on multiculturalism that position this 'ism' as a condition that highlights current cultural negotiations in light of histories of migrations and 'entanglements', development and underdevelopment (Rex 1995, Stasiulis and Bakan 1997, Bannerji 2000, Abu-Laban & Gabriel 2002, Hesse 2000) are relevant to my exploration as they illuminate hierarchies and exclusions implicit in articulations and practices of multiculturalism in liberal democracies.

Multiculturalisms are also ideologically based, and the forms of governance strategies that develop out of different ideological frameworks result in very different articulations of cultural heterogeneity.¹ Hall states, "in fact, 'multiculturalism' is not a single doctrine, does not characterize one political strategy, and does not represent an already achieved state of affairs" (Hall 2000:210). Himani Bannerji (2000) and Eva Mackey's (2002) work on Canadian multiculturalism refer to it as a liberal democratic strategy of governance. For Hall, multiculturalism is an ongoing process of nation making that is highly contested across and within ideological and philosophical camps. Because of the contested nature of the ideologies and practice of multiculturalisms, subaltern scholars and activists have called for a redefinition of the term and the conditions under which it is called into action.

As outlined above, multiculturalism is not a neutral term or practice that describes cultural diversity. Current practices of multiculturalisms in western liberal democratic nations are

¹ See Stuart Hall's discussion on the heterogeneity of multiculturalism in Chapter 10, "Conclusion: the Multi-cultural Question" In Barnor Hesse (2000) *Un/settled Multiculturalisms: Diaspora, Entanglements, Transruptions*.

as a result of post-colony rearrangements of demographics due to unequal global economic development and labour driven migration. Racialized notions of difference circumscribe these practices and non-white subjects serve to signify the ‘other’ whose origins are outside of the foundational myths of western nations. At the core of multicultural debates is the question of how to govern cultural diversity.

Culture and nation

The term ‘culture’ is implicated in discussions of multiculturalism. It is a highly contested term that is used to denote both symbolic and material aspects of human activities. Its most generalized usage is rooted in the discipline of anthropology and refers to a distinctive way of life of a group of people or a nation as well as the activities and production of objects within traditional arts and intellectual spheres. The term is laden with multiple meanings and overlapping interests that are bound up within the range of meanings. The ways in which we come to understand, categorize and evaluate products of human activities is based on our definition of culture. The anthropological framing of culture as ‘a way of life’ attempts to unhinge the term from its older, elitist European roots with its assumptions about the evolution of society from a stage of primitivism to civilization and the concomitant processes of “intellectual-spiritual formation”² that occurs within societies. This perspective on culture obfuscates the dynamic aspects of societal relations; the practices of signification and meaning making within societies and creates hierarchical distinctions between western and non-western societies.

² Benhabib, 2002, *The Claims of Culture*, p. 2

Within the sociology of culture, the definition of ‘culture’ has been expanded to refer to a “*signifying system* through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored” (Williams, 1981:13). Williams states:

The difficulty of the term is then obvious, but can be usefully seen as the result of earlier kinds of convergence of interests. We can distinguish two main kinds; an emphasis on the ‘*informing spirit*’ of a whole way of life, which is manifest over the whole range of social activities but is most evident in ‘specifically cultural’ activities, styles of art, kinds of intellectual work; and (b) an emphasis on ‘*a whole social order*’ within which a specifiable culture, in styles of art and kinds of intellectual work is seen as a direct or indirect product of an order primarily constituted by other social activities. (Williams, 1981: 11-12)

In other words, society and culture are mutually constitutive elements with the operationalization of the term occurring at both a quotidian level and at the level of governance. The relationship between nation, government and culture depends upon a number of processes and institutions for its development and deployment.

When and What is the Nation: Theories of Nation

In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.³

Within the disciplines of history, anthropology, and sociology, discourses about nation and nation-making can be organized within conceptual frameworks that are categorized as the primordialists,⁴ perennialists, modernists, post-modernists and ethno-symbolists. Modernists

³ Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (1983)

⁴ Modernists - Gellner (1983,1997), Hobsbawm (1983) argue that primordialists such as anthropologist Clifford Geertz, subscribe to the immemorial antiquity of nations and “refuses to accept that the attribution of an immemorial antiquity to nations is an illusion” (Gellner 1983). Also see “Do Nations have navels? (Gellner 1997: Chapter 15)

such as Ernest Gellner, Benedict Anderson and Eric Hobsbawm view the nation as a relatively recent phenomenon that emerged in eighteenth century Europe and developed as a consequence of the cultural processes of modernization. They argue that the nation is a constructed entity that is inextricably linked to the emergence of the state and is a result of industrialism, rationalities, and new divisions of labour. Within the modernist framework, the nation is both territorially and ideologically bounded. The modernists are concerned with the material, symbolic and cultural manifestations of nation and nation-making.

Modernists

Gellner (1983) developed a typology of societies and highlighted the conditions under which the modern nation emerged in Western Europe. His approach posits that the modern nation emerged within a temporal frame characterized by the birth of industry. He describes industrial society as a highly mobile society in which mass education, class mobility and literacy are discernable features. Gellner (1983) suggests that the modern nation is itself a product of bureaucratization, rationalization, and changes in practices and perceptions about the role of culture in society. In other words, western European nation emerged out of the structural requirements of capitalism and industrialism. Gellner embraces Weber's (1979 [1946]) notion of rationality and discusses the importance of mass educational infrastructure for the dissemination of hegemonic ideologies in the project of nation-making. The dissemination of 'culture' as shared values and civilizing practices were enabled by the state if such an organizing body is present in society. Gellner describes the salience of 'culture' in modern society as that of social cohesion as it enables subjects to recognize each other by way of shared beliefs, codes of

communication and behaviour. In a sense, ‘culture’ serves a homogenizing and cohesive function in relation to nation making. Gellner states:

Culture is no longer merely the adornment, confirmation and legitimation of a social order which was also sustained by harsher and coercive constraints; culture is now the necessary shared medium, the life-blood or perhaps rather the minimal shared atmosphere, within which alone the members of the society can breathe and survive and produce. For a given society, it must be one in which they *all* breathe and speak and produce; so it must be the *same* culture. Moreover, it must be a great or high (literate, training sustained) culture, and it can no longer be a diversified, locality-tied, illiterate little culture or tradition. (Gellner, 1983: 37-38)

Here Gellner mobilizes culture to mean shared values, ideology and the best artistic and intellectual producers and products a society has to offer. Culture from this perspective conflates the ‘way of life’ paradigm with earlier conceptions that place ‘culture’ along the continuum of primitive to civilized; while privileging western high culture and its products.

Although culture is central to Gellner’s analysis of nation-formation and nationalism, he refuses to provide a clear definition of the term. Instead, he opts to look “at what culture *does*” (Gellner 1983: 7) with regard to shaping the imaginary of *what* and *who* the nation is. In this approach, culture holds an instrumental position vis-à-vis nation making. Gellner’s theory has also been critiqued “for relying excessively on functionalist argumentation” because ‘culture’ provides a category that implicitly and explicitly places non-western social, political and economic configurations and organizations within a non-rational or pre-rational space (Hall, 1998: 3). His typology of societies also takes as a given, a linear evolution of societies from a nascent primitive/hunter-gather stage to a modern/industrial nation.

In response to Gellner's typology, Benedict Anderson in his seminal work, *Imagined Communities* (1983, 1991), discusses the nation as a modern 'myth-making' invention and goes on to spatially enlarge the discussion to include the complexities of nation-making and independence movements in the colonies of Western Europe. In this perspective, nations are differentiated from each other by the myths they create and disseminate about themselves. The uneven nature of global capitalist development is emphasized by Anderson in ways that draw attention to exceptions to Gellner's universalistic typologies.

Anderson argues that the nation is both an imaginary and a real object that is produced through practices of the state. The nation is "imagined because the members of even the smallest *nation* will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Anderson 1991:6). Anderson suggests that the development of the idea of the nation is achieved by rendering time as 'homogeneous' and 'empty'. Anderson places emphasis on printed language and the ways in which it enabled individuals from a variety of backgrounds and languages to become aware of each other which aided in engendering nationalist sentiments in the process of early Western nation-making. In this paradigm of nation-making individuals are linked across space and place because mass communication enables them to share a consciousness of the constructed linear temporal plane on which they co-exist. In one sense the nation is circumscribed by space and in another sense it is much less bounded by space than by common affiliations, myths and histories.

The homogenizing influence that tradition and its symbols, mythologies and histories, have on how the nation is constructed, 'engineered' and articulated is also addressed by historian

Eric Hobsbawm. Traditions are posited as playing a central role in the nation making process. Language and education play key roles in the mass production, normalization and transmission of elite traditions across the space and time of the nation. Hobsbawm contends that traditions are invented by the ruling class and are disseminated as a way of establishing “bonds of loyalty” and social cohesion amongst a wide cross section of “nationals”. Although traditions aid in assisting alliance building between the ruling class they are always in flux. In the edited collection of essays, “The Invention of Tradition” (1983), Hobsbawm and Ranger argue that traditions are historically contingent and serve to transmit ideologies and legitimize institutions. For Hobsbawm, the nation is a recent phenomenon and is primarily a set of ‘invented traditions’ designed by the elites. He purports that ‘invented traditions’ are “highly relevant to that comparatively recent historical innovation, the ‘nation’, with its associated phenomena: nationalism, the nation-state, national symbols, histories and the rest. All these rest on exercises in social engineering which are often deliberate and often innovative” (Hobsbawm, 1983: 13).

The modernist approaches to nation-formation discussed above, highlight the ways in which a number of conceptions of ‘culture’ are implicit or at least related to particular constructions of nation in the social sciences. In all three approaches discussed, culture is viewed as both a ‘way of life’ or shared idioms and as practices of signification which serve as a homogenizing force in the shaping of notions of a national space, territory, and practices. The production and circulation of shared meaning through pedagogical institutions are central to the authors' understanding of the processes by which the nation is constructed and maintained. Implicit in Gellner’s approach are elitist conceptions of culture based on notions of the evolutionary progress of societies toward the modern. He also places emphasis on the

codification of practices. Anderson draws our attention to material systems (capitalism), language and technologies (printing press) that assist in the project of codification and dissemination of notions a way of life or singular national identity. Hobsbawm's assertion that nations are the products of traditional elites whose traditions/ways of life are reproduced and transmitted through pedagogical means bears similarity to earlier discourses on culture as evolutionary and hierarchical.

Critiques of Modernist Perspectives

Much of the critique of the modernist approaches focus on their universalistic terms of reference and the negation of ethnicity, gender and race as salient factors in the construction of nation. One of the most prominent detractors of the modernist approach, and in particular of Gellner's perspective, is sociologist Anthony D. Smith, one of Gellner's former students. While Smith is in full agreement with the modernists regarding the timeframe and conditions of the emergence of the contemporary nation and nationalist sentiment, he is critical of the modernists' negation of the role that kinship and ethnicity play in the formation of nation. He is a self-described ethno-symbolist,⁵ who proposes that the nation is also predicated on other pre-existing pre-modern elements, such as kinship, group/ethnic affiliations and traditions that have coalesced over centuries and generations. Smith suggests that the modern nation is linked to the past and pre-modern formations that were characterized by ethnic ties and elite dominated culture.

According to Smith, a nation is:

⁵ Smith describes ethno-symbolism as an approach to analyzing the formation and development of nations as well as increasing ethno-nationalist sentiments. This approach places emphasis on the symbolic and "the important role of memories, values, myths and symbols" in nation making (Smith, 1995: Warwick Debates).

A named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historic memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members, the nation is a multidimensional concept, an ideal type that provides a standard or touchstone which concrete examples imitate in varying degrees. (Smith, 1991:43 emphasis in the original.)

Smith argues that the multidimensionality of the European nation is posited on the notion that modern nations emerged within territorial boundaries that included and/or encompassed numerous ethnic communities with their corresponding languages and customs.

He is also concerned with nation-making in the New World and considers colonial nation-formation as a process of “reconstructing the ethnic core and integrating its culture with the requirements of a modern state and with the aspirations of minority communities” (Smith, 1991: 111). Smith’s perspective provides a way to think about nations as being multi-nodal in their points of origin and allows us to deconstruct the myth of *the* founding people/s of a nation. His argument underscores the contingent nature of nation and nation-formation but fails to address the political aspects of contemporary nation making. The inclusion of the political would by necessity involve a discussion of the role of the state in the ongoing production of nation.

Postcolonial scholars have taken issue with the approaches of both the modernists and the ethno-symbolists for their homogenizing and reductive thrusts. The centrality of gender in defining, reproducing and maintaining the boundaries of the modern nation is addressed by feminist scholars (Brand and Carty, 1988; Floya Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992). These authors examine the construction of nations as specific ideological objects and emphasize the salience of colonialism, post-colonialism, migration, race, class and gender in the creation and maintenance of the modern nation. They argue that women are heterogeneously positioned in relation to

nation making and citizenship, although gender divisions and systems of gender relations produce unequal statuses between men and women stressing that women “are acted on with regard to the labour market” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992: 115). They argue that women who are minoritized based on ethnicity can be positioned in precarious and detrimental positions vis-à-vis the labour market. These scholars offer valuable insights into the links between race and the precarious position of minoritized women vis-a-vis the labour force. This will be taken up later in the thesis in relation to black activism of the 1970s and 80s.

Anthias and Yuval-Davis also critique Smith’s approach to nation-formation for its dependence on tropes that are linked to the past and for failing to address those cases in which nationalist sentiments are not based on the past, as in the case of settler nations like Canada, and they are sympathetic to the notion of ‘common culture’ based on ‘common destiny,’ as espoused by Otto Bauer. Anthias and Yuval-Davis suggest that the sentiment of common destiny “can explain the subjective sense of commitment of people into collectives and nations, such as in settler societies, or in post-colonial states, in which there is no shared myth of common origin” (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992:27).

Other postcolonial scholars (Bhabha 1990, Gilroy 1993, Hesse 1999) intervene in the discussion of nation-making by highlighting a reductive historicism inherent in modernist perspectives that reify western assumptions about temporality, space, race, cultural diversity and identifications. Gilroy (1993) writes: “crude and reductive notions of culture that form the substance of racial politics today are clearly associated with an older discourse of racial and

ethnic difference which is everywhere *entangled* [my emphasis] in the history of the idea of culture in the modern west” (Gilroy, 1993: 7).

Bhabha pays particular attention to colonial constructions of nation and highlights the ways in which racial hierarchies were produced and reproduced through textual strategies within colonial discourses and practices. Implicit in Bhabha’s argument is the understanding that imaginative texts have the potential to substantively act upon the reader. He draws heavily on psychoanalysis and semiotics to make his arguments about how nations and nationalisms are represented in both written and performed forms. Bhabha critiques the modernist paradigms for their naturalization and re-inscription of essentialist narratives of the Third World and its populace that enable the West to falsely maintain a dominant status vis-à-vis the Third World. He draws attention to in ‘between’ times, spaces and places that lay outside of western linear constructions in which subaltern subjects and their counter-narratives destabilize and make ambiguous the signifiers of nation. Bhabha (1990, 1997) suggests that the counter-narratives of the subaltern are enunciations of ambivalence towards domination, but more importantly, they are interventions against colonial dominance.

Bhabha (1990) like Anderson is also concerned with language and text as sites for the enunciation and dissemination of the ideology of nation. He furthers Edward Said’s (1974) discussion on Orientalism and focuses on language and western textual practices that construct the western nation and its subject as dominant while simultaneously constructing the Third World and its natives as subaltern. Bhabha argues that the nation and nationhood are narrated and that it is through narration that nations and peoples come to be marked with characteristics

that define them as modern or primitive. He believes that the oppositional construction of Europe and the Third World is achieved through processes and acts of representation through narration. Bhabha argues that one of the ways that the nation comes into existence is through various forms of articulations that change with history. In other words, the nation is called up through the meanings ascribed to cultural signifiers and the ways in which they articulate the nation.

Cultural difference and the relation between difference and forgetting are given salience in Bhabha's (1990, 1994) discussions of the nation. Bhabha focuses on the concept of cultural difference and the performance of difference as a "form of intervention" (Bhabha, 1990: 312) that re-inscribes the agency of the subaltern or minority subject. His notion of cultural difference and the agency of the subaltern challenge the unity of the fiction/narrative of the nation. The notion of forgetting figures prominently in Bhabha's analysis of nation-formation and maintenance. Bhabha contends that it is through processes of forgetting that the nation comes to be symbolized as a unitary or homogeneous entity. The origins of nation and the nation's narratives are deeply bound up in disregarding subjects, time, and place that register as contradictory to the "imagined" uniform space of nation.

According to Bhabha, nations must be understood as both liminal and hybrid in their form and content. He argues that the nation is in a constant state of becoming due to ongoing negotiations or 'plebiscites' that take place in society between contesting stakeholders in a quest for cultural and political hegemony. The nation is thus seen as elastic and its boundaries change with and over struggles for political and cultural hegemony. Bhabha also suggests that we historicize the de-historicized object of nation so that the constructed nature of the western nation

can come into view as hybrid and in dialogic relation to the oriental. While Bhabha's perspective on difference infuses subaltern agency and subjectivity; it also runs the risk of relegating cultural difference to the sphere of race and ethnicity.

The state is deeply implicated in the protection and governance of the populace existing within the territorial confines of the entity called the nation, as well as with its reproduction. Corrigan and Sayer's (1985) historical sociology of 18th century state formation in Britain builds on Foucauldian arguments on the bourgeois state as a diffuse ensemble of power relations. The authors provide a critical lens from which to view the state itself as cultural in character and they attend to the role that state forms and practices play in defining both the state and society. Corrigan and Sayer argue that state forms are cultural forms that are agile and have the facility to adapt to contesting external demands. The authors propose that we view the state not as a coherent unit organized solely from above but that we "simultaneously grasp state forms culturally and cultural forms as state regulated" (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985: 3). This allows us to understand the discursive practices of the state and ensuing policies as not merely the outcome of contestation but also as articulations of specific ways of understanding politics, society, ourselves and the collectivity.

States, if the pun be forgiven, *state*; the arcane rituals of a court of law, the formulae of royal assent to an Act of Parliament, visits of social inspectors, are all statements. They define, in great details, acceptable forms and images of social activity and individual and collective identity; they regulate, in empirically specifiable ways, much – very much, by the twentieth century – of social life. (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985: 3)

Regulation from this perspective is "a project of normalizing, rendering natural, taken for granted, in a word 'obvious', what are in fact ontological and epistemological premises for a

particular and historical form of social order” (Corrigan and Sayer, 1985: 4). Implicit in this argument is the fact that capitalism has evolved in an environment of unequal relations. Shared understanding and what becomes normalized within society are governed by the activities of state institutions whose discourses set and shape the terms of reference through which contestation can take place. In elaborating on Corrigan and Sayer’s discussion of the production of shared meaning in the process of state formation, Brodie (1997) states:

While they recognize that the institution of government are tangible entities, they argue that the state-society relation is less an oppositional dichotomy, one characterized by regulation and coercion, then coterminous, discursive and mutually-creative—embedded in our shared understandings at any point of what is natural, neutral and universal. These shared understandings, however, are anything but these. Instead, they are 'impositional claims'—assertions about reality which help create a cultural form in their own image and according to their own rules. (Brodie 1997: 226)

The perspectives on nation-formation discussed above explore some of the ways in which ‘culture’, as a loosely defined set of practices and performances, is related to the imaginary of the modern nation. The nation is framed as an entity that is contested in struggles over hegemony. Ethnosymbolists such as Anthony Smith describes the nation as established on pre-modern formations and affiliations like kinship and ethnicity. Although he takes up the project of colonial nation-making his analysis fails to account for relations of power inherent in colonial expansion. Post-colonial scholars (Gilroy, Bhabha, Anthias and Yuval-Davis) focus our attention on the unequal power relations between the west and non-west and question the chauvinism of western assumptions as to the time and space of modernity. Race, gender and class are centrally placed in their analysis of nation-making and these authors illuminate the ways in which these categories are deployed in the production of the boundaries of the nation.

The Eurocentric bias of the deployment of the term culture in the process of nation-making and its relationship to race and gender are exposed by post-colonial scholars as having foundations in values associated with western notions of civilization and linear growth. Corrigan and Sayer's emphasize 'state-society relation' in their analysis and view state formation and the idea of the state as cultural and simultaneously regulating culture. This perspective allows us to see the state and state institutions as nimble cultural entities with the capability to respond to counter-discourses and contestation.

In the section that follows, I will examine a number of theories on citizenship in liberal democracies and explore the ways in which they relate to conceptions of the nation, becoming a member of a national community, qualifying for citizenship, and the link between culture, race and citizenship. This examination provides a foundation from which to later understand the claims made by racialized artists for resources from the Canada Council for the Arts and for more equitable participation in civil society.

Citizenship and Nation-making

Both as a political imaginary and a set of practices citizenship is caught...., between the normalizing forces of modernity and the essentialising forces of nationalism and exclusion. Yet citizenship holds a promise for the future: of personal autonomy and the protection of collective difference and diversity even beyond the nation state. (Yuval-Davis and Werbner, 1999:28)

Ideas of the nation and *who* belongs to such a geo-political entity are inextricably linked to ideas of citizenship. This section focuses primarily on contemporary social theorists of citizenship and nation. The literature surveyed views citizenship as a variable set of negotiated or relational practices between individuals and the state as well as between states. The scholarly

work addressed is concerned with the practices and institutions that enable the ideal citizen to come into existence. The writings are concerned with the making of the citizen and view the citizen as both a construction and as lived experience. The literature illuminates the discursive fields - political, cultural, social and economic in which citizenship is enunciated and addresses the ways in which subjects negotiate those fields. There is overall agreement amongst the contemporary theorists around the idea that democratic citizenship, as an idea and as practice, is a modern phenomenon that is “deeply dialogical, encapsulating specific historically inflected, cultural and social assumptions about similarity and difference” (Yuval-Davis & Werbner, 1999: 2).

The common-sense notion and prevailing understanding of citizenship is that it is constituted through bestowal of rights to individuals in the context of a sovereign nation. In their study of foreign domestic workers in Canada, feminist scholars Stasiulis and Bakan (1997), ask us to expand this static understanding of citizenship and think about citizenship within the context of advanced capitalism as a lived, dynamic process and practice of negotiations between individuals and the state, as well as between sovereign states. Paying attention to the lived nature and practices of citizenship shifts the citizen’s status from a passive to an active one vis-à-vis the society and the state. Stasiulis and Bakan state:

The citizenship experience tends to be rendered ‘thing-like’, objectified as something one is granted or not granted. Alternatively, we suggest a re-conceptualization of citizenship as a *negotiated relationship*. Subject to change, it is acted upon collectively, or among individuals existing within social, political, and economic relations of collective conflict, which are shaped by gendered, racial and class and internationally based state hierarchies. (Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997: 113)

An interrogation of the lived or experiential aspects of citizenship brings the complexities of citizenship with its “spectrum of variable rights and denial of rights” into focus. In other words, citizenship can be seen as a status conferred on the individual by the state as well as activities or practices that are dialogical between individual, community, and state.

The practice of citizenship entails the demarcation of the non-citizen and the partial-citizen from the full citizen (Stasiulis & Bakan 1997, Ong 1996, Alexander 1994, Isin 2002, Dua 2003). Enkashi Dua stresses that discourses of nation, nationalism and citizenship are linked to the discourse of race and the exclusion of ‘abject’ bodies (First Peoples, people of colour, sexual minorities) from the category of the human or full citizen. Central to practices of citizenship is the creation of categories of bodies or non-citizens who are outsiders to the nation. Historically, the boundaries of citizenship were established to exclude women, slaves, Aboriginal peoples and people of colour from the category. The practice of citizenship is also posited (Dua, Ong, Isin) in Foucauldian terms as a technology of state regulation and governmentality in which subjects are engaged in “a dual process of self-making and being-made within webs of power linked to the nation-state and civil society” (Ong, 1996: 738).

Within the critical contemporary research and literature on citizenship, much of the focus has been on understanding *who* the citizen is, within specific timeframes and political, and economic formations. Critics of traditional citizenship studies (Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997, Brodie, 2002, Lister, 1997) have debunked the socio-economic evolutionary approach to citizenship rights and the emergence of the notion of the ‘social citizen’ that proliferated in the 1950s through the work of T.H. Marshall (Marshall, 1950). Marshall believed that the expansion of

social and political rights would occur simultaneously with development of modern capitalism.⁶ Stasiulis and Bakan state that for Marshall “civil rights are seen to be a feature of eighteenth-century capitalist development; political rights of the nineteenth century; and social rights of the twentieth century” (Stasiulis & Bakan, 1997:116). Critics view his notion of citizenship as: (a) an ideal that negates the existence of the non-citizen or differentiated citizen within the British post WWII society he studied; (b) Eurocentric in its linear evolutionary development and, (c) premised on defining the citizen as a passive participant.

Citizenship is deeply bound up with the nation and has “little meaning, conceptually or empirically outside of the context of the modern national state (Janine Brodie, 2002). In her discussion of Canadian government social policy interventions and nation-making activities of the post WWII era, Janine Brody (2002) argues against Marshall’s evolutionary model of the development of citizenship rights. By examining the Canadian bi-cultural context, Brodie highlights the complex and contested relationship that exists between citizenship and the state when economic and cultural differences and multiple foundational myths of origin exist within a given nation. She argues that the economy and social policies are deeply implicated in the production of the citizen, ideas of who belongs to the nation, as well as political solidarity.

In Brodie’s analysis, “citizenship connotes membership within a bordered territory and an internationally recognized state that defines the relationship between individual and state, ever increasingly through the language of rights” (Brodie, 2002: 379). Citizenship is also “a set of practices (juridical, political, economic and cultural) which define a person as a competent

⁶ Marshall saw citizenship and social rights as necessary conditions for the development of capitalism and the maintenance of political harmony.

member of society and which, as a consequence, shape the flow of resources to persons and social groups” (Brodie, 2002:379). Brodie argues that the early twentieth century saw the introduction of the notion of social entitlement and social welfare in the state discourse of industrialized democracies, coupled with concomitant implementation of policies and practices geared toward producing social solidarity. She suggests that shifts in the Canadian government’s discourse of entitlement are influenced by economic expansion and contraction and this in turn alters the relationship between citizen and the state.

Contemporary notions of citizenship, the discourse of equality, and the conception of rights are linked to the development of the liberal state (Balfour and Cadava 2004, Kymlicka 1989, Young 1989, Brodie 2002, Isin, 1997, 2002; Ong 1997, Faulks 2000, Yuval-Davis, 1999). Citizenship can also be understood as a process of subjectification that is part of an assemblage of strategies and practices developed by the state and institutions of civil society. My engagement with conceptions of citizenship foregrounds discussions in Chapter 4 on black social activism and the claims put forth by racialized artists pertaining to arts funding.

Citizenship and Difference

Yuval-Davis & Werbner (1999), Luke and Gore (1992), and Gilroy (1987) take up the issues of difference in their examination of race, gender, the abject body in the making of the western nation and western citizen. These authors illuminate the fact that citizenship is differentially experienced by subjects whose bodies have been marked as outsiders to the nation. Within the framework of globalization, postcoloniality and black diasporic thought, Ong and Gilroy argue that race, and in particular blackness, is imbricated in processes and institutional

practices of citizen making and nation. Gilroy asserts that in the British context the discourse of race and nation are intertwined and “the effect of their combination can be registered even where ‘race’ is not overtly referred to, or where it is discussed outside of crude notions of superiority and inferiority” (Gilroy, 1997: 56). Regarding race, nation, and citizenship in the American context, Ong writes that “the ideological formation of whiteness as the symbol of the ideal legal and moral citizenship today continues to depend upon the “blackening” of less desirable immigrants. Immigrants situated closer to the black pole are seen as at the bottom of cultural and economic ranking” (Ong, 1996: 742). Ong highlights the everydayness of how the discourse of race is called up to maintain distinctions and differentials of citizenship.

The literature I have surveyed view citizenship as negotiated or relational practices. The authors theorize citizenship as practices that are constitutive of insiders and outsiders in relation to the nation-state. They point to the fact that specific institutions within civil society conduct the work of producing and reproducing differentiated citizenry. Depending on the academic discipline and perspective, citizenship connotes a variety of relationships - political, legal, moral and cultural – between individuals and institutions. Some feminist scholars suggest that we should depart from an abstract theorization of citizenship and move towards an examination of the lived experiences of citizenship. This level of analysis, the authors contend, reveals the substantive aspects of citizenship and infuses the category of citizen with agency. A grounded analysis of citizenship as advocated for by feminists’ moves beyond the dichotomies of citizenship to expose the lived negotiations involved in the practice of citizenship. Everyday negotiations and the contexts in which they take place, offer insights into new possibilities of governance and subject participation.

Rights, Cultural Difference, and Liberal Democracy

Debates and questions pertaining to difference, differential citizenship and the exclusion of certain bodies from participation in liberal democratic societies have focussed on issues of equality, recognition and the rights of the individual autonomous subject in relation to the community. These questions are at the core of the multicultural debates and struggles over access to cultural, economic and political resources in Canada. At the foundation of classical liberalism is the belief that individual freedom is the most efficacious way of attending to social needs in society and to the development of the individual's essential identity. This core belief has survived in many of liberalism's strands and has been paradoxically enmeshed with notions of order and governance. Some of the questions being posed by scholars ask whether or not different kinds of rights such as civil, cultural and social rights go against the core framework of the liberal tradition. The literature explored acknowledges the notion of culture as including the particular cultures of women and sexual minorities as well as ethno-culturally defined cultures.

Multiculturalism and Group Recognition

The works of liberal philosophers Will Kymlicka and Charles Taylor have provided important input in the scholarly debates on multi-ethnic, multicultural group rights and

citizenship. Both Taylor and Kymlicka draw upon the Canadian experience of building a multicultural nation-state in their analyses of liberalism and its ability to acknowledge difference.⁷ Taylor's essay, "The Politics of Recognition" (1992) is noted for opening up dialogue in academia about the concept of recognition and the ways in which the concept circulated within the fields of politics and philosophy. The essay traces the dissolution of honour and the emergence of the idea of recognition as a contemporary social and cognitive practice out of which the 'authentic' self is formed. According to Taylor, individual and group identities are shaped partly by the recognition or misrecognition we receive from others. Identities are shaped in dialogical relationship to the external world. Identity is defined as "who we are, where we're coming from. As such it is the background against which our tastes and desires and opinions and aspirations make sense" (Taylor, 1992:33-34). Taylor uses this notion of the particularized authentic self to argue from a point of view of similitude or universality.

Taylor argues that modern identity marking processes are distinctly different from the pre-modern era because "what has come about with the modern age is not the need for recognition but the conditions in which the attempt to be recognized can fail" (Taylor, 1992: 35). In setting up his perspective on individual and group recognition, Taylor defines the contextual plane on which inter-subjective negotiations that are subject to mis-recognition as existing within the public sphere. He contends that "equal recognition is not just the appropriate mode for healthy democratic society. Its refusal can inflict damage on those who are denied it" (Taylor, 1992: 36). Taylor goes on to state that a withholding of equal recognition is tantamount to oppression. Examples of the Québec nationalism and the multicultural nature of Canadian

⁷ More discussion on the complex debate about liberalism, see Ruth Abbey's (ed) discussion in *Charles Taylor*, pp.113 – 119.

society are used to provide grounded examples of the conditions under which mis-recognition or discrimination can take place. His elaboration of the Canadian examples highlights the tensions inherent in discussing liberalism as both a philosophy and an ideal type, and as a political practice. The power-knowledge nexus and its relationship to material resources and status are not attended to in his discussion.

In speaking about Taylor's essay, Lash and Featherstone concur that Taylor "wants to make the step from inter-subjective recognition to solidarity, to community, to what Hegel called *Sittlichkeit* [original emphasis] and Wittgenstein 'forms of life'. He wants to make the step from recognition of the subject as singular to the culture that enables this singularity" (Lash and Featherstone, 2001:6). Taylor accords recognition with instrumentality both in the making of individual and group 'authentic' identity and has been heavily criticized for making the leap because it necessitates that one views culture in a bounded and essentialist manner (Hesse 1999, Fraser 2001, Gilroy 2001). Taylor is concerned with what he identifies as two strands of the identity based politics of recognition in contemporary multi-cultured democratic society. One strand of this politics is based on universalism, while the other is based on the politics of difference. Taylor approaches the politics of difference in ahistoric terms, hence he does not pay attention to the histories of marginalization and the material inequities in which the politics of difference are rooted. He grounds the politics of universalism or/equal dignity in the writings of Rousseau and uses Kant as the primary perspective from which to discuss identity or the politics of difference. The politics of difference pays attention to uniqueness of identities while the politics of universalism is concerned with equality. Taylor claims that the politics of difference enters into the domain of the politics of universal equality and collides with it because it calls for

the conferral of full citizenship while retaining distinctness. However, Taylor is in favour of the granting of differential rights that acknowledge cultural difference because what is at stake for his brand of liberalism is the loss of authentic identity through misrecognition which, in his perspective is crucial to the development of the human subject. He asks that “we all *recognize* the equal value of different cultures; that we not only let them survive, but acknowledge their *worth*” [author’s emphasis] (Taylor, 1992:64).

Limits of the Politics of Recognition

The guiding principles of Taylor’s politics of recognition have come under considerable scrutiny for his Eurocentric racialization of modernity.⁸ Taylor is criticized for his emphasis on the universal and his subjective draw to occidental ontology to support his hegemonic position. Hesse suggests that Taylor’s comfort in his Eurocentric intellectual tradition inhibits him from engaging with the politics of difference as a valid space from which those who have been excluded from full citizenship (women, queers, racialized minorities, and disabled people) claim to speak. He states, “Taylor ignores (and also seems to reinforce) the basis upon which these exclusions are enacted” (Hesse, 1999:211). Taylor’s notions of recognition and cultural worth are also called into question (Ibrahim 2000, Hesse 1999, Fraser 2001, Gilroy 2001). Critics of Taylor’s position emphasize that we need to look at race, gender, class, re-distribution and ethics as part of the politics of recognition.

⁸ Also see Chapter 2 “Modernity and Infrahumanity” in Paul Gilroy’s (2000) *Against Race: Imagining Political Culture Beyond the Color Line*. A useful discussion regarding ‘modernity and its discontents’, can be found in *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Paul Gilroy (1993).

Barnor Hesse astutely points out that Taylor's only subaltern intellectual reference regarding the politics of difference is Frantz Fanon and he is de-contextualized, as Taylor does not locate Fanon within an intellectual tradition. He argues that Taylor 'misrecognized' Fanon's argument because Fanon was "not so much theorizing the conditions of recognition as initiating a theory (and politics) of interrogation" (Hesse, 1999: 212). Specific to a politics of interrogation is the questioning of European hegemony within western culture. "It begins with an interrogation of the imperial construction of universal ideas like the West, Europe, 'non-Europe' and particularly the nation" (Hesse, 1999: 214). Feminist scholar Nancy Fraser, troubles Taylor's perspectives of identity-making and the authentic self by asking that we re-consider the terms by which the notion of recognition is understood. She insists that if the notion of recognition is to be substantively evoked, it needs to be removed from the realm of ontology and understood within a politics of societal change and social justice.

From Fraser's perspective, the theory of equality is to be viewed as a theory of justice that extends the theory of equality beyond the notion of identity and rights to include an examination of normative cultural values and how they reproduce inequality and exclusion. She is concerned with the notion of the politics of redistribution which is inextricably tied to the politics of equality and depends upon an expanded conception of notions of justice. The politics of redistribution is criticized for its economic focus and the politics of recognition for its myopic understanding of culture as ethno-culturally based, homogenous, with tightly bounded parameters. Fraser takes issue with Taylor's ethnocultural emphasis because it excludes women, the disabled, gays and lesbians, to name a few 'other' minority cultures. Fraser calls for both recognition and the egalitarian redistribution of societal power and resources. For Fraser,

redistribution and recognition are “two mutually irreducible dimensions of, and perspectives on, justice” (Fraser, 2001: 31-32). She argues that in order to effectively deal with questions of equality and recognition, the concept of recognition has to be dealt with in terms of status and not in terms of identity.

Fraser proposes that the claim for recognition is a claim for justice, if we conceive of justice as an issue of morality, instead of as an ethical concern. This conceptual move (a) “permits one to justify claims for recognition as morally binding under modern conditions of value pluralism”, (b) conceives of “misrecognition as status subordination” and “locates the wrong in social relations, not in individual or interpersonal psychology” and (c) “aligns recognition with justice instead of the good life” as a way to avoid discussions of the individual’s right to authentic self identity” (Fraser, 2001: 27-28). The good life in Fraser’s view is open to culturally diverse interpretation. Fraser’s conceptual move eradicates some of the issues around *whose* cultural worth and good life; however, it simultaneously extricates and locates justice and equality outside the capricious realm of cultural interpretation.

In an attempt to recoup liberalism as a viable philosophy and state practice that protects individual and minority rights, Will Kymlicka (1989, 1995) attempts to harmonize liberalism’s tension between the individual and the community and the specific and the universal. His early discussions examine “the relationship between individual and society – and in particular, of the individual’s membership in a community and a culture (Kymlicka, 1989:1). His goal is two-fold. He seeks to reconcile liberal notions of justice, equality, and redistribution with notions of the good/ethics. Part of reconciling the notion of justice and the good also involves linking the

notion of cultural or community membership to ideas of freedom. Kymlicka also seeks to relocate the theory of the self and recognition into a more grounded framework of ‘culture’ in which material histories of oppression (conquest, colonization, occupation) are centred within the liberal discourses on identity-making.

In his book *Multicultural Citizenship* (1995), Kymlicka explicitly argues for the granting of differential rights to minoritized cultural groups such as First peoples and immigrants. For Kymlicka this is not an illiberal stance as he views cultural membership as important to the formation of self. He states:

liberals should recognize the importance of people’s membership in their own societal culture, because of the role it plays in enabling meaningful individual choice and in supporting self-identity. While the members of a (liberalized) nation no longer share moral values or traditional ways of life, they still have a deep attachment to their own language and culture. (Kymlicka, 1995:105)

For Kymlicka, the preservation of cultural practices functions on the level of the individual and on a communal level. Group cultural rights support a framework for individual freedom and authenticity while maintaining societal cohesion. The granting of minority group rights in modern multinational and polyethnic liberal nation states provides “a domain of freedom and equality, and a source of mutual recognition and trust, which can accommodate the inevitable disagreements and dissent about conceptions of the good in modern society” (Kymlicka, 1995: 105-106). Kymlicka, like Taylor, remains Eurocentric in his conceptualization of liberalism and renders the philosophy and practice, value neutral.

Kymlicka focuses primarily on culture as defined by ethnocultural difference and defines his notion of community in terms of ethnicity or nation. This narrow focus on culture arises because Kymlicka’s starting point is the multiethnic pluralist foundation of nation. According to

Kymlicka, the mode of ethnic or national incorporation (voluntary or involuntary) affects the nature of minority groups, and the sort of relationship they desire with larger society” (Kymlicka, 1995:10). He distinguishes between ‘national minorities’ - groups who share language, territory, culture and common history - and ‘ethnic groups’ within polyethnic states. Voluntary immigrants make up the category of ‘ethnic group’ and the messiness of forced migration is acknowledged by Kymlicka as exceptionalism. Kymlicka employs examples of cultural contestation over the nature of the Canadian nation state to illustrate that a combination of the two types of ethnocultural group formations may be present in a ‘single’ nation state.

Kymlicka clearly specifies three overlapping types of group differentiated rights that serve to protect cultural communities from internal and external restrictions to their liberty. Differentiated groups take the following forms: self-government rights; polyethnic rights and special representation rights. The group rights associated with national minorities are self-government and self-representation. These rights accorded to national minorities are permanent as they affirm an inherent right to claims of cultural autonomy and nationhood. On the other hand, Kymlicka contends that the impulse of voluntary immigrants is to assimilate into the dominant culture but also advocates for the granting of polyethnic rights that eliminate discrimination and racism within the public sphere. An immigrant’s culture of origin is viewed as a basic resource that allows for easier assimilation into the new dominant culture, and so polyethnic rights are usually temporary in nature.

Susan Okin’s (1997) work on immigrant women in multinational nation-states looks at the gendered dimensions of the liberal debate on polyethnic rights. She highlights the absence of

gender and the inattention paid to feminist concerns regarding the relationship between the public and private spheres within liberal debates on group rights and in Kymlicka's argument in particular. Okin argues that conferring group rights solely on the basis of ethno-cultural practices without attending to intra-group differences and contestations runs the danger of condoning and perpetuating practices that are illiberal and oppressive to women within minority cultural communities. Okin states, "it is especially important to consider inequalities between the sexes, since they are likely to be less public, and less easily discernible" (Okin, 1997:10).

Liberals like Kymlicka make convincing arguments for the conferral of group rights but the argument is grounded on a notion of culture that is representational. Kymlicka's arguments for equality continue to be mired within distinctions between majority and minority culture. I am in agreement with scholars who call for the de-ontologizing of 'recognition' as a way to move the discussion of equality and the multi-cultured into one about politics that redistributes and transforms the context in which one participates.

The Emergence of Canadian Official Multiculturalism

The 1960s brought with it two important legislations (Canadian Bill of Rights, 1960; Official Languages Act, 1968) that paved the way for the legislation and institutionalization of the Multicultural Act of 1985. The 1960s saw dissention from various groups (Québécoise, Aboriginals, women, and people of colour) who were placing pressure on the governments of the day to facilitate ways in which their political demands could be met within and separate from the framework of the Canadian nation-state. In other words, parallel claims were being made for inclusion and equality and for the recognition of difference, distinction and equality. Under

Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, the Canadian Bill of Rights (1960) enshrined in law the rights of every Canadian:

without discrimination by reason of race, national origin, colour, religion or sex, the following human rights and fundamental freedoms, namely, (a) the right of the individual to life, liberty, security of the person and enjoyment of property, and the right not to be deprived thereof except by due process of law; (b) the right of the individual to equality before the law and the protection of the law; (c) freedom of religion; (d) freedom of speech; (e) freedom of assembly and association; and (f) freedom of the press. (Department of Justice Canada: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-12.3/28511.html>)

Diefenbaker saw this bill as the tool to eradicate discrimination and differential citizenship practices that were based on race or ethnicity. Leslie Pal (1993) argues that the bill further damaged the relationship between the federal government and French Canadians because the bill focused on individual rights of all citizens regardless of race or ethnicity without allowance for group rights such as those articulated by French-Canadian culture.

In his genealogy of Canadian official multiculturalism, Richard Day points out that the reality of Francophone and Anglophone existence in Canada was not based on the equal status of both of the ‘settler’/‘founding’ nations as was outlined in the documents of Confederation, but on Anglophone dominance in the political, cultural and economic life of the nation. Day states, “English Canada nationalists had never really seen Confederation as a meeting of equals is apparent in the obstinate equation of Britishness with Canadianness..., and in attempts to assimilate/integrate non-British Immigrants to the English-speaking society” (Day, 2000:180). Language rights were absent from the Bill of Rights and English as both language, and culture, dominated within the social and political realms.

Within a climate of high Québec nationalism, the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963) was established by the federal government. The commission was formed three years after the passing of the Bill of Rights to acknowledge “yet again that it had a French problem. Access to bilingual education was to be guaranteed, a Commissioner of Official languages was to supervise the implementation of a federal Official Languages Act” (Day, 2000: 182). Based on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Official Languages Act was adopted by the parliament of Canada in 1969. In official government speak, the purpose of the Official Languages Act is to:

(a) ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions, in particular with respect to their use in parliamentary proceedings, in legislative and other instruments, in the administration of justice, in communicating with or providing services to the public and in carrying out the work of federal institutions;

(b) support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and generally advance the equality of status and use of the English and French languages within Canadian society; and

(c) set out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the official languages of Canada. (Department of Justice of Canada: <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/O-3.01/89243.html#rid-89252>)

The Official Languages Act was one of the solutions implemented by the federal government to quell separatist dissent in Québec. In his speech to introduce the Official Languages Bill to the House of Commons on October 17, 1968; then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau situated the Québec ‘problem’ within the framework of ‘diversity’. He stated:

The most important example of this diversity is undoubtedly the existence of the two major language groups, both of which are strong enough in numbers and in material and intellectual resources to resist the forces of assimilation. In the past this underlying reality of our

country has not been adequately reflected in many of our public institutions. French Canada can survive not by turning in on itself but by reaching out to claim its full share of every aspect of Canadian life. English Canada should not attempt to crush or expect to absorb French Canada. (http://www.canadahistory.com/sections/documents/trudeau_-_official_languages_act.htm)

Trudeau's speech alludes to the idea that language and culture are important factors within ideas and practices of nation-making and building. The speech also highlights a tension between assimilation and diversity and what these two concepts symbolized in relation to Canadian nation-making. The problem of population makes itself quite evident in both the Prime Minister's speech to The House and in the subsequent Languages Act that followed. The hegemonic dominance of English Canada was being called into question by French Canada. The Act hoped to appease Francophones and differentiate the Canadian nation from others by emphasizing its ability to accommodate difference. The act of accommodation by the state to ethno political mobilization provided a fissure that 'other' minorities pried open in the name of cultural heritage and preservation.

The Multiculturalism Act of 1988

In 1971, under Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, Canada became the first western country to adopt multiculturalism as official state policy. Under the auspices of the Department of the Secretary of State, funding was provided to ethno-cultural communities and organizations to assist in capacity building as well as to showcase the cultural products and performances of 'other' ethnic groups who were not French, English or Aboriginal.⁹

⁹ See Rinaldo Walcott's unpublished MA thesis entitled, *Critiquing Canadian Multiculturalism: Towards An Anti-racist Agenda*, 1993.

In 1988, the Multicultural Act was passed by parliament and it focused on full and active participation of Canada's non-Anglophone and non-Francophone citizens. Multiculturalism was made into law within a bilingual framework – hierarchy of English and French dominance that was officially established through the passage of the Official Languages Act.¹⁰ It was also ascended into law by the conservative government of Brian Mulroney at a time when new immigrants from previously colonized areas of the world were establishing themselves in large numbers in Canada.

Table 1. Immigrant Population by Place of Birth, Showing Periods of Immigration 1981 - 1990 and 1991 - 1996, for Canada, 1996 Census - 20% Sample Data *

Place of Birth	Immigrant Population (1)	1981-1990		1991-1996	
		Period of Immigration		Period of Immigration	
		1981-1990	%	1991-1996(2)	%
Total - Place of birth	4,971,070	1,092,400	100.0	1,038,995	100.0
United States	244,695	46,405	4.2	29,025	2.8
Central and South America	273,820	106,230	9.7	76,335	7.3
Caribbean and Bermuda	279,405	72,405	6.6	57,315	5.5
Europe	2,332,060	280,695	25.7	197,480	19.0
United Kingdom	655,540	63,445	5.8	25,420	2.4
Other Northern and Western Europe	514,310	48,095	4.4	31,705	3.1
Eastern Europe	447,830	111,370	10.2	87,900	8.5
Southern Europe	714,380	57,785	5.3	52,455	5.0
Africa	229,300	64,265	5.9	76,260	7.3
Asia	1,562,770	512,160	46.9	592,710	57.0
West Central Asia and the Middle East	210,850	77,685	7.1	82,050	7.9

¹⁰ See Eve Haque's unpublished PhD thesis, *Multiculturalism in a Bilingual Framework: Language and the Racial Ordering of Difference and Belonging in Canada*, 2005

Eastern Asia	589,420	172,715	15.8	252,340	24.3
South-east Asia	408,985	162,490	14.9	118,265	11.4
Southern Asia	353,515	99,270	9.1	140,055	13.5
Oceania and Other	49,025	10,240	0.9	9,875	1.0

(1) Non-permanent residents are not included in this table. (2) Includes the first four months only of 1996

*Source: Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.ca/english/census96/nov4/imm2c.htm>

Purpose of the Multicultural Act

The purpose of the Act is outlined in Section 3.1- Multicultural policy - of the Multicultural Act.¹¹ Its purpose is to govern the growing immigrant populations who entered Canada in the second wave of post-World War II immigration. Rinaldo Walcott (1993) provides a backdrop from which to view the multicultural policies and cultural products of the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s. Walcott points out that the Multicultural Act came about as a result of a number of economic and socio-political shifts that were occurring, nationally and internationally. He states:

It resulted from the increasing number of ethnic and racial minorities immigrating to Canada since the 1960s, and their insistence on recognition of their historical and continuing contributions to Canada. Considerations of Québec nationalism, and human and civil rights issues around the world and in the United States of America (U.S.A.), in particular, influenced similar movements in Canada. The federal multicultural policy can be seen as a [sic] a ruling class response to those movements. Multicultural policy was one way of appeasing large numbers of citizens and avoiding some of the violent pitfalls that occurred in the U.S.A. (Walcott, 1993: 35)

¹¹ Section 3.1 of the Multicultural Act is attached as Appendix I

The Multicultural Act elaborates several of the ‘problems’ it hopes to address or contain, the major issue being that of Canadian diversity. Haque’s (2005) genealogical study on language, race and Canadian nation-making highlights contestation over the nation in the 1960s by ‘other’ Canadians as well as the elision of discontent by Aboriginals and ‘other’ Canadians within the official texts and discourses of bilingualism. She draws attention to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963-1969) and its enunciations of the multicultural other in relation to languages beside English and the concomitant entrenchment of racialized hierarchies within a multicultural nation space. Sixteen recommendations aimed at creating knowledge about other ethnic groups and to facilitate social cohesion through an engagement with the uniqueness of the Canadian ‘cultural mosaic’ are outlined in the Report of the Royal Commission on Biculturalism and Biculturalism: Book IV: The Cultural Contribution of the Other Ethnic Groups. The postscript of the report remarks on the lack of knowledge held by the government of Canada about the history, folklore and achievements of these groups. It states, “A striking fact that emerged from our research into cultural groups other than British or French in Canadian society is that so little is known about the subject” (Report of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism: Book IV: postscript). Key areas impacted by the recommendations were cultural organizations, broadcasting, employment equity, schools and universities.

Richard Day astutely points out that the Multicultural Act articulates ‘diversity’ as a core and natural feature of Canadian society, masking the constructed and contested arena out of which the Canadian polity emerged. In the preamble to the Multicultural Act, Canada’s ethno-cultural diversity is referred to as a “*fundamental* (my emphasis) characteristic of Canadian

society” (Multicultural Act 1988: preamble). Himani Bannerji situates official multicultural policy and its call for diversity within the context of the state’s anxiety about ‘questions of nationhood’. She states:

The usefulness of the discourse of diversity as a device for managing public or social relations and spaces, of serving as a form of moral regulation of happy co-existence, is obvious. The Canadian government and other public institutions, the media, and the ideological projection of the Canadian nation (and its unity) are marked by this discourse. (Bannerji, 2000: 37)

Bannerji goes on to explain that “this discourse of diversity in its comprehensive ideological and political form is materialized and extended as a discourse of multiculturalism, with its linguistic constellation of visible minority, women of colour, and so on” (ibid: 40). The preamble to the Act not only naturalizes diversity but also acknowledges that previous legislations that it refers to – the Constitution of Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Act, and the Citizenship Act– had all failed to address issues of equity and full participation of peoples of diverse ethno-cultural communities in Canada.

The Multicultural Act seeks to incorporate non-English and non-French peoples into the fabric of Canada by appealing to the idea of the preservation of the cultural forms of those who identify with specific *cultures of origin*. The word ‘origin’ is sprinkled throughout Section 3.1 to delineate the cultures of recent immigrants – primarily people of colour - from the established ‘white’ Francophone and Anglophone Canadians. The word origin infers a place and culture that is outside of the space/territory of Canada, a place that is somewhere else. It also refers to an authentic/pure place and culture that is essentialized and fixed. The cultures and origins of the new Canadian immigrant of the 1970s and 1980s are classified and categorized in ways that

‘recognized’ them as interpretable and non-threatening in the context of Anglophone and Francophone dominance. Within this system of essentialist categorization, one has little chance of becoming a ‘Canadian’. I contend that the concept of ‘origin’ is mired in a trope of a past that refuses to move into a present.

Yasmeen Abu-Ladan highlights the problem with liberal multicultural approaches that invoke ‘origin’ and heritage ‘culture’ as eliding the possibilities of “multiple, hybrid and even shifting identities (based on religion, race, nationality, gender, class, age etc.) that may shape one’s existence, and quests for belonging and recognition” from emerging (Abu-Ladan, 2002: 465). The categorization of people of colour/new immigrants enabled the state to account for the bodies of these immigrants and prescribe the ways in which cultural differences could be integrated into the larger bi-cultural, bi-lingual narrative of the Canadian nation. Under the guise of the Multicultural Act, the state legitimated a public imaginary about *who* the new ‘immigrants’ were and created a limited context in which the symbolic cultures of individuals and groups were made visible. Mackey suggests that the state’s intervention in defining ethno-cultural identities also served to shape a political awareness of difference. She states, “By defining and recognising immigrants as ‘ethno-cultural groups’ the policy provided a means through which cultural difference became politicized, but also manageable through the funding of ‘cultural programmes’, the main function of the early policy” (Mackey, 2002: 65).

As pointed out earlier, the Act’s focus on the “full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation,”

suggests that previous legislation had failed to take into account minoritized cultures and ethno-cultural communities. We are reminded that the Multicultural policy and the bestowing of ‘equitable participation’ was not an altruistic act. It served to assuage the growing resentment of people of colour who were excluded from full participation due to racism. In a sense, the new immigrant was inscribed with ethno-cultural specificity and was called up individually and collectively to extend the debate about the politics of difference to reach outside of Québec.

The Multicultural Act, through its legislation of the practice of inclusion, also illuminates the fact that institutional practices of both government and civil society excluded certain types of bodies based on ‘origin’ and ‘race’. This legislation sought to ‘encourage’ full participation in civil society through a welfarist approach to providing opportunities to new immigrants. The language and tone of the Act suggests a proactive move to ‘assist’/enable individuals and groups from designated ethno-cultural communities to integrate into a society that was resistant to integration. According to Mackey, liberal politicians and lawmakers of the 1980s understood official multiculturalism as a practical measure that would enhance its ability to keep cheap labour (people of colour) and attract additional labour force to Canada. Mackey contends that the 1988 Act was a form of state intervention that “not only appropriates and institutionalises diversity for the project of nation-building in the manner of earlier multicultural policy, it now proposes that multiculturalism is a national resource in the context of global capitalism” (Mackey, 2002: 70).

The Act explicitly outlines the role of the federal government in achieving diversity in the following clauses:

(f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;

(g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins.
(Multicultural Act 1988)

Here the state implicates itself in the creation of “multiculturalism” and assumes a leadership role in the proliferation of the ideology of multiculturalism and diversity into the rest of society.

The Canadian government created and adopted the Multicultural Act to address the concerns about exclusion from civic life by the growing numbers of new immigrants to Canada; Québec separatism; and as a strategy to preserve Canada’s position within the global capitalist economy. In addressing these problems, the state created a system that marked and made visible bodies that were not French, English or westernized. The provision of arts funding to individuals and groups from ethno-cultural communities was only one of the strategies developed by the federal government to operationalize the Multicultural policy within the cultural sphere.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have mapped out a terrain of interdisciplinary scholarship concerned with contemporary nation-making, citizenship, the multi-cultural and multiculturalism. I engaged with scholarly interdisciplinary literature on Canadian multiculturalism as a way to reflect upon the purpose of the Canadian Multicultural Act of 1988. The theoretical perspectives that I have explored, emphasize the centrality of ‘culture’ to the arguments, as well as, acknowledge the role of the state in reproducing and disseminating culture. To summarize my discussion: the nation is

a contested object of analysis and an imaginary to which membership status is negotiated. The nation-state is essentially multi-cultured in nature. Citizenship as a membership status is based on the body politic and implies equality and justice even though the practice is exclusionary. Membership to a nation-state is also accompanied by rights, obligations and duties. Feminist and postcolonial scholars share the belief that the practice of citizenship, if it is to embody ideas of equality, requires that an ethic of redistribution be adhered to.

I have also argued that Canada's Multicultural Act (1988) was deployed by the state to manage and deflect real and perceived threats to the unity of the 'nation' of Canada. The state's intentions with regard to the effects of the Act on the populations it was geared towards were contradictory with regards to notions of inclusion and full participation within civil society. The Act served to 'politicize' new immigrants and bodies of colour through its 'rights' discourse while it contained these same bodies in a place outside of the nation-state in its insistence on categorizing newcomers on the basis of their 'origin'. In a sense, the Multicultural Act created and called up people of colour to dampen the separatists arguments about cultural identity, difference, and a redistribution of societal power.

Chapter 3 - Arts funding, the State, and Canadian Nation-making

Introduction

A number of concerns regarding nation, sovereignty, culture, and race underline Canadian state funding of the arts and policies which are geared towards the distribution of state funds. These concerns can be characterized as simultaneously philosophical and pragmatic in nature. In this chapter I engage with macro theories of state, governmentality and culture in order to argue that early state patronage of the arts, through the establishment of the institution of the Canada Council for the Arts, highlight a politics of arts funding that was concerned with elite discourses on aesthetic, cultural, and social values. Early state funding of the arts produced practices of imagining, shaping, and narrating the fledgling Canadian nation as white, modern, and European. This imaginary produced a system of exclusionary arts funding practices that persist to this day. The questions that arise as I examine the institution of federal arts funding are: What constitutes culture? What are the forms in which culture and art are manifested? Who produces culture and art? And how do the institutions such as the Canada Council for the Arts produce, shape, and disseminate meanings about what art and culture are?

I begin my investigation with a discussion on cultural policy and governance to assist the task of unpacking the relationships between government cultural policy, the social, governance, race, and sovereignty. I then examine the formation of the Massey Commission (1949) and its report that led to the formation of the Canada Council for the Arts (1957), highlighting the discourses underpinning the ideas expressed by the commissioners. I approach the Massey Commission as a “scheme of legitimation,”¹² in keeping with Adam Ashforth’s (1990) understanding of the work that Commissions do vis-à-vis enabling subjects to simultaneously be heard and listened to by the state so that actions can be planned on their behalf to produce the common good in society. I focus my attention on the emergence of issues of race and representation dating back to the Massey Report and the development of racial equity policies in the 1990s. I argue that the Massey commissioners deployed the concept and practices of culture in an anthropological manner predicated on European mores and sensibilities to create a similitude of a Canadian way of life to galvanize support for their project while downplaying the aesthetic register. This strategy was deliberately used to engender alliance-building across various elite constituents and their meaning making practices in the name of an independent bicultural Canadian nation.

Governing Culture/Culture of Governing

Contemporary cultural theorists have moved past earlier conceptions of culture as merely signifying practices and have implicated state policy in the production of culture. Within these

¹² Adam Ashforth (1990) argues that the work of Commissions of Inquiry is one of the mechanisms that the State in liberal society utilize to neutralize the State’s involvement in the production of the common good in civil society. The work is carved out to produce outcomes that legitimate the actions of the state. He states, “schemes of legitimation are not merely doctrines, assertions or ideologies’ concerning the political road to the good life. Rather they involve concrete plans of action designed to achieve the ‘proper’ means and objectives of power. (Ashforth 2002: 6)

discussions of culture (Yudice, Bennett, Bourdieu, Miller, Rose), culture is viewed as normalized through various pedagogical mechanisms, or it is seen as a product of contestations over meaning and social and economic relations (Williams, Hall, Yudice).¹³ There is an acknowledgement that culture is connected to state policy and is invoked in two registers: the anthropological and the aesthetic (Bennett 1995, Lewis and Miller 2003, Miller and Yúdice 2002, Yudice 2005, Bourdieu 1984). In the *anthropological* register, the term culture is used to refer to what is distinctive about the ‘way of life’ of a people, community, nation, or social group. In the *aesthetic* register, the creative products of individuals are assessed on the basis of formal criteria regarding beauty, derived from the fields of art history and cultural criticism. According to Bennett (1992), culture is best thought of as “a historically specific set of institutionally embedded relations of government in which the forms of thought and conduct of extended populations are targeted for transformation – in part via the extension through the social body of the forms, techniques, and regimes of aesthetic and intellectual culture” (Bennett, 1992:26). Bennett’s definition of culture provides an entry point for understanding the formation of the Canada Council and its relationship to the state. Bennett moves away from earlier articulations of culture as ‘way of life’ or signifying practices and positions culture as a concern of the state and in need of governance and regulation. Culture is a historically contingent set of non-coercive practices deployed by the state to produce a cultivated population.

¹³ Yudice (2002) discusses Raymond Williams’ application of the Gramscian concept of hegemony to culture. It is argued that hegemony is achieved “when the dominant culture uses education, philosophy, religion, advertising and art to make its dominance appear normal and natural to the heterogeneous groups that constitute society. The accomplishment of this ‘consensus’ instantiates what then appears to be an ethical state”, which deserves universal loyalty and transcends class identifications” (Lloyd and Thomas 114-118. p. 7-8). Stuart Hall also elaborates on the relevance of Gramsci’s work to the analysis of superstructures and the function of the state in containing conflict and legitimizing the status-quo of the ruling class. Hall states that the modern state “is where the bloc of social forces which it dominates over it not only justifies and maintains its domination but wins by leadership and authority the active consent of those whom it rules. Thus it plays a pivotal role in the construction of hegemony” (Hall 1996: 429).

In the aesthetic register, the notion of taste or preference for particular types of cultural practices and products is foundational to discussions as to what constitutes culture and how cultural expressions and subjects are classified. The work of Pierre Bourdieu makes strong claims that aesthetic, high cultural tastes and values, are socially constituted. In *Distinction*, a book based on empirical material gathered in France the 1960s, Bourdieu argued that taste is an acquired "cultural competence" that is used to legitimize social differences. Bourdieu asserts that taste is imbricated with social class and status. On such terms, an elite assessment of culture favours high-culture, and this assessment is used to differentiate between social classes.¹⁴ Cultural policy scholars such as George Yúdice (2005) examine 'culture' in the context of neo-liberal globalization and the ways in which culture has become an important economic 'resource' or commodity. Yúdice suggests that "culture is increasingly wielded as a resource for both socio-political and economic amelioration, that is, for increasing participation in this era of political involvement, conflicts over citizenship (Young 2000:81-120), and the rise of what Jeremy Rifkin (2000) has called "cultural capitalism" (Yúdice 2005: 9). In short, culture is called upon to spur on economic growth as well as to reduce social conflict. As a resource, culture is defined as including the realms of both the aesthetic and way of life and in need of state management. Yúdice further argues that in the current era of globalization, culture is legitimized based on its utility as an object of exchange in the global marketplace. In this marketplace, migration and contact with difference have disturbed the foundation upon which a unified culture was previously used to express "a national expedient" (Yúdice 2005: 11); making way for claims over cultural citizenship and cultural recognition by culturally defined groups. As a resource,

¹⁴ In *Distinction*, Bourdieu discusses the notion of 'good taste' and its acquisition. Good taste is dependent upon a separation or distancing from the requirements of manual labour. It is through class power that social inequities are reproduced.

culture (food, music, art, way of life, signifying practices) is articulated as both in terms of difference and as a commodity from which profit can be derived.

Foucault's argument about the role of the state in managing populations is central to my discussions on cultural policy in general and the formation of the Canada Council for the Arts, in particular. I use the term 'managing population' to refer to the production of detailed knowledge and expertise developed by institutions of the state that allow for the categorization, organization and care of a given population within a given territorial boundary. His argument also serves as grounding for my later examination of the Canada Council's establishment of the Racial Equity Office (1991). Foucauldian analyses of the liberal state (Mitchell, Foucault, Gordon, Rose and Miller) are concerned with the materiality of practices of the state or how the state comes into being. From this perspective, the liberal state is not one single rational entity with a single identifiable centre of power; rather, it is seen as a decentralized network or assemblage of power relationships that extend into civil society. It is through quotidian relationships with social institutions and their practices that the effects of the state are materialized. Walcott suggests that "It is the managerial and administrative moments through which we encounter the 'state' that moments of state formation and our participation in that process become evident" (Walcott, 1993: 21). Subjects participate in reproducing the state and themselves through the activities and policies of the state. In the provision of public goods and services, the state classifies and calls upon subjects to account for themselves in prescribed ways. The classification of subjects makes possible the formation of certain groups and identifications, as well as creates subjects who contest the state by demanding different types of public goods and government policies.

For Foucault, part of the work of the liberal state is to perfect what he calls the art of governance - to know and account for its subjects and while doing so, produce subjects who are self-regulating and governable. He employs the concept of governmentality or ‘governmental rationality’ – discourses that make up the logic of governmental authority - as descriptors of: processes and practices by which states manage populations within territorial spaces; the governance of the conduct of subjects; and the governance of the self by the self. Foucault was concerned with the ways in which populations are problematized, objectified, and managed through the activities of institutions and state policing. This form of power is exercised over members of a population to constitute their subjectivity in accordance with state policies. But Foucault was critical of contemporary Marxists who identified all power with the state hence he developed the concept of governmentality to signal that much governing takes place beyond the purview of the state.

Foucault outlines two intertwined registers of bio-power – one that refers to the subject’s care of self and another that is concerned with the disciplining and regulation of whole populations. In this way populations can be adjusted in accordance with economic processes. The concept of governmentality serves as an analytic framework for understanding: state formation; the ways in which subjects govern themselves and exercise agency; the technologies employed to enable both domination and contestation as well as the ways in which subjects are constituted.

The concept allows us to:

Call attention to the constitution of new political forms and levels of the state such as the introduction of systems of negotiation, mechanisms of self-organization, and empowerment strategies. At the same time, this theoretical perspective can grasp the rearticulation of identities and subjectivities. It focuses not only on the integral link between micro- and macro-political levels (e.g. the call for “lean” collective bodies and

institutions and personal imperatives as regards beauty or a regimented diet), it also highlights the intimate relationship between "ideological" and "political-economic" agencies (e.g. the semantics of flexibility and the introduction of new structures of production). This enables us to shed sharper light on the effects neo-liberal governmentality has in terms of (self-) regulation and domination. (Lemke, 2003: 177-178)

This conceptual lens focuses attention on the ideological¹⁵ function of the liberal state as well as the multiple ways in which the state is implicated in activities within civil society. It specifically allows us to shed light on the dynamic relationship that exists between the Canadian state, Canada Council for the Arts and its administration of culture in civil society, and the mechanisms through which cultured subjects are produced.

Foucault refers to this ‘working on’ one’s self and the maintenance of certain ways of being and social practices as the ‘cultivation of the self’¹⁶. He writes:

The precept according to which one must give attention to oneself was in any case an imperative that circulated among a number of different doctrines. It also took the form of an attitude, a mode of behavior; it became instilled in ways of living; it evolved into procedures, practices, and formulas that people reflected on, developed, and taught. It thus came to constitute a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions. (Foucault, 1986: 43-45)

Through government intervention and institutional practices behaviours are shaped in order to produce morally uplifted individuals and civilized populations. These practices are normalized within the sphere of everyday activities via various forms of educational practices and cultural institutions. It is through education and the establishment of taste-shaping institutions such as art funding agencies, museums, libraries, and art galleries that the subject learns the art of cultural

¹⁵ Foucault distances himself from this term; he is more interested in the politics of truth than the politics of untruth linked to ideology.

¹⁶ See the History of Sexuality, Vol. 3 (1986).

consumption and production within the parameters of the cultural sphere. A specific instance of how governmentality gets played out in the public realm can be seen in the establishment and execution of commissions of inquiry.

Understanding Commissions of Inquiry

The work of Adam Ashforth (1990) is useful in guiding an understanding of the symbolic and material work that commissions of inquiry engage in as part of a process of state legitimation.

Schemes of legitimation can be seen in attempts to systematize the principles underlying policy, to provide explanations of the necessary, possible and desirable ends of State power. In a broad sense, schemes of legitimation elaborate the ways in which the collective communicative action of those who represent the State in its principal, if fictive, guise as speaking subject (author of the Law) should address its subjects. They are characterized by statements expressed in a language observing the rules of 'objective' knowledge. (Ashforth, 1990:6)

In other words, commissions of inquiry are exercises in standardizing and explaining the rules and outcomes of state policy formation. Commissions of inquiry actively produce publics who participate, intervene and shape public opinion" (Ashforth, 1990: 6).

Ashforth argues that the work of commissions of inquiry is constituted of three symbolic and ritualistic phases and performances in which a new discourse is constituted that facilitates "the direction of administrative action within States to take forms which do not appear to reduce to the pursuit of sectional interests or particular values" (Ashforth, 1990:12). The first phase is the investigative phase during the life of the commission in which representatives chosen by the

State – the Commissioners- engage with representatives of selected interests and the processes of engagement are bound by institutional, jurisdictional and epistemological and juridical parameters Ashforth, 1990: 6-7). This phase is composed of oral presentations or performances which serve to sanction forms of social discourse and State truths. Ashforth describes commissions as institutions that derive their authority from a positivist scientific paradigm to “present the state of Truth and the majesty of judgement to represent the truth of State” in the naming and solution to a “problem” (Ashforth, 1990: 7).

The second phase is referred to as the persuasive phase which is marked by the publication of the report/s of the inquiry and “the invitation to discussion that this act signals, symbolizes a sort of dialogue between the State on the one hand and Society on the other” (Ashforth, 1990: 7). Ashforth points out that the symbolic aspects of this phase is of utmost importance and argues that the report/s “helps constitute the neutrality of the State as an institutional domain separate from Civil Society yet dedicated to the advancement of the ‘common good’. In this phase of symbolic dialogue with Society as a whole, a report becomes an authoritative statement relating to questions of political action” (Ashforth, 1990: 7). The final or ‘archival’ phase is the phase in which the report becomes an instrument of policy formation and serves as a way to interpret events and enter into dialogue with history.

Ashforth characterizes commissions of inquiry as theatres of power where performances are scripted and the parameter in which the performance unfolds is bounded by codes that govern the performance. He states:

A Commission of Inquiry can be thought of as a theatre of power. It is a theatre in which a central received 'truth' of modern State power is ritually played out before a public audience. This truth is that the subjects of power can speak freely of their interests, and will be heard: that State power is a benign partner with Society in pursuit of the Common Good. Public inquiries mediate between the State and Society. They listen to Society and speak to the State: they interrogate society on behalf of the State. And they do so within a framework of codes and rules for representing true knowledge. For as well as hearing, they venture out from the official spaces of State to inspect conditions with their objective gaze. (Ashforth, 1990: 9)

Each phase of an inquiry contributes to the process of truth making out of which specific plans can be devised to ameliorate a problematic social condition. The production of rational public space for dialogue and public debate of reports serve to transform "contentious matters of political struggle into discourses of reasoned argument" (Ashforth, 1990: 12). These ideas on the symbolic and material work of commissions are helpful for analysing the Canadian Massey Commission.

The Canadian Government and its Responsibility for Culture

Culture is that part of education which enriches the mind and refines the taste. It is the development of the intelligence through the arts, letters, and sciences. (Massey Commission Report, 1951:7)

The Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences, chaired by Vincent Massey (ex-high commissioner to London, England) was struck in 1949 by then Liberal Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent to examine "broadcasting, federal cultural institutions, government relations with voluntary cultural associations, and federal university scholarships" (Litt, 1992: 3). The commission, which later became known as the Massey Commission, made its recommendations to Parliament two years later, and in 1957, through an

Act of Parliament called the Canada Council Act, the Canada Council for the Enjoyment of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences came into existence.¹⁷ The Commission and the subsequent creation of the government agency in charge of the arts and social sciences can be viewed as technologies designed to draw clear parameters around the types of creative and intellectual knowledges that would be privileged by the state as representing the Canadian nation at a time when the nation was differentiating itself from others.

The Massey Commission was struck at a time when intellectuals and artists were actively organizing and lobbying for the creation of a funding agency to support the arts and universities. The establishment of the Arts Council of Britain in 1945 played an influential role in informing the sentiments of the intellectuals and artists (who were primarily of British ‘stock’) regarding the need to establish a Canadian institutional body that would shape and oversee national cultural production and dissemination.¹⁸ According to some scholars (Whittaker 1967, Litt 1992, Cummings and Katz 1987, Beale 1993), the Commission interpreted its mandate as a campaign to galvanize Canadian nationalism in order to distinguish postcolonial Canada as distinct from its southern neighbour and from Britain. The post-war period was a significant one in which art, culture; research and education were deemed important tools for preventing the re-emergence of fascism and socialism.

¹⁷ From now on I will reference to the Canada Council for the Enjoyment of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences as the Canada Council.

¹⁸ See W. Whittakers’s unpublished Ph.D dissertation (1965) entitled, *The Canada Council for the Encouragement of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences; It’s Origins, Formation, Operation, and Influence Upon Theatre in Canada.*

The Massey Commission

The Massey Commission was composed of members of Canada's cultural establishment¹⁹ who were affiliated with national voluntary associations such as the League of Nations Society, Société du éducation des adultes du Québec, the Canadian Institute for International Affairs, Société des écrivains canadiens, the Association of Canadian Clubs, and the Canadian League- in both English and French Canada.²⁰ Individuals who sat on the Massey Commission exercised power within the public sphere and are characterized by Litt as "a definable, privileged group that wielded significant influence in Canadian society" and "through their leadership positions, its members were able to exert their influence informally from the national to the local level" (Litt, 1992: 38). Not only were the commissioners drawn from Canada's cultural elite, almost all of the commissioners were "friends-of-government insiders" (Litt, 1992: 35). Litt goes on to describe the commissioners as: "generally well educated, white, middle class, and male, and their interactions led to friendships which reinforced their shared interests" (Litt, 1992: 21). Although one female academic was appointed to the group, the Massey Commission was a homogeneous assemblage with regard to gender, race, ethnicity, ideology, education and class. It should be noted that not one single artist was appointed to the Commission. The Commission excluded the rank of the 'average' Canadian citizen and drew from a pool of Canadian intellectuals who advocated for state support of the arts and letters as a way to foster the development of a distinctly Canadian culture, one that symbolized Canada's transformation from the status of colony, to that of an independent, bicultural, yet unified nation.

¹⁹ Other members of the commission were Norman A. M. Mackenzie, President of the University of British Columbia; Georges-Héni Lévesque, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval University; Arthur Surveyer, civil engineer from Montreal; and Hilda Neatby, Acting Head of the Department of History, University of Saskatchewan.

²⁰ See Chapter 1, "The Origins of the Commission" in Paul Litts' *The Muses, The Masses, and The Massey Commission* (1992) for a more detailed descriptions of the backgrounds and affiliations of the Commissioners.

The commissioners held hearings in “sixteen cities across Canada, making sure that every province had been visited. Traveling some 10, 000 miles, it held 224 meetings, 114 of which were public sessions; 462 briefs were presented to it and about 1,200 witnesses appeared before it” (Massey Commission Report, 1951:8). Associations such as the Canadian Arts Council²¹, which later became known as the Canadian Conference of the Arts and the Canada Foundation played a pivotal role in providing support for the commission’s work. Their ideology and goals were in keeping with those of the members of the Massey Commission regarding the central role of the arts and culture in shaping the Canadian nation and the need for public funding to support the endeavour,

On a more philosophical level, the culture lobby articulated a cultural logic that was based on what Litt (1992) refers to as a liberal humanistic philosophical perspective on culture and the social and psychological development of democratic society. In their quest to better society and the individual in society, the cultural lobby favoured state interventions that enabled and furthered the project of the production of universal knowledge and practices. Their perspective was in keeping with that of the Massey commissioners. The culture lobby and the Massey commissioners were committed to Enlightenment notions of progress and freedom that emphasize the universality of aesthetic judgments and the transcendental potential of western aesthetic sensibilities. The

²¹In 1946, The Canadian Arts Council took on the role of administering culture out of concerns for the well-being of artists and in an effort to create a unified sense of national culture. The new Canadian Arts Council represented the following sixteen organizations: The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada, the Sculptors' Society of Canada, the Canadian Society of Painters in Water Colour, the Society of Canadian Painter, Etchers and Engravers, the Canadian Group of Painters, the Canadian Society of Graphic Art, the Federation of Canadian Artists, the Canadian Authors' Association, la Société des Écrivains Canadiens, the Music Committee, the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects and Town Planners, the Dominion Drama Festival, the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, the Canadian Guild of Potters, and the Arts and Letters Club. (Canadian Art 1946: Vol. III #4, accessed online www.ccca.ca/c/writing/d/duval/duv001t.html).

commissioners saw elite culture as being central to the mission of democracy “because it opened to the individual a path of self-improvement leading to intellectual freedom” (Litt, 1992: 85). They were interested in the arts and culture as apparatuses that could improve the spiritual, moral, and intellectual capacities of the ‘ordinary’ citizen. The growing influence of broadcast media and the influence of American productions were also important factors that fuelled the concerns of the culture lobby. Litt appropriately conjectures that the cultural elites concern to halt the proliferation of mass culture was an attempt to further the project of the betterment of the masses. More importantly, Litt claims it was an indication of class struggles being played out in the cultural sphere.

The development of the collective and individual self of the nation is implicitly bound up in the notion of ‘working on’ the spiritual foundation of Canadians. The state is involved in securing the nation while the institutions in civil society take on the role of molding social practices concerned with care of the self and self sovereignty. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent expressed sentiments similar to those of the commissioners with respect to the subject’s care of self and the role of the state in relation to the welfare, education, and upliftment of its citizenry. Litt reports that the Prime Minister stated, “there is another side of human life that is as important as the dollars resulting from trade. Upon that side of the normal activities of civilized, Christian human beings, sufficient attention has not been focused nationwide” (Litt, 1992: 31). Culture and the arts were employed to produce, maintain, and transform the Canadian citizenry into respectable subjects with strong Christian moral principles.

The Massey Commission was concerned with the production and consumption of taste as much as the development of a nationalist sentiment. The commissioners strategically downplayed the use of the terms 'art' and 'culture' on their tour across the country so as not to draw attention to their elitist interpretations of the terms. Instead, they opted to market the commission as a nationalist project that was concerned with the average person. This is apparent in the rhetoric employed by the commission over its two year period of public consultation held in sixteen cities across the country. Litt states that "the commission remained wary of associating itself with culture" and "the commissioners would continue to pitch this combination of lowbrow pretence and patriotic purpose as they moved across the country" (Litt, 1992: 65-66). The move towards appealing to the 'average' person or to the lowbrow was ironic and somewhat patronizing as the Commission was composed of a sampling of the elite who themselves were concerned with highbrow cultural practices. The term culture was excluded from public discourse and replaced by ideas about the public good and the development of a nationalist sentiment. This shift served to protect the commissioners from being challenged about their highbrow affiliations and the elitist connotations the terms 'art' and 'culture' carry.

The cultural elite also sought to differentiate Canadian culture from the culture of the rest of the world, but specifically from the United States. There was fear that American mass culture would bastardize the Canadian cultural persona because:

Canadians imported a large number of items from the United States which had a very direct influence upon the national, cultural pattern; these included newspapers, periodicals, books, maps, educational equipment, films, radio and television programs and artists. (Whittaker, 1965: 110)

The commissioners viewed the increase in leisure time of Canadians as allowing the specter of mass culture to creep into the national psyche and expressed the following opinion about the role of the arts and letters in halting this phenomenon. They state:

Canadian achievement in every field depends mainly on the quality of the Canadian mind and spirit. This quality is determined by what Canadians think, and think about; by the books they read, the pictures they see and the programmes they hear. These things, whether we call them arts and letters or use other words to describe them, we believe to lie at the roots of our life as a nation. (Royal Commission on national Development in the Arts, Letters and Sciences (1949-1951), 1951: p.271) <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/massey/h5-439-e.html#bibcopyright> online National Library of Canada accessed January 25, 2007

The immediacy of the fear of the proliferation of American mass culture was fuelled by the fact that Canada lacked a history of arts patronage from the economic elite to stoke the engine of creativity and the market for art and high culture. To ameliorate the position of artists and Canadian culture vis-à-vis the southern neighbour's influence, the state was called upon by the cultural power brokers to intervene and provide the necessary infrastructure and financial support to generate distinctly Canadian cultural products while building an independent Canadian nation. It is important to note that this discourse was established in the 1930s when the Aird Commission on public broadcasting deliberated on whether there should be a publicly owned Canadian broadcast company.

The commissioners were not only concerned with American cultural presence in Canada; they were equally concerned with Canada's cultural presence abroad. They called upon the state to participate in the engineering of a coherent articulation of Canadian-ness that could be exported. To meet that need, the commissioners recommended that the Canada Council would act as a "clearinghouse" of products that could be distinctly catalogued and labeled Canadian.

The Massey Report stresses the need for a centralized, state-supported agency that would oversee and manage Canadian presence on the international scene. The report states:

We do not possess in Canada a clearing-house or a centre of information on the arts, letters, humanities and social sciences. Inquiries from abroad often come to the Department of External Affairs which, unable to supply full and accurate information on all aspects of Canadian culture, refers the inquiries to one or another of the voluntary organizations, (The Canadian Music Council, the Social Sciences research Council, the Dominion Drama Festival, the Canadian Arts Council). Most of these organizations operate on a very modest scale, and it is not generally appreciated that they find the burden of gathering the information and of answering inquiries, whether from abroad or from within the country, far heavier than their restricted resources can endure. We are informed, for example, that the Canada Foundation corresponded during 1949 with organizations and individuals in forty-two countries, and that its time is almost fully occupied in dealing with inquiries from Canada and from abroad. Very few of our voluntary organizations are affluent enough to employ a full-time secretary; but, as they reasonably point out, they are constantly invited to assume, particularly in the interest of Canada's cultural relations abroad, the role of an information centre which many of them feel is a national responsibility. Massey Report, 1951: item 4c, 72).

<http://www.collectionscanada.ca/massey/h5-452-e.html>

The commissioners prescribed the creation of and a role for the Canada Council. The Canada Council was called upon to possess expert knowledge of Canadian culture and participate in the dissemination of the nation's cultural products on the national and international stage. Their concern was with holding the state responsible for developing public policy that would (a) aid in differentiating the culture of Canada from those of other nation states, and (b) create the conditions in which Canadian high culture would be produced and consumed, and (c) enable the 'spiritual foundations' of the Canadian citizenry to flourish. This concern with the management (creation and enabling) of culture drew on both the anthropological and aesthetic registers of culture for resonance and legitimacy although the aesthetic was prioritized. The commissioners sought to throw off the yoke of colonial domination while engaging in a love affair with the

cultures of their colonial pasts. The goal then was to create a Canadian culture or ‘way of life’ that was distinctly different from those of other nations yet the ‘art’ forms of western Europe were espoused as the benchmarks of valuable cultural expression. These forms represented a nation’s arrival at the pinnacle of cultural evolution and moral development.

Culture, Race and the Massey Report

The Massey Commission presented its written report and recommendations to the Prime Minister in 1951 during the height of the Korean War. The commissioners employed the rhetoric of the ‘defence of Canadian culture’, which meant a Canadian culture that represented Anglo and Francophone Canadians, as one of the justifications of the formation of a federal arts funding body. Quoting from the Massey Report, Walter Whittaker states that the commissioners wrote:

If we as a nation are concerned with the problem of defence, what, we may ask ourselves, are we defending? We are defending civilization, our share of it, our contribution to it. The things with which our enquiry deals are the elements which give civilization its character and its meaning. It would be paradoxical to defend something which we are unwilling to strengthen and enrich, and even allow to decline. (Whittaker, 1965: 107)

The commissioners not only championed the defence and enrichment of Canadian culture through the activities of the state, it anchored the notion of progress and civilization on the concepts of ‘national’ culture and sovereignty.

Enlightenment notions as to *who* are the subjects of progress informed the types of representational national culture espoused by the commissioners in the Massey Report. The term ‘race’ is used to denote who the subjects are and it appears in the report under subheadings such as, ‘the conduct of the inquiry’; ‘the mandate’; ‘general and specific

contributions to Canadian life'; 'radio broadcasting'; and 'Indian Art' to denote individuals and groups of French and English origins, as well as their First Nations other. Other European ethnicities are placed within the category of 'ethnic'. In other words, Canadians of British and French descent were at once raced and erased of ethnic affiliations. The Massey Report touts the two 'founding races' of Canada as the producers of culture and hence the defenders of civility and civilization. In contrast, Aboriginal and non-European cultural producers are deliberately removed from the palette that symbolizes the nation.²² Culture in the Canadian context would reflect the achievements of Canada's French and English populations. However, the term was not and is not without contestation. Eve Haque (2005) points out in her study on language, multiculturalism, biculturalism and racialization in Canada that the notion of the two founding races was highly disputed by Aboriginals and a range of other non- Anglophone and Francophone ethnic groups during the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism hearings of the 1960s.

The Massey Report makes explicit the hierarchies and worth ascribed to the cultural expressions and products of various racial/ethnic groups in Canada in the 1950s by privileging art forms based in European traditions. The commissioners' discussions on 'Indian Art' and the cultural contributions of groups from other European ethnicities illustrate the racist thinking behind how First Nations cultures were viewed by the commissioners. The Massey Report states:

Indians should not be encouraged to prolong the existence of arts which at best must be artificial and worst are degenerate. It is argued that Indian arts emerged naturally from that combination of religious practices and economic and social customs which constituted the culture of the tribe and the region. The impact of the white man with his

²² Richard Day (2002) discusses the emergence of concept of the two founding races in light of British and French colonization of Canada and the systems these two colonial entities used to differentiate themselves from each other as well as from their other, the First Nations peoples of the new territory.

more advanced civilization and his infinitely superior techniques resulted in the gradual destruction of the Indian way of life. The Indian arts thus survive only as ghosts or shadows of a dead society. They can never, it is said, regain real form or substance. Indians with creative talent should therefore develop it as other Canadians do, and should receive every encouragement for this purpose; but Indian art as such cannot be revived. (Massey Report, 1957: item 4, 240)

The obliteration of Aboriginal art from the legitimate categories of Canadian art permitted the Massey Commissioners to imagine and produce referents that gestured back to European conventions and logics unhampered by the ghosts of First Nations others. What this obliteration also suggests is that modern culture and contemporary art are shaped by values and practices that transcend difference. It also allowed for the establishment of European culture and art as dominant in the order of cultural things. In the minds of the commissioners, First Nations cultural production was unimaginable as a possibility because settlement practices had eradicated the conditions necessary for the production of this nativist form of art. The tropes of the advanced and the pre-modern allowed the commissioners and Europeans to presume a form of innocence based in and on violence and a racist ideology of cultural development.

In his discussion of the raciological thinking behind European aesthetics, Paul Gilroy (1993) argues that blacks and First Nations subjects are spuriously positioned in relation to the realm of art making. Gilroy argues that Europeans have imagined and constructed blacks as infantile, unable to move from the stage of object fetishism to abstraction while First Nations peoples are disappeared from the modern era and encoded into a time before history. This positioning denies other subjects their creativity hence their humanity and allows white European subjectivities to take centre stage in the stories, images, and imaginings of the modern world. He writes:

The capacity to make art was identified as a sign of progress of non-Europeans out of their prehistoric state and into both history and culture. Writing before scientific racism gained its intellectual grip, Hegel identified the major difference between blacks and whites as a cultural and perpetual one. He denied blacks the ability to appreciate the necessary mystery involved in the creation of truly symbolic art and placed them outside the realm of authentic aesthetic sensibility. Unlike the American Indians whom he saw as effectively destroyed by the exposure to the culture of the West, he endowed blacks with the potential to progress into culture even if they were often viewed as a childlike group that could perceive higher values but was incapable of objectifying them as artistic abstraction. (Gilroy, 1993:77)

The removal of contemporary Aboriginal art from the palette enabled the elites of the Canadian nation to imagine the nation and themselves as free from the encumbrances and entanglements of settler history and its violence towards First Nations peoples.

Elsewhere in the Report, the commissioners discuss the briefings received by groups who were “proud to be able to trace their origins back to various countries in continental Europe” (Massey Report, 1957: item 20, 72). The report goes on to state that the commissioners “were impressed by what they were doing to enrich our national heritage by preserving their distinctive and vigorous cultural activities. We were particularly struck by the contribution of these groups to Canadian music and to Canadian ballet” (Massey Report, 1957 item 20, 270). Up until 1947, Canadian immigration policy favoured immigrants from European countries while discouraging and placing barriers to other potential immigrants including blacks.²³ By the 1960s, non-Europeans were recruited in greater numbers to Canada to meet labour market requirements. The shade of Canada began to undergo transformations that would eventually shape later conversations on citizenship and participation. The Massey Report and its recommendations on “Indian Art” served as one mechanism in an array of mechanisms that excised contemporary

²³ See Richard Day’s, *Multiculturalism and the History of Canadian Diversity* (2002) for discussions on the history of Canadian immigration and diversity.

First Nations peoples from the images that represented the nation and simultaneously allayed the fears of the dominant white elite regarding the contamination of their imaginations of the Canadian collective self.

It is often said that one of the Massey Commission's most significant acts was its recommendation that the Canada Council for the Arts be formed. This sentiment is echoed by Litt who states:

It was for its recommendation for the creation of the Canada Council that the Massey Commission would be best remembered. Indeed, the commissioners themselves regarded this as the single most important proposal to come out of their work. There were good reasons for this sentiment. In such areas as broadcasting, university education, or federal cultural agencies, the commission was wrestling with established institutions and policies; it found itself involved in constitutional controversy, sordid squabbles with private interests, or tedious administrative questions that would continue to rankle on long after it finished its work. The arts, on the other hand, were a field that they had almost entirely to themselves. Here was the chance to create something new, something unsullied by the claims of rival factions or established interests, something that could significantly change the Canadian cultural scene. (Litt, 1992: 184)

Ioan Davies suggested that the importance of the Massey Report lies not merely in its recommendation to create a new institution to administer culture, but because it was “the first time that a public document was issued inviting the Canadian public and its legislators not only to theorize about culture, but to involve theory in the process” (Davies, 1995: 6). The Massey Report did engender public theorizing of culture *after* the cross-country consultations – as the discussion above illustrates. Perhaps more to the point, the Massey Report symbolizes the cultural elite's ability to turn into practice the philosophy of liberal humanism with its universalizing tendencies by employing the arts, letters, humanities, and social sciences as agents to transform and drive new conceptions of citizenship, society and the nation.

The Massey Commission and Report served to set the terms by which the social and economic values of art and culture came to be understood. The investigative phase of the Massey Commission in which a number of cultural elites were selected to steer the process of community hearings allowed for discourses on whose culture and what forms of art would be sanctioned for support from the State. As Ashforth (1990) asserts in his description of an inquiry, the Massey Report and its recommendation to form the Canada Council for the Arts became the foundational document out of which Canadian arts policy formation, the administration of arts funding, arts professionals and arts expertise would develop.

Bernard Ostry (1978) writes that the Commission's report ignited debate about the role of the federal government in stimulating cultural production and growth amongst the cultural elite in Québec. He describes the debate as dividing Quebecers into two factions in relation to the issue of federal cultural funding. He writes:

The Massey-Lévesque Report, as it came to be known in Québec, divided the province's intellectuals into two main camps. The first group maintained that the soundest way to protect the cultural development of Québec was to let the *federal* government defend Canadian culture from the influences pouring in from the United States. The second group felt that *Québec* must develop its own cultural institutions, parallel to those being established by Ottawa, and that the province should exercise exclusive jurisdiction in this field to avoid becoming a tributary of the central source. (Ostry, 1978:81)

Nonetheless, the commissioners managed to engineer the creation of the Canada Council for the Arts in a Canadian cultural and political ecology that was circumscribed by the practice of biculturalism which gave precedence to the cultural traditions of English and French Canadians.

The Massey Commission hearings were themselves part of the practice and performance of governance. The hearings enacted deliberative participatory democracy by providing spaces in which a range of publics could engage in the field of the performance of politics. A more adequate understanding of the commission's strategy for gaining approval from Canadians might be gained by engaging with the concept of hegemony in relation to the Massey Commission's activities.



"... the Canada Council and the CRTC are there to make us cultured Canadians,
and we've always gone along with it..."

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February 9, 1997, Vancouver Sun

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Managing the Arts: The Birth of the Canada Council for the Arts

Prime Minister St. Laurent made public the government's intention to form the Canada Council for the Arts in his Throne Speech on January 8, 1957 (Ostry, 1978: 69) and a bill was

debated in Parliament some three months later. The debate on the bill highlighted anxieties and competing notions regarding the role of culture in society among politicians. Ostry writes:

Deeper anxieties were expressed by members like Solon Low, the Social Credit leader, who saw cultural concerns as “frills-and that is what this is – a frill...” These anxieties were based on the Puritan view that the arts were merely to be enjoyed and that enjoyment was somehow wicked – or at least something to be put off to the end of the day of hard work. And perhaps on the amoral behaviour of many artists. Even among those who supported the bill there was a feeling that only those whose works of art which carried moral uplift were to be cherished. Most discussion centred on the need to support universities. (Ostry, 1978: 71)

On April 15, 1957, Order in Council P.C. 1957-51 appointed the Honourable Brooke Claxton of Ottawa and the Very Reverend Georges Henri Lévesque, of Québec as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Canada Council for five year terms along with nineteen other members from across the country whose tenure varied between two and four years.²⁴ Chairman Claxton had been a Liberal cabinet minister in charge of the national defence portfolio and was instrumental in getting the project of the Massey Commission off the ground. Levesque was a commissioner involved with the Massey Commission. Care was taken by the government to ensure that Canada’s ten provinces were represented on the board of the nascent Canada Council.

Board members of the Canada Council continue to be appointed by the government of the day. The Director and Associate Director of the Council are also appointed by government and are “deemed to be employed in the Public Service” (Canada Council Act, 1957: item 12). The number of board members has been reduced to eleven and the authority of the Governor in Council to appoint the Associate director was done away with, by the introduction of the Bill-

²⁴ The Canada Council First Annual Report, March 31, 1958; Annex A.

C65, an Act to reorganize certain federal agencies. Bill C-65 was introduced in 1995 by the Liberal government under the leadership of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien.

Issues of geographical or regional representation peppered discussions amongst politicians in Ottawa regarding the Canada Council and its ability to represent the nation. This is evident in Whittaker's quote of St. Laurent's response to questions posed to the prime minister in the House of Commons during the debate on the Canada Council Act about the composition of the Canada Council board and the criteria employed to choose the members of the board. The Prime Minister addressed the issue of representation in the following statement:

It will not be possible to have representatives of each branch of the arts or of each branch of the humanities and the social sciences, neither should every racial group be represented because one is of that racial group, nor should any person be excluded from the Council because of his racial origin. (Whittaker, 1965:156)

The Prime Minister's response highlights the fact that the issue of racial representation underlined concerns of nation building and cultural development. The issue of racial representation on the board of the Canada Council is acknowledged but salience was given to individuals "who would give it the greatest possible prestige among those who are especially interested in the activities of the Council" (Whittaker, 1965: 155).

Government Funding of the Canada Council for the Arts

There exists a close relationship between the Canada Council and the government although the Council is set up as an arms-length agency of the federal government. This is played out in Parliament as the Council receives an annual appropriation from the government.

The Council's financial relation to the state illustrates its financial reliance on the state and its governments. This puts the Council in a precarious position as it is subject to the ideologies and strategies of politics.

The initial funding for the Canada Council came from the government's decision to create an Endowment Fund of \$100 million derived from the death duties of two Nova Scotian industrialists – Sir James Dunn and Izaak Walton Killam. In the beginning, the Council's activities were funded by the endowment fund but by “1965 the federal government increasingly provided subventions; by 1969, it had become an automatic vote” (Davies, 1995: 7). The Council receives an annual appropriation from Parliament which is supplemented by its endowment income, donations, and bequests. The Canada Council competes with a number of government cultural agencies – the National Gallery, CBC, National Library and Archives, National Film Board, Museum of Civilization, National Arts Centre - for financial assistance. The Canada Council was given autonomy over how it disbursed and invested its money and was directly responsible to Parliament. The Canada Council Act ensured that the Canada Council reported directly to Parliament and had some degree of financial independence over the manner in which it administered and oversaw its affairs. From time to time, the chairperson and Canada Council staff is requested to appear before Senate committee hearings.

An Investment Committee was appointed to “aid and advise the Council, in making, managing and disposing of investments under this Act” and the finances of the Council are audited by the Auditor General of Canada (Canada Council Act 1957: item 18(2)). From the start

the Council directors has been plagued by insufficient financial resources to do its job. The introduction to the second Canada Council for the Arts Annual Report states:

After two years of service to Canadian Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, the Canada Council is in a position to confirm the truth of the old Latin tag “ars longa, vita brevis”. So much to do, so little time to do it -and to these reflections may be added “not too much money to do it with.” This is not to say that the Endowment Fund’s annual income of approximately \$2,750,000 is a negligible sum. Far from it! But the needs of Canada as expressed through existing organizations and individuals representing the infinite variety of the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences are so great that time, indeed, Will not wither them, nor custom stale, nor will \$2,750,000 per annum wholly gratify them. (Canada Council Annual Report, 1958-1959: 1)

The Council’s Parliamentary allocation has been an item of contention since the early days of the inception of the organization and persists to this day.

A significant change in the Canada Council’s reporting relationship to Parliament also occurred in the 1960s. The direct reporting relationship enjoyed by the Canada Council transformed into one that saw reporting to Parliament via the Minister of Communications. Over the Council’s fifty year history it has reported to Parliament through the Secretary of State and the Minister of Canadian Heritage (Robertson, 2006: 114-119). Despite these changes in the chain of accountability to Parliament, the Council is assigned full responsibility, through the Canada Council Act, for its policies, programs, and expenditure of its funds.

Funding to Artists and Arts Organizations

Since the early years of the Canada Council’s existence, two overlapping questions have arisen on a recurrent basis: *what* constitutes art and *who* produces it. Over the years, the Council

has had to paid attention to, and expand its notions of what constitutes art and who produces culture in Canada to accommodate those who have contested the Council's definitions and practices. The Canada Council Act of 1957 defined what counted as art, setting up parameters around the disciplines and genres that would be supported through state subsidies. At the beginning, the Council provided support to established Western European disciplines in the arts: theatre, music, ballet, painting, sculpture, and literature as laid out in the Act.²⁵ Individual artists were funded through programs of Senior Fellowships and Junior Scholarships. Grants were awarded to organizations on a yearly basis and according to the Council's first annual report, funding decisions were made by both Council officers and committees of experts drawn from organizations such as the Canadian Foundation, the Canadian Social Science Research Council and the Humanities Research Council of Canada. Council staff would vet applications to determine eligibility and expert opinions were sought when deemed necessary.

Special emphasis was placed on funding "the two or three leading organizations in the country having world standards to enable them to reach more people and to stimulate improvement in standards of performance and appreciation" (Canada Council Annual Report, 1958-1959: 25). The rationale for the focus on a few leading organizations, located in urban centres, was based on the Council's image of itself as facilitating the development of excellence in an environment of limited financial resources. Key cultural organizations such as the CBC Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, Opera Festival Association of Toronto, Toronto Symphony, National Ballet Guild of Canada, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Stratford Shakespearean Festival, Banff School of Fine Arts, Canadian Film Institute, and the Canadian Art Journal, were prioritized for funding with the hope that the injection of financial resources would enhance the

²⁵ These disciplines are outlined in the Canada Council Act of 1957 as 'expressions' of what constitutes the arts.

quality of the work produced and disseminated by these organizations.²⁶ Whittaker argues that the principle underlying this decision to fund the *best* was based on Council's recognition of itself as a national body whose primary role is to uphold national standards (Whittaker, 1965: 232-233).

The notion of quality or excellence was connected to the professionalization of both artists and organizations served by the Canada Council. The ability of an artist or arts organization to achieve excellence and international notoriety was equated to the ability to engage in artistic endeavours on a full-time basis. Ostry (1978) in his discussion on early Canada Council policies and the question of quality, states:

The policy of the Canada Council announced by its second chairman, Dr. Claude Bissell, had in fact been pursued from the beginning: "We believe that our resources should go to the support of full-time professional artists and organizations that are likely to achieve some degree of national prominence and efforts to create an audience for first class performances. (Ostry, 1978:75)

This emphasis on the full time artist or arts organization served to weed out the categories of artists often referred to as 'Sunday painters' or 'amateur artists,' as well as local community-based arts organizations. Large urban organizations received the bulk of the arts funding and continue to receive the biggest slice of the Canada Council pie. With the concentration of funding accruing to a few large organizations, Council staff and directors saw it necessary to strategize and disseminate cultural products to Canadian audiences outside of the metropolitan areas. The Council's concern with the dissemination of quality artistic works and the acculturation of the Canadian populace is expressed in the following statement about the accessibility of quality theatre productions:

²⁶ A full list of grant recipients for 1957-1958 can be found in Annex J of the Canada Council's first Annual Report.

The Council has for some time been bothered by the lack of good professional theatre in a number of Canadian cities which might have been expected to support a company. Apart from one or two tentative forays there has recently been no well-established professional theatre outside Montreal, Toronto, Stratford, and Winnipeg. Other cities have had to rely largely upon the uncertain glory of touring companies. This would be bad enough in itself, since it is generally considered among civilized people that the theatre (particularly as a commentary upon contemporary society) is as essential to well-being, like wheat and steel. At the moment, however, nobody is making much theatrical hay out in the grasslands. There are, of course, a great many amateur theatres doing excellent work, but this - as any professional actor will explain without any prompting - is not at all the same thing. (Canada Council Annual Report 1961- 62: 9)

The Canada Council's support of national and international touring activities and festivals became two of the ways of promoting the arts and encouraging the enjoyment of the arts in Canada.²⁷ Cultural products were exported to the Canadian populace in the hinterland who otherwise would be exposed to parochial amateur art.

From the outset, the Canada Council's staff liaised with artists and cultural producers in order to legitimate the work of the Council to artists and to the government as well as to better serve the needs of the art communities. During the first six years of its operation, the small staff of five at the Canada Council organized a series of national consultation and networking meetings of Canadian artists and curators. The first of these conferences was called the Kingston Conference.²⁸ Council staff saw this conference as an opportunity to inform themselves about the cultural ecology of the country; enable artists to network; and to use some of the concerns of artists and curators to inform the development of policies and guidelines of the new Canada

²⁷ Extensive details of the touring and festival programs are outlined in Annual Reports of the Canada Council over the years 1957-62.

²⁸ Panel discussions were held to address the following areas in the arts: drama, opera, ballet, music, visual arts and writing. Lists of panellists can be found in Appendix H of the Canada Council's Annual report 157-58.

Council. Consultations with artists and representatives of art organizations aided in the development of the Council's early operational guidelines and principles for conducting the business of providing support to artists and art organizations in the early days. This practice of consultation continues today in the Council's use of advisory committees and juries.

Culture and Representation

The mid 1980s saw a wave of advocacy and lobbying activities that were driven by independent First Nations artists, artists of colour, and cultural workers across the country. Artists of colour and First Nations artist formed coalitions and organized separately to advance their cause. Cultural producers of colour and their First Nations counterparts were demanding that cultural institutions including the Canada Council address and ameliorate inequities within the cultural sphere. Questions were being posed about what it meant to be 'Canadian'; who and what defined artistic merit as well as who was being privileged as creators of Canadian culture (M. Nourbese Philip 1992, Fung and Gagnon 2002, Gagnon and McFarlene 2003). In short, the received notions of Canada's commitment to cultural diversity in the arts that emerged following the Biculturalism and Bilingualism Commission were being subjected to close scrutiny by artists and racialized cultural producers of colour. Racialized artists questioned cultural institutions for the exclusion of their works from those institutions and the positioning/categorizing of the symbolic products produced by those artists as folk art. This categorization contained the art within the paradigm of tradition or a way of life based on notions of origins based outside of the confines of the Canadian nation. The residual effects of Canada Council funding to artists and

arts organizations working within European art traditions were being felt by the burgeoning numbers of First Nations artists and immigrant artists of colour producing contemporary art.

For artists of colour and First Nations artists the tenets of Trudeau's multicultural policies of the 1960s and 70s that espoused citizen participation did not come to fruition. Artists of colour and cultural organizations serving people of colour drew from the well of multicultural funding provided by the Secretary of State, Citizenship and Multicultural Branches and later from the Department of Canadian Heritage for ethno-cultural activities but came to realize that the criteria for funding was limited in the definition of what it meant to be from a specific ethno-cultural community. Tensions around multicultural funding and products were observed by a past Canada Council bureaucrat who stated:

The artists themselves realized that it was not about artistic creation. It was about song and dance. The community said we do not want to get money from Heritage under a different category because we want to be understood as part of the artistic community of this country and we believe that Council should be able to address us as practicing artists and the art forms that we practice. (Interview, July 2006)

By the mid 1970s there was a proliferation of ethno-cultural community based organizations across Canada who had garnered funding from federal multicultural programs to facilitate capacity building and celebrations of their cultures of origins (Leslie Pal 1993). However, the desire of artists of colour was to create cultural products that referenced the contemporary hyphenated nature of Canadian identity and not merely to produce nostalgic narratives about a place of origin. This is a classic example of what Mackay (2002) refers to as the limiting effect of multiculturalism and its policies vis-à-vis resource distribution to ethno-cultural groups. She states, "State recognition of diversity also limits diversity. Trudeau's announcement of the policy defined and limited the specific forms of support for multiculturalisms that the government

would provide” (Mackay, 2002: 65). To extend her argument, multicultural funding also limited and defined the kinds of performances of ethno-cultural specificity that was allowable. I discuss this tension between multiculturalism and art as culture in Chapter 4.

During the decade of the 1970s, the Canada Council began to address questions of representation as they pertained to the working of juries and advisory panels, access to programs by a broader cross-section of artists, regional issues, and marketing. At the same time, demands for access to state funding for the arts through the Canada Council’s programs were made from outside the institution by: artists living in regions outside of central Canada and Quebec, ‘alternative’ galleries, production and distribution centres, women, artists working in new genres, and artists and producers who located their works ‘in between’ or outside of European traditions. New programs that focused on touring, ameliorating regional disparities, and new innovations in art making were developed by the Council. The category of ‘other art forms’ shows up during this period in the Council’s accounts of itself and funding activities, regional juries were implemented, the first artist run organizations were supported, and the Canada Council expanded into the marketing of Canadian art through the Art Bank program. During this period, the video program was established as part of the Visual Arts section and multidisciplinary work and Performance Art were funded by the Council.

Despite the recognition of disparities in funding to its clientele, the Canada Council’s tradition of providing large operating funds to big, urban-based organizations that were considered bastions of European artistic traditions, persisted in to the 1970s and continues today. For example, the Canada Council’s Annual report of 1971-72 lists organizations such as the

Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal Symphony Orchestras, Canadian Opera Company, National Ballet Guild, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, National Theatre School, Montreal, Stratford Shakespearean Festival, Art Gallery of Ontario, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts - as receiving operating grants ranging between \$500,000 and \$210,000 while smaller organizations received smaller grants of \$1500 to \$500.

In the wake of the calls for access to Canada Council funding from new, smaller, experimental art venues across the country, the Visual Arts Section of the Canada Council opened up its assistance program to new organizations and art collectives in the 1970s. These new organizations or artist-run centres critiqued the traditional museum and art gallery systems for “their particular administrative allegiances and self-interpretations of inherited mandates and resource allocation” (Robertson, 2006:7). The forms of organizational cultures that existed within the traditional museum and art gallery sphere resulted in exclusionary practices which shut out new forms and genres of contemporary art. Organizations such as A Space Gallery, Open Studio Print Workshop, Toronto; Niagara Artists’ Cooperative, St. Catherines; Canadian Artists Representation, London; Artspace, Peterborough; Independent Filmmakers’ Cooperative, Montreal; Intermedia, Vancouver; and Western Front, Vancouver became members of the Canada Council’s clientele and the legitimate ecology of Canadian art. Artist-run centres saw themselves as autonomous of, and an alternative to, the closed institutionalized gallery system. They were collective laboratories in which artists imagined and created art and organizational systems that countered what was valued in “mainstream” cultural activities. According to Robertson (2006: 17): “From the beginning, artist-run centres, in varying degrees and ways, saw themselves as sites of radical possibility, as sites of resistance – even if such resistance was

limited to critiques of existing categories of art and arts funding or debate over which types of institution could be run more effectively by artist.”

In 1973 a significant shift in what was seen to constitute art and where it was produced took place at the Canada Council. A regional office was set up in the Atlantic region as part of a pilot project to ensure that all regions of Canada had equal access to Canada Council funds. This was also the year that the Canadian Horizons program was reinvented, renamed Explorations, and allocated a budget of \$1 million.²⁹ The Explorations program was designed “to include grants for new forms of expression, communication, and public participation in the arts, humanities and social sciences” (Canada Council Annual Report 1972-1973: 63). The program served new categories of art such as community-based productions that did not fit into the Council’s disciplinary silos. It was also meant to open up definitions of the category of the artist and reach out to artists from other conventions and cultures, hence fostering diversity in the types of works supported by the Council. According to the Council’s Annual Report:

Explorations was created because the Council wished to reach anyone, professional or not, with a good idea and the ability to see it through. As defined in our brochure, the program applies to any or all of the arts, humanities and social sciences, and to the discovery of new forms of expression and public participation or of new insights into the Canadian cultural and historical heritage. Far from limiting itself to specific kinds of projects, it actively seeks out applications that are off the well marked paths, and excludes only those projects that are eligible for support under other Council programs. On the assumption that good

²⁹ The Canadian Horizons program was “inaugurated by the Council in 1971 to create a heightened awareness of Canada’s cultural diversity and heritage in the humanities and social sciences” (Canada Council 17th Annual Report, p.82).

The Explorations Program was established in 1973 by the Canada Council as an extension of its Canadian Horizons program. Under the Explorations Program, the Council awards grants to individuals, groups and organizations for innovative projects which seek to address new needs or investigate new directions within or outside existing art forms. This program funded film and theatre script development, craft workshops, biographies, new performing arts projects, exhibitions, popular writing, film, video, and audio experiments, and community-based cultural animation projects. The grants cover travel and other direct costs of a project and frequently provide a subsistence allowance.

creative work may come from anyone, anywhere, it accepts applications from any person or group, subject to the provision that non- Canadian applicants must have landed immigrant status and three years' [sic] residence in Canada. (Canada Council Annual Report, 1974-1975: 9)

The Explorations Program was set up in response to changing conceptions and realities as to who and what the Canada Council represented. The program was created to serve the new: new genres, new forms, and new immigrants. The Explorations Program attended to “new needs and directions in the arts, studies of things past which hold special meaning for the cultural development of Canada” (Canada Council 24th Annual Report, 1980-81: 16). The Council’s Exploration Program brochure outlines the mandate of the program, stating:

Through the Exploration Program, the Canada Council acknowledges that to ensure continued growth and development in the arts it is essential to assist new artists and to encourage fresh ideas. Thus, Explorations both encourages artists in the early stages of their practice and new forms of artistic expression by offering project grants toward the creation and presentation of new works drawn from any cultural context. Equally, it encourages initiatives that challenge creative possibilities within or across any arts discipline. As a regionally-structured program, it assists in the development of artists within their respective communities. (The Explorations Program brochure 1995:2)

The concern with fostering regional representation and culture is an acknowledgement of a Canada as a pluralist entity that is constituted of multiple cultural centres that produce a range of cultural expressions. One question that can be posed about the notion of the ‘new’ at the Council is: how *new* were these supposed new forms, practices, and insights into Canadian cultural heritage? The term ‘new’ operates to denote a boundary without the politics the boundary assumes, particularly the politics of distribution, since this interest in the ‘new’ did not affect how the ‘old’ continued to be funded. The Canada Council now supported cultural production – disciplines, genres and contents - that represented those outside of the status quo. The

Explorations program ran until 1998, when the budget for the program was cut in the process of bureaucratic rationalization whereby categories of eligible projects previously funded by the program were absorbed by the respective disciplinary sections at the Council.

The Explorations Program was described by an ex-head of that section as an “exploratory tool within the Council as well as outside of it. The program provided the space in which new things could be accommodated without involving new Council structures” (Interview with Explorations Program head: 2006). Explorations dealt with artists’ work from a multidisciplinary perspective and required regional multidisciplinary juries to assess applications. Multidisciplinary juries allowed two complimentary perspectives to emerge in jury settings: that of the expert from a specific discipline and the other, from the perspective of potential audiences (those jury members from other disciplines). A past Canada Council director characterized the program as “somewhat radical” in its approach to whom and what products deserved arts funding. It was a more open and flexible approach to cultural production that took into consideration the influence of geography and communities of affiliation in its deliberation on the material conditions out of which cultural products are produced. “The open nature of the Explorations program has made it especially sensitive and outgoing in its dealings with applicants. In the competitions, rules are kept to a minimum, and are intended only to give an equal chance to everyone who applies” (Canada Council 18th Annual Report, 1974-75:9). This more open approach to artists, practices, and genres that up until now were considered outside of the nation enabled the Explorations staff to proactively bring new constituents into the Canada Council system. The past director states:

Explorations had the capacity to deal directly with artists. They went out and sought Inuit artists, West Coast artists, East Coast artists etc

who might not have come to Council and it looked to create opportunities for artists from underserved communities -geographically and culturally- and addressed the needs of those artists. Explorations was doing a very good job at it, and all of the Explorations officers were in the loop in terms of what the needs were as they were serving these communities through an alternative channel and not through the traditional professional arts requirement. That's one of the things that was an issue, how to define a professional artist. Explorations was not bound by the same requirements as the Arts Sections were. (Interview with ex-Canada Council director, July 2006)

According to an ex-Explorations program officer, the program provided regional artists, artists of colour and First Nations artists whose works were not easily understood within the established disciplinary sections at the Council access to state funding. The officer went on to explain that Explorations was set up to function as a receptacle for identity based works as well as new and emerging art forms and practices. The ex-officer explains,

Explorations was the place where many things not just issues of race ended up. Interdisciplinary work, collaborative work, community-based works all the kinds of practices and works by people of other cultures of the world besides European, wound up in Explorations. Explorations naturally became the spokes-section for people of colour (Interview with ex-Explorations Officer, April 2006).

This perspective was corroborated by many of the black artists interviewed for this study, regardless of their artistic disciplines. They recalled 'getting their start' and 'recognition' in the art world because of the support they received from the Explorations program. It is not surprising that the Explorations program took up issues of race, as its precursor, the Canadian Horizons, also supported work that dealt with cultural diversity and heritage. Although the Explorations programs was set up to ameliorate some of the disparities with regard to Canada Council funding to its clients, the Council did not address the question of opening up the disciplinary frameworks

upon which the Canada Council's disciplinary sections hinged their sense of collective self. The disciplines remained committed to European conceptions of art and disciplinary boundaries.

By 1977, serious questions were being asked by racialized artists and cultural producers outside of Council, as well as by officers and section heads inside the Council itself about the reach of the Council's programs. These questions addressed the workings of juries and advisory panels, the notion of excellence, and marketing.³⁰ Women artists contested their exclusion from juries and the small portion of grants they received. The composition of juries was a bone of contention. The calls were for gender and regional equality. Artistic excellence, one of the bedrocks of Canada Council criteria for funding, although viewed as problematic by artists wanting to gain access to Council resources, was deemed by the Council as congruent with its ideas and practices of cultural democratization and decentralization. However, this was not the sentiment of the Canada Council's experts who made up the Advisory Arts Panel. They advocated for an expanded notion of excellence, one that took into consideration regional concerns, the conditions under which artists produce work, and the cultural milieu in which, and for whom, it is produced.

In the spirited discussions of this question among Council members, advisory committees and staff, perhaps two statements from the arts panel stand out as illustrative of at least some of the current thinking: "It is *not* a good idea to define excellence; the Canada Council should add to its perception of excellence a recognition of regional concerns, with the flexibility this implies." And again: "The word 'excellence' is itself a barrier." (Twenty plus five: The Canada Council, 1977: 8)

³⁰ In a discussion paper put by the Canada Council's Advisory Art Panel in November of 1977 entitled, *Twenty plus five*, the Council outlines three areas for development – policies, programs and structures.

The two remarks regarding the notion of excellence and its operationalization in the context of the Council's work were inflections of a growing dissatisfaction amongst artists and arts organizations regarding the continued elitist nature of Canada Council activities and the resulting exclusions. In their report entitled *The Future of the Canada Council*, the Advisory Arts Panel stated that they preferred "the term standards of quality as indicating that excellence is more to be found with an open and sensitive mind than to be applied from a single preconceived idea" (The Future of the Canada Council: A Report to the Canada Council from the Advisory Arts Panel, 1978: 19).

The Advisory Arts Panel's response highlighted the areas of diversity, equality, and the role of the Canadian government in supporting the development of diversity in Canadian culture. Again, the threat of American culture was offered up by the authors as one rationale for government support to assist in the production of cultural products that would otherwise be unvalued in the marketplace. The challenges of Canada's demography and its distribution were offered as additional reasons for government support. Referring to the state of Canadian culture and the Canadian artist they state:

However, the pressures and influences from its neighbour, the AMERICAN GIANT make it more vulnerable than others. Moreover, it faces specific problems, such as the dispersal of a small group of individuals (21 million) over the second largest NATIONAL SURFACE AREA in the world and the diversity of ethnic and linguistic groups. (The Future of the Canada Council: A Report to the Canada Council from the Advisory Arts Panel, 1978: x)

The messiness of Canadian culture is acknowledged and geography is pinpointed as working against the possibilities of the nation, hence the state is called upon to intervene in the problem that this diverse and dispersed population posed. With concerns for regional issues and diversity

on the table, it was not ‘business as usual’ at the Canada Council; an impending crisis was in the offing.

The primacy of the established bi-cultural framework in which grants were distributed was problematized by the Arts Advisory panel which referred to it as “a crisis in Confederation.”³¹

This crisis should not be identified only with the Quebec situation. Quebec is an example of a region that has begun to recognize its needs. If people in Quebec are searching for their political identity, it is because they clearly already have an authentic cultural identity. Many other parts of Canada are going through a similar identification of their cultural nature, which will inevitably lead to political change. (The Future of the Canada Council, 1978: 17)

Regionalism as a particular form of expression of Canadian diversity must be set against Quebec’s clear assertion of its cultural and political autonomy and specificity. The imagined cohesiveness of the nation was perceived to be under threat. The idea of a solitary and unified Canada with its unique bi-culture was called into question inside and outside of the Canada Council. In an attempt to foster artistic activities that refocused on a unified and confederated Canada, the government made “the most flagrantly political overture yet made to Council ... the offer of \$1,715,000 in 1977-78, with a larger sum for 1978-79, to be used in programs that contributed to national unity” (The Future of the Canada Council, 1978: 14). The Quebec crisis of the 1970s set the stage for demands on the Canada Council based on regional specificity. In a sense, identity politics made itself visible at the Canada Council through the Council’s vexed relationship with the regions, women, and through the mandate of the Explorations Program that specifically dealt with issues of ethnicity and ‘minority culture’.

³¹ See section entitled “Issues and Conditions Facing the Council” in *The Future of the Canada Council*, pp.17-18.

Diversity Years 1980s – 1990s

The 1980s was an era of fiscal constraint at the Canada Council due to government cuts in spending. The era saw increased representation of women, First Nations, and visible minority artists at the Canada Council, and the introduction of new programs such as the creation of the Media Arts Section and Inter-Arts Office. As mentioned earlier, the Media Arts program was initially housed under the Visual Arts Section and as a discrete section it now included an integrated media program. The Inter-Arts Office's mandate was to deal with interdisciplinary and hybrid works.

In the early 1980s, a significant transformation of the Council's practices occurred. Women were included on juries and this resulted in an increase in the number of grants received by women. Feminism posed a real challenge to sexist practices in society at large and made strong gains at the Canada Council and in the wider cultural arena. The Council was jolted into facilitating access to an 'other' stakeholder in the production of Canadian culture - women.

In the 70s the Canada Council grants were going to men on a disproportionate basis and disproportionate scale. There was a lot of lobbying done by women's groups to put women on juries. Just as we consider geographic representation, you have to consider gender representation. We started doing that, despite the outcry and people saying "why do they have to be on juries, we know what excellence is, juries are gender blind." After women started sitting on juries grants to women artists increased. (Interview with ex-Canada Council Director, July 2006)

In an interview with Richard Fung on issues pertaining to cultural institutions and racial equity, Monika Gagnon (2002) comments on the activism by women that led to the reshaping of the Council's processes and how gender equity has been normalized at the Council today. She states:

It is also interesting to recall that it was only in the early 1980s that Sasha McInnes-Hayman, Jane Martin and Martin Dagg released various reports and studies which in part noted how women visual artists were grossly under-represented at the Canada Council, both as jury members and grant recipients. These imbalances are almost unthinkable today. And it's not even that this process of equitable gender representation is laboured or forced anymore. (Gagnon and Fung, 2002: 64)

The trope of the male artist as public cultural producer and women as private sphere reproducers was disputed and altered through advocacy work taken on by several women's groups. The strategies of these feminist groups were later taken on, critiqued, and adapted to assist in struggles over racial equity. I will return to this issue later on in my discussion of black activism in Chapter 4.

The Canada Council's language regarding Canada's diverse population and their needs changes in tone in the Council's report entitled, *The Canada Council in the 1980s: The Applebaum-Hebert Report and Beyond* (1982). *Diversity* here referred to the distinctness of cultural and geographical Canada's regions but also to ethnicities and races other than English and French. The authors stress the need for the 'accommodation' of French and English cultural expression while 'taking into account' the other satellite cultures that exists around them. The main concern was with the representation of Francophone cultures outside of Quebec. The act of 'taking into account' suggests a passive relationship to those 'other' cultures. They state:

It is however, our firm belief that a single, uniform culture is neither possible nor desirable in Canada and that, accordingly, federal arts funding must recognize and respect the diversity of the Canadian

population. Where French- and English-speaking Canadians have distinctive forms of expressions, institutions, or needs, these must be accommodated in policies and programs. Other forms of cultural diversity must be recognized, understood, and taken into account. (*The Canada Council in the 1980s: Applebaum-Hebert Report, 1982: 5*)

The quote above draws attention to the hierarchical foundation of biculturalism in which Francophone and Anglophone cultures assume dominance over ‘other’ cultures. The Council’s position on diversity was clearly steered by the institution’s relationship to government. The Council’s distant relationship to multiculturalism would change in the late 1980s to one that saw the Council directly negotiating with ‘multiculturalism and its discontents’. In 1988, the Council reported in its *Annual Report* that:

As part of the planning process, we have begun examining a number of issues of immediate concern. We are initiating internal and external consultations on multiculturalism and on interdisciplinary and collaborative artistic activity – in both cases with the aim of determining how the Council can best serve the current needs of the community. (*The Canada Council 32nd Annual Report, 1988-1989: 11*)

Respondents in the study reported that The Council embarked upon its racial equity commitment in 1989 because of internal work at the institution and because of advocacy activities carried out by First Nations artists and artists of colour. On the ground, racialized artists raised objections and protested against practices of appropriation and exclusion taking place within cultural institutions. For example in Ontario, members of various black communities and their allies spoke out against the Royal Ontario Museum, and the Art Gallery of Ontario. The Women’s Press was also called upon to respond to charges of exclusion of the voices of women of colour writers. In British Columbia, artists confronted the Vancouver Art Gallery for its exclusionary practices and in Alberta, The Spirit Sings exhibition at the Glenbow Museum was called into question by First Nations chiefs and artists.

Conversations taking place in marginalized communities entered into the Council through various channels including alternative community publications. An ex-director stated, “I wasn’t unaware of the issues around diversity because I read FUSE magazine³² that dealt with these issues from the perspective of communities who did not feel that the Canada Council was serving them well” (Interview, July 2006). Equity became one of Council’s priorities in the late 80s and a commitment was made to serve First Nations artists and artists from all visible minority communities because of “discussions within the Council of a need for its policies, programs and practices to comply with two federal laws” – the Employment Equity Act (1986) and the Multiculturalism Act (1989) (Robertson, 2006:53).

In April 1989, Council director Joyce Zemans focused attention on issues of racial equity and diversity, even though the Council was plagued by years of underfunding from the federal government. An internal multiculturalism committee was formed to focus the issues and engage in long-term strategic development. The committee recommended a number of strategies to facilitate the inclusion of visible minority and First Nations artists into the milieu and culture of the Council. The recommendations covered the following areas: human resource policy development in keeping with the Employment Equity Act, staff sensitization, eligibility and assessment criteria, representation of artists of colour and First nations artists on juries, training of artists of colour and First Nations artists, and communications - a review of the ways in which

³² Formerly known as Centrefold, FUSE was founded over thirty years ago at the same time as the national artist-run centre movement. FUSE is one of Canada’s art and culture periodicals with a history of engagement with political and cultural issues and has evolved to include the perspectives from diverse and racialized communities.

the Council makes itself present to different communities.³³ Reflecting on the Council's commitment to racial equity, Zemans writes:

Within the context of its ongoing long-range planning exercise begun two years ago, the Canada Council identified cultural diversity as one of the principal challenges facing it in the 1990s. Recognizing that Canada's artists come from an increasing diversity of cultural and racial backgrounds and work within a broad range of art forms, the Council wished to ensure that its policies, programs and practices were appropriately responsive to the reality of contemporary artistic practice in Canada. (*Recommendations of the Advisory Committee to the Canada Council for Racial Equality in the Arts*, 1992: foreword)

A Racial Equity consultant was hired in 1990 to start the process of institutional change by assisting "the Council in developing policies and strategies relating to cultural diversity and aboriginal art" (Robertson, 2006: 53).

The Racial Equity Committee, made up of racialized artists and a First Nations artist, was struck in 1990 to assist the consultant in the task of policy development. A separate First Peoples Advisory Committee was also created at the same time as the issues being dealt with by these two constituents of artists, although similar in many ways, diverged because of historical differences in the groups' relationship to the Canadian nation-state. The first Racial Equity Officer was appointed in December 1991, the following year an Aboriginal Coordinator was hired. The Council began the development of outreach activities to artists of colour and First Nations artists in the late 80s and in 1991-1992, the Council established an internship program for First Nations and visible minority artists. The program served artists of Aboriginal, African and Asian backgrounds, as well as artists from other minority cultures. Interns were hired "to work with the Council and the artistic community in the development of communication, recruitment, and outreach strategies and to participate in the regular work of Council" (*Canada Council 35th Annual Report, 1991-1992*: 16).

³³ *Report on Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council* (1991) authored by Chris Creighton-Kelly

Throughout the 1990s new programs geared toward First Nations artists in Theatre, Music, Visual Arts, Media Arts, Writing and Publishing, Dance and Aboriginal cultural exchange programs were created. Programs catering to culturally diverse artists and arts organizations, such as the Quest program for new and emerging culturally diverse artists and the Visual Arts sections' assistance to culturally diverse curators, were developed. The programs were designed to address racial equity at the Council and took place both within a climate of major cutbacks of federal funding to federal institutions and the threat of an amalgamation with the Social Science and Humanities Research Council by virtue of the introduction of Bill C93 around this time.

In 1992, Bill C93 was introduced to Parliament “to amalgamate or eliminate 46 agencies and/or commissions” in an attempt to rationalize government bureaucracies (Robertson 2006:118). The Bill was defeated, but the Council proceeded with its cost cutting agenda because the Treasury Board requested that the Council reduce its administrative costs by \$2 million over three years (*Canada Council 37th Annual Report 1993-1994*: 10). Programs and staff were eliminated as employee and community dissent grew. Several Council staff resigned or opted for early retirement packages, signalling their opposition to a top down, government directed style of governance at the Council. The Council reported, “as a result of voluntary measures, a total of twenty-six positions out of a total of 260 regular and temporary employees were cut” (ibid: 12). The style of governance was in direct contrast to the culture of most of the Council to date. Many of the staff members were themselves artists who believed in the principles of arms length funding and democratic governance practices. Clive Robertson (2006) discusses the Council's

attempts to apply rationalized approaches to management and its emphasis on efficiencies in the following manner:

The failed merger did not prevent the Canada Council's management from proceeding with a "technocratic vision" of the Council that included (according to then members of senior management): all juries meeting once a year, officers as clerks, top-heavy program evaluation by bureaucrats, less officer travel and barring officers from attending Council board meetings, less money spent on advisory committees, and grant programs identical across disciplines. As a result of these impositions the Head of Visual Arts Section, the Head of Media Arts Section, the Treasurer, and the Head of Arts Division resigned. (Robertson, 2006: 112)

Although reflecting the mood of the moment, Robertson's statement does not account for different management styles of government that directly and indirectly affected the Canada Council's administrative practices, such as who is appointed to the post of director and to the board.

The Council articulated its plan for long-term streamlining in its strategic plan published in 1995 entitled, *The Canada Council: Design for the Future*. In this document, the Council reiterated its commitment to cultural diversity. The plan identified five priority areas - investment in the arts; leadership, advocacy and appreciation of the arts; partnerships and other forms of support; equity, access and new practices; improving program delivery - and action plans for meeting the goals. Within the objectives set out under the priority of 'equity, access, and new practices' the Council undertook to address issues pertaining to regionalism, First Nations peoples, culturally diverse communities, interdisciplinary art, and new technologies. This is also a time when reform and restructuring came to the forefront in the government and public sectors more generally. Budget cuts and the introduction of more market-like practices to government and the public sector were the order of the day.

Representation and jury composition were addressed under two of the priority areas - equity, access and new practices, and improving program delivery and administrative reform. There is a dissonance in the ways in which the Council articulated the action plan for transformation in each area. With regard to equity and cultural diversity the plan states; “The Council will *try* to ensure that the perspective of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds is better reflected in the Canada Council by such means as jury and advisory committee representation, Council staff representation, program guidelines and criteria” (*The Canada Council: Design for the Future*, 1995: 17). Later on in the document, the Council commits to improving the practice of peer assessment by taking into account issues of diversity and representation. The peer assessment system of evaluation is prized by the Council as one that ensures that government does not directly influence what types of artworks and activities the Council funds. The report states:

The Canada Council is committed to maintaining the principle of assessment of grant applications by peers drawn from relevant professional arts communities. Juries and assessment committees will continue to be balanced for professional perspective and specialization, experience, expertise, diversity of philosophy and practice, the region, gender, age, cultural diversity and First People’s representation. (*The Canada Council: Design for the Future*, 1995:20)

At the same time that peer assessment was being upheld as a key principle, the workings of the system were under threat of erosion because of the implementation of cost saving practices. Cuts were made to the budgets for juries and advisory committees and the frequency at which juries were held decreased. The administrative system was centralized, the Art Bank was closed, and up until now separate Arts Awards Section was handed over to disciplinary sections (Robertson, 2006: 119). The culture of the organization evolved to one that embraced the practices and principles of the corporate world. The Council’s first Corporate Plan was unveiled in 1997-98

and by the close of the decade, the Council was rewarded with new funds from the government that enabled the development of new programs, such as the world music program, geared towards culturally diverse artists and First Nations artists.

Culture of Administration/Administration of Culture

The Canada Council holds specific ideas about itself and its systems for achieving the goals within its mandate. The organization articulates a number of guiding principles that inform and give shape to the institution's practices and culture in relation to its day to day duty of supporting professional artists and arts organizations. The notion of arms length funding, a form of immunity from government meddling in the decisions of the Canada Council, is one of the foundational and guiding principles of the organization. This feature of the Council's decision making practice is supposed to allow juries, advisory councils, and staff the freedom to make decisions about policy, funding, cultural practices, and products in Canada. With this system of accountability in place, the Council – not the government - is held responsible for the decisions it makes. However, as illustrated above, the Council is closely tied to and influenced by the dictates of the government of the day and its ideology and practices. Key power brokers at the Canada Council (the Director and Board of Directors) are, for instance, appointed by government.

Since the mid-1990s peer assessment has been championed by the Council as another of the foundations of the Council's operation. The practice depends on culture experts or art professionals to evaluate applications in a program. Experts are drawn from a pool of artists, critics, and administrators who are acknowledged by the community and the Council as

possessing expertise in a given field. The role of the peer assessment committee is to provide advice to the Council on who should receive support and recognition from the Council. Peer assessment is seen as another aspect of arms length funding in that decisions are removed from the direct control and influence of the Council staff. This system of assessment has been called into question on various occasions by those who have been excluded from participation in the system. The question of who constitutes a peer is perennially posed to the Council as new constituents seek to participate in and benefit from the institution.

Conclusion

I have provided an overview of the history of the Canada Council for the Arts starting with its antecedents, the Massey Commission and the Massey Report. I have highlighted the ways in which Eurocentred and white understandings of the Canadian nation shaped what came to count as art within the Canada Council. I have argued that the Council was a nation-building project spearheaded by an elite to differentiate the Canadian nation from other nations and to disseminate culture and civility over a large geographical and regionally diverse area. More importantly, this nation-making project produced a particular type of nation – European, liberal, modern and ‘democratic’. The architects of the Council imagined, designed, and created the Council to support the production and reproduction of Anglophone and Francophone cultures. Over the years, this imaginary of the nation and the role of the Council in fostering and supporting nation-making opened up to include women, people of colour, and gays as part of the imaginary. Although the Council transformed from a conservative supporter of high culture to an institution responding to new practices, genres, and demographics, the residual effects of highbrow interpretations of culture continue to shape the Council’s decisions. It continues to

provide the largest support to European-based art and organizations, while at the same time making formal commitments to equity. Since its inception, the Council has taken a responsive role in dealing with issues of representation, including race, an issue that surfaced early in its history and resurfaced again in the late 1980s. The practices of government, including multiculturalism and its policies, found their way into the Council, highlighting the ways in which the state and the social and political are intertwined and are difficult to disentangle.

Introduction

The mid 1980s brought with it protest, outcry and lobbying activities led by racialized artists and cultural workers across the country.³⁴ Calls for self-representation and access to state funding was high on the agenda. Racialized artists and cultural producers demanded that cultural institutions address institutional racism and exclusion of ‘other’ modes of expression from narrations of the Canadian nation. In this chapter I examine calls for representation and inclusion by black artists and cultural producers as well as the ways in which the arts, culture, and multiculturalism were harnessed and deployed. I start with a brief history of what can be called a ‘black cultural movement’ in Toronto over the decade spanning the mid 1980s to 1990s.

A number of factors and events position Toronto as a central location for much of the lobbying and activist activities spearheaded and led by black artists and cultural producers over the period being examined in this study. Toronto is the largest city in Canada with the highest

³⁴ Some examples include: *Ms. Saigon* protest (1993) against the stereotypical portrayal of Asians in musical *Ms. Saigon* in Toronto; The PEN ‘incident’; *Showboat* protest, the *Into the Heart of Africa* at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Protest by Artists of Local Colour in Vancouver. Artists of Local Colour (a coalition of artists of colour and their allies) picketed outside the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1991 at the opening of the exhibition, *Fabled Territories: New Asian Photography in Britain*. Zool Suleman (1992) outlines the issues as located in the specific issue of the exhibition’s coordinators decision not to hold an opening reception and engage Vancouver’s South Asian communities. He also states that “larger issues of systemic racism, access, community outreach and accountability at the Vancouver Art Gallery as they relate to artists of colour” informed the formation of the coalition and its activities (Suleman, 1992: 20).

The formation of the Minquon Panchayat Council (1993) at the AGM of ANNPAC/RACA (the national body representing artist run centres) in Calgary also signalled discontent and transformational activities by First Nations and artists and artists of colour in relation to issues of access and representation in the sphere of the artist-run centre. . in her keynote address at the AGM, Lillian Allen challenged the audience to acknowledge the low level of First Nations artists and artists of colour in attendance. The challenge generated the creation of a seven member group of artists of colour and First Nations artists who presented ANNPAC with an antiracist strategy which was adopted by the AGM plenary. The strategy called for a commitment from ANNPAC to direct resources towards addressing systemic racism in the organization itself and in the structures and practices of its member artist run centres.

percentage of racialized immigrants. The city became home to large number of Caribbean and African immigrants as a result of reforms to the Canadian immigration policies that expanded the categories of who could enter Canada as immigrants. Toronto is also the economic hub of the nation and also became the hub of activist activities. The city also saw the formation of governmental and community agencies that dealt with issues of human rights and race such as the Ontario Human Rights Commission (1961), Anti-Racism Secretariat and the Urban Alliance on Race Relations.

In this chapter, I outline key conjunctural moments/events and sensibilities that underline the development of black cultural activism of the 1980s and 1990s. I go on to describe three seminal events that scaffold and illuminate calls for representation and inclusion into the multicultural nation of Canada. The following three events – *Show Boat*, the 54th PEN Writers Conference and the *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibition – all mark important turning points in the strategies and discourses employed by black artists in their struggles for inclusion and against oppression. As mentioned earlier, the bulk of activist activities addressed in this section were carried out by black artists and cultural producers located in Toronto. Counter-cultural movements such as the US Civil Rights Movement, the South African Anti-Apartheid Movement and the feminist movement that internationalized race and gender politics all informed and shaped black artists' and cultural producers' calls for self-representation and participation in cultural institutions.

Anti-racist principles and practices developed within the context of grassroots organizing that challenged “pluralist concepts of diversity premised on the desire to assimilate, incorporate

or overcome differences” were posited by black and other racialized artists as alternatives to the practices and politics of multiculturalism (Gagnon and McFarlene, 2003). Writer M. Nourbese Philip vociferously critiqued the Canadian multicultural paradigm and argued that “multiculturalism, as we know it, has no answers for the problem of racism or white supremacy – unless it is combined with a clearly articulated policy of anti-racism, directed at rooting out the effects of racist and white supremacist thinking” (Philip, 1992:185). Protest and media coverage of a number of events and activities organized by racialized artists and their allies brought some of the concerns of to a broader public. Racialized artists were concerned with the ways in which racism shaped or circumscribed their representation in the public sphere. The issue of access to resources to enable the production and dissemination of their artwork was also high on their agenda. In other words, the politics of representation or the politics of art as well as the relationship between art and politics within Canada’s multicultural framework were being called into question.

In the second half of the chapter, I examine the subsequent formation of the Canada Council’s Racial Equity Committee in 1991 and the development of the Racial Equity Office at the Canada Council for the Arts. I probe the discourses on culture, multiculturalism, and inclusion and the manner in which they were employed in the racial equity policymaking process. Here I am concerned with the *how* of policy formation and implementation at the Canada Council. Some of the questions that I am grappling with are: how are ethno-cultural communities produced and shaped by state\institutional structures like the Canada Council for the Arts? How has the activist work of artists of colour shaped the institution of the Canada Council for the Arts and vice versa? To this end, the data analyzed in this chapter is derived

from interviews with black artists and cultural producers; past Canada Council employees; past members of the Canada Council's Racial Equity Committees (1990 – 1999), Canada Council reports and strategic plans, grassroots magazines, and newspapers articles, features, and letters to the editor. Dorothy Smith's approach to institutional ethnography shapes my understanding of the data, allowing the voices of the subjects involved in the process of racial equity formation to provide their understandings/standpoints on the process.

Black Community Outrage

Black Community Concerned: Youth Claim Police Abuses (Share, June 18, 1969)

Racism Inherent in Our Educational System (Contrast, December 19, 1969)

Toronto Black School Opens (Contrast, June 20, 1970)

Artists Tell of Discrimination (Contrast, March 6, 1971)

March Brings Out Blacks On Cold Day (Contrast, April 19, 1971)

Advice from Civil Rights Worker: Act Now and Save Canada from Serious Race Problem (Contrast, Nov.1, 1971)

Racism, as experienced through police brutality against blacks and unequal access to and benefit from education, housing and employment in Canada underlined the development of a new³⁵ critical consciousness and activist activities in black communities over a period spanning the 1960s to 1980s. Canadian multicultural policies, the Human Rights Act, and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms came into effect in the 70s and 80s yet, in the relational field of everyday life, black people did not have full access to material resources, justice, health, education, and safety that other groups were able to command. As noted above, international political movements such as the US Civil Rights Movement, the Anti-Apartheid Movement, and later on the feminist movement facilitated a heightened awareness of the need to develop a black

³⁵ The use of the term 'new' acknowledges the struggle for civil rights by blacks in Canada that predates the 1950s.

coalition politic that could begin to critically address and combat racism in its various forms and manifestations.

Toronto's community weekly newspapers - *Contrast* and *Share* - served the black and West Indian communities and played a central role in developing and disseminating dialogue, as well as in making connections between the position of blacks in Canada and those in the United States, South Africa and other black diasporic spaces. These weekly newspapers emerged at a period in Canadian immigration history in which increased numbers of immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa settled in centres like Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa. Canada's black population became more diversified as West Indians and Africans joined the ranks of African Canadians some of whom arrived via various earlier migration routes that started as early as the late eighteenth century. In a discussion about the histories of these two community weeklies that represented Toronto's black population, Patrick Martin (1993) describes *Contrast*, the older and now defunct paper, as catering to militant sensibilities while *Share*, its competitor, "staked out a boosterish position to attract non-militant readers; its mandate was to cover "things worth celebrating"" (Martin, 1993: accessed on line January 7, 2010 <http://www.rrj.ca/issue/1993/summer/176/>). The study utilizes these two black weeklies in order to shed light on the ways in which black communities self-presented and articulated collective identities.

In the late 50s and 60s a climate of intolerance existed against blacks in Canada's largest cities. In his book *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, Robin Winks (2000) singles out the West Indian Domestic Worker Program that was implemented in the mid-1950s as a factor that aided

in fostering and entrenching notions of blacks as subordinate subjects in those cities. Winks writes:

Late in 1955 the Canadian government agreed to admit one hundred female domestics each year from Jamaica and Barbados. By 1960 the government increased the number to nearly three hundred. Under the regulations some were able to have their fiancés and close relatives join them, and the domestics could take out citizenship after five years. The effect of this regulation, though it supplied upper-class homes in Montreal, Toronto, and Ottawa with badly needed household help, could well have been harmful to the West Indian community as a whole, for it brought into Canada a class of people calculated to foster white notions of superiority since West Indians were to be found in largely menial jobs. (Winks, 2000: 439)

In exchange for landed immigrant status, West Indian domestic workers left their families and children in their home countries to enter the private sphere to assist with reproducing the Canadian nation.

Many of the women who entered Canada under this program were encouraged by government officials in Canada and Jamaica to falsely claim in their applications that they had no children even though they were sole-support mothers. The women's false claims regarding their status led to threats of deportation and the actual deportation of women in the mid-70s which served to galvanize the black community's political consciousness and activism around the differentiated nature of citizenship and belonging that existed in relation to black immigrants.³⁶ The gendered nature of the Domestic Program and the precarity of racialized women in relation to the labour market and citizenship rights were brought into focus in this struggle.

³⁶ See Makeda Silvera's, *Silenced: Talks with working class Caribbean women about their lives and struggles as Domestic Workers in Canada, 1989*

Immigration policy reforms of the 1960s removed “the explicit racial and ethnic discrimination that had imbued Canadian immigration policy” as evidenced in the preference for immigrants of European origins and a points-based system to assess immigrants in order to meet the labour demands of the economy was the implemented (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002: 43). Immigrants now gained points based on criteria such as educational level, knowledge of English or French, age and occupational skill. As a result of this reform of the immigration system, the number of skilled black immigrants from source countries in the Caribbean and Africa increased. The implementation of the 1976 Immigration Act and subsequent reforms of immigration policies in the 1980s and 1990s facilitated the entry of a diversified group of black immigrants into Canada. The 1976 Immigration Act created new classes of immigrants – families, assisted relatives, refugees, independent immigrants – which expanded the pool of immigrants who could enter the country. As a result of the implementation of the 1976 Immigration Act, the children of domestic workers and their extended families were now able to enter Canada.

With the increase in the numbers of blacks in Canadian cities and their unequal access to social rights came the development of a coalition politics of the late 1960s and 70s that demanded social justice for, and the participation of black people in, civil society. Regional and national organizations sought to draw attention to and rectify the disadvantaged position of black Canadians. Organizations such as the Black United Front (Nova Scotia), B.C.A.A.C.P (British Columbia), The Canadian Council for Black Artists, The Coloured Women’s Club of Montreal, The Negro Citizenship Association, Congress of Black Women, and the National Black Coalition took up causes of economic, political, social, cultural, and educational equality for blacks in Canada. Cooperation amongst and communication between groups as well as the need

for unified representation on behalf of blacks to government and non-governmental bodies were important elements in the organizing thrust of these groups. In 1970, Dr. H.D. McCurdy, chairperson of the National Black Coalition, stated that the function of that organization was to:

Establish communication among Black people scattered over the broad geographical expanse that is Canada. It represents an unprecedented opportunity for Black organizations to work together towards the complete elimination of all forms of discrimination and oppression and it is the only vehicle that offers hope that Blacks may make a meaningful contribution with others the achievement of a just society for all. (“Growing Black Unity”, *Contrast*, April 4, 1970: 13)

Makeda Silvera (1989) characterizes the 1970s and the proliferation of organizations that struggled for social justice as signalling “both the birth and simultaneous coming of age of the Black Community” (Silvera, 1989: iii). Student protest sparked by charges of racism against a faculty member and the administration at Sir George Williams University in the late 60s were pivotal in providing momentum to the growing black movement to combat racism against blacks in Canadian society. The expansion of black communities made possible by reforms in Canadian immigration policies created a critical mass and “facilitated the emergence and development of new talents, new organizations, new strategies” that informed the struggles engaged in by black people over the right to belong to the nation (Silvera, 1989:iii).

In cities such as Toronto, Halifax, Vancouver, and Montreal, the right to belong to the nation and to which spaces and places in the nation became rallying cries for justice against police brutality. For two decades spanning the late 60s to 80s, editorials and articles in *Contrast* newspaper took up the issue of the antagonistic and racist relationship of the police to black people in those communities. Over this period headlines highlighting police harassment and brutality such as “Black Riot or Police Riot: It Can Happen Here”, “Police and Black People:

Vicious Plot to Antagonize Blacks”, “Beaten Black Fined”, “Vancouver Police Refuse Practices Inquiry” were commonplace in the paper. A 1970 editorial portrays the precarious and hostile conditions blacks faced in Toronto. It states:

It has become a decided risk for Black people in Toronto to walk the streets, drive cars or engage in any of the “freedoms” enunciated in the Bill of Rights. Black people run the risk of being arrested, abused and beaten for no apparent reason. They run the risk because of the attitude of the Police Force. (Editorial, *Contrast*, September 18, 1970)

The policing of the black body became common practice in large cities such as Toronto in which it was seen as in excess or out of place in public spaces. The 1979 shooting of Albert Johnson³⁷ by Toronto police became a marker for mobilizing against police violence against blacks in large Canadian cities. Various levels of legislative authority including the federal government’s Bill of Rights (1960) were called to task by black activists over their ineffectiveness in providing security and freedom for all Canadians. Black community leaders also levelled criticism at the Ontario Human Rights Commission for its inattentiveness to the role that race plays in discriminatory practices.

Struggles against racial oppression taking place in other parts of the world found expression in Canadian cities because of the increase in the diversity of the black population. In part, transnational discussions on black liberation including engagements and exchanges with US Civil Rights, South African and West Indian activists shaped and bolstered demands for freedom, civil rights and legislative change. In the wake of calls for civil rights, Stanley Grizzle, a prominent Toronto-based black activist, expressed an urgency regarding the need for blacks to engage in coalition politics in order to gain civil rights. He states:

³⁷ See Cecil Foster’s article, “1980: A year of concern for Toronto blacks”, *Contrast*, December 24, 1980.

Black people must always keep in mind that, the history of the struggle “tells us that he must be free, must free himself. He added: “Rights are never given to any one group or groups on a silver platter. They must be taken from a position of strength which comes in forms, starting with unity among the oppressed. Subsequently they must form coalition with other “have nots” groups for the purpose of extracting maximum political action and gains. (“Queens Park”, *Contrast*, November 1, 1971: 15)

Blackness as an identity and framework for coalition politics and strategizing was actively taken up by activists in the black community at the same time that this category was being produced through experiences of racism from outside those communities. In his discussion of black diasporic traditions and the production of the category of black David Scott states:

One is not black simply by choice; one’s identity is always in part constituted – sometimes against one’s own will – within a structure of recognition, identification and subjectification. On my own view, the black diaspora subject is a subject whose “historical fate has been produced as “black” in and through raced social relations, ideological apparatuses, and political regimes”. (Scott, 1999: 125)

Scott goes on to write that, “to be black in the New World (perhaps to be black in the modern world) is to carry the traces of this historical fate” (Scott, 1999: 125).

People of African descent in Canada engaged in a coalition politics that called attention to the complex negotiations and exclusions that occur in relations between dominant and minoritized groups. It is important to note that black coalition politics in Canada differed from that which developed in Britain in the 80s. In Britain people of African, Afro-Caribbean and Asian descent organized to combat racism under the category of ‘black,’ while in Canada coalitions formed between people of nationalities and ethnicities within the category of people of African descent and its diasporas. An important distinction can therefore be made between the

deployment of the term black in the British context and its use in the Canadian context. The category of ‘black’ was and continues to be taken up by people of African descent in Canada in resistance to the hyphenated categories of identity based on country of origin expressed in the discourse of Canadian state multiculturalism. The term and category of ‘black’ is an identification across ethnicities and nationalities which allows people of African descent in the Canadian context to develop critical mass in numbers. The term and identity category of ‘black’ comes to signify a common experience of being posited as racialized other, subject to racism, and a subject distinctly different from whites of European descent and ethnicity.

In my discussions with black artists/cultural activists regarding t black coalition politics over the period covered by this study, I heard that individuals identified with local, national and international black liberation struggles and opted for the identity category of black as a political imperative. One of the artists interviewed states:

Identifying around the islands, Africa or where you came from was not our primary concern, we identified as black people. We saw places like black South Africa as part of our issue so we mobilized around it. (artist interview, 2006)

The statement above makes visible the local, national and ‘outernational’³⁸ linkages that were made between people of African descent as well as the fluidity of the category of ‘black’.

Another activist stated that the “the energy in the late 70s and 80s in Toronto was electric and people came together across nationalities because they wanted to do something to change their circumstances locally and in the world” (artist interview, 2006). The demand was for social justice for all people of African descent, regardless of locality. The shift to blackness as political identification that crossed national borders signalled a remaking of black subjectivity and created

³⁸ See Rinaldo Walcott’s essay, “Salted Cod...: Black Canada and Diasporic Sensibilities” in the exhibition catalogue, *Reading the Image: Poetics of the Black Diaspora*, 2006.

“a new form of symbolic ‘unity’ out of the signifiers of racial difference” (Mercer, 1990: 55).

The instrumentalization of the discourse of blackness enabled relatively quick formations of organized resistance to racism and the development of international coalition politics.

In the area of education, demands for representation took centre stage within the sphere of black activism as concerns about black children’s education in Canada’s cities grew. Critical questions about the workings of the educational system were being posed and discussed by black parents. Issues of particular concern were the streaming of black children into vocational training, the pejorative representation of black people in textbooks and educational materials and the effects of material inequality on the life chances of black people. A 1970 editorial in *Contrast* newspaper entitled, “Schools for Black Children” that discusses a conference on education organized by the Black People’s Movement reads:

The conference touched on the context of textbooks and it was pointed out that many of them are unconsciously racist in nature. This is to be deplored as is the trend to channel black students into vocational and non-academic courses. Teachers are entrusted with the responsibility to see that every child is given an equal opportunity to learn and mature. If this is to be truly an equal opportunity, then teachers must be capable of comprehending the peculiar background of black children, especially migrant children in our community. (Editorial, *Contrast*, April 17, 1970: p 2)

One of the black activists interviewed for this study emphasized that the Black Education Project placed ‘culture’ at the centre of their work in the community. The group was consciously involved in the reproduction and dissemination of black culture to black children. She states in the following quote:

It very much involved in and concerned about culture. It saw culture as a very fundamental dimension of political work. It had cultural events, a family day, it offered support to the artists, and for example, it offered

grants. It was an organization that spoke on behalf of Black life and our stake in a political way. When I came into town, it was very vital and it created a movement that was incisive politically, with great leaders who worked to frame the issues and bring them forward in serious ways. The issue of culture has always been important so at events we would always integrate readings, singing etc. Politics and culture weren't that separated. (Black artist interview, 2006)

Her statement locates culture as both a way of life and as creative products while being aware of the discursive relationship that exists between politics, education, and culture. The Black Education Project situated 'culture' as a central element and sphere of contestation in which issues of representation were implicated. Several of the black artists and cultural producers interviewed for this study pinpoint the issue of black education as the starting point for community discussions about the interconnection of education and culture and their relationship to nation-making, citizenship, and belonging.

During the 1970s Black activists also exerted pressure on other state-regulated entities responsible for producing and disseminating culture, such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC), to open up access to participation and to rectify the lack of representation of blacks in the media. The Black Arts of Canada Committee,³⁹ an affiliate of the National Black Coalition, was formed to tackle the problem of the invisibility of blacks in the fields of mainstream media and entertainment. The uniqueness of black culture was highlighted in the Committee's philosophy. This emphasis on cultural 'uniqueness' found its expressive roots in the categories of excess that existed inside of Canada's bilingual and bicultural framework.

Cultural policies of the day acknowledged the changing cultural order and programs such as the

³⁹ Black Arts of Canada is an affiliate of the National Black Coalition and lists a number of prominent Black artists among its membership, including Dr. Wolsely Anderson, Lennox Brown, Inez Burt, Vera Cadjoe, Kay Livingston, George Livingstone and Adrian Pitt.

Cultural Resource Development Program at the Ministry of Multiculturalism were geared towards developing ‘minority’ cultures in the sphere of writing, publishing, film and television. The broadcasting regulator, CRTC, spearheaded shifts within the broadcast sector. A call from the Black Arts of Canada Committee to the Secretary of State, Mr. Gerald Pelletier, and the President of the CBC, Mr. G. Davidson, asked them to ameliorate the invisibility of blacks on CBC television and set up a special Black Program Department states:

This request is not made lightly. It has become a mandatory issue for Black citizens and residents of Canada. It follows a study of CBC program policies, content, including Black tokenism, hiring practices, and the methods used to discover and develop art, talent, and cultural expressions among Black taxpayers. It goes on: “The committee found itself looking into a sea of white. It found that the CBC, according to its own tenets, has ignored the Black taxpayers of Canada with insensitivity, a disregard, and a racial exclusiveness amounting to contempt. The committee points out that its demand does not create a precedent for racial programming on the CBC and also makes reference to the Federal Government’s recently announced “multi-cultural policy””. (“Call for Black TV Program”, *Contrast*, November 15, 1971:3)

The journalist goes on to state in the article that:

The committee feels that it is unnecessary to explain that Black people living among a white majority have special cultural needs due to their racial visibility and physical differences. It is common knowledge that constant exposure to a totally white cultural environment wreaks severe psychological damage on Blacks. (“Call for Black TV Program”, *Contrast*, November 15, 1971:3)

In their call for equality, The Black Arts of Canada Committee emphasized how the social shaped the cultural. The group utilized essentialist arguments about blackness, as well as arguments that are congruent with Kymlicka’s discussions on minority group rights in liberal society, access to state resources and the maintenance of social cohesion.

Police brutality and inequitable educational practices in Canada's largest city served to galvanize community organizing against racism in Toronto's black communities. Black community activists demanded increased representation and participation in civil institutions. The black cultural activists interviewed for this study locate the beginning of their engagement with cultural activism of the 80s as having its root in community organizing that developed as a response to the concerns discussed above.

Black Cultural Activism

The central issues driving the activist activities of black artists and cultural producers were racism, self-determination and access to state resources and institutions. By the 1980s, Black artists not only held cultural institutions accountable for their exclusionary policies, they began to examine the framework of the 'preservation of home culture' that multiculturalism espoused and the ways in which it curtailed their participation in contemporary Canadian culture. *Contrast* newspaper journalist, William Doyle-Marshall (1980), in his article "Black artists dialogue in Montreal" states:

The Canada Council needs to change its policy to accommodate black writers. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) has to make programming changes to incorporate meaningful contributions from the black community.

Black artists must make a point to be informed about bureaucratic procedures in the creative Canadian community. Black artists in Canada must start paying attention to the society in which they live and concentrate less emphasis on the places they left behind. (William Doyle-Marshall, 1980: 9)

Doyle-Marshall describes the ways in which new black immigrants negotiate their inter-national allegiances to other nation spaces. The author makes an important reference to black artists and their performances of the discourse of ‘culture of origin’ that is also taken up by all the black artists in this study. His comment highlights Foucauldian understandings of the process of self-regulation and enunciations shaped in part through government policies and programs. In this case, some of the ways in which communities came to perform and talk about themselves were shaped by the language that emerged out of recommendations from the Bilingual and Bicultural Commission targeting the languages, heritage and culture of other Canadians for government support.

The issue of cultural appropriation served to politicize and incite activism around issues of access and representation across the country in the 1980s and early 1990s. Cultural appropriation was discussed, rallied against and challenged at all levels of cultural production and presentation. Who was being represented in the cultural sphere and by whom were questions fervently debated and contested by artists of colour and First Nations artists. Kwame Dawes (1993) outlines the material reality that framed the calls by artists of colour and First Nations artists in their struggle for self-representation in his article “Re-Appropriating Cultural Appropriation”. He states:

Our society is marred by significant inequities which have, for years, led to the exclusion of “minorities” and communities not regarded as belonging to the “mainstream” of the society from telling their stories. Riding on the back of a carefully designed and efficiently implemented system of cultural oppression of colonialism and imperialism, much of Canada’s behaviour merely reflects a privileging of white Eurocentric values. In this context, minorities have often been excluded from funding which would allow them to tell their stories – instead, white artists have had greater access to money available, even when they are

telling stories taken from cultures of the “minority” people. (Dawes, 1993: 10)

Dawes goes on to call for a re-evaluation of the philosophical foundations on which practices of appropriation are based on and for a redistribution of state funds to rebalance the scales.

Dawes writes:

Such a reevaluation would be founded on the argument that since so many whites have told, for years, the stories of non-whites, and have, in the process brutally misinterpreted them and established a discourse of inferiority in such portrayals, it is time to shift the emphasis and flavour, instead, to the non-white artists who are willing and able to tell their own stories and to tell it well. (Dawes, 1993: 10)

Dawes’ response seeks to rectify the issues of appropriation and misrepresentation by reallocation public resources to individual artists instead of directly to corporate interests.

Key events, such as the *Into the Heart of Africa* exhibition at the Royal Ontario Museum (1989), the 54th International PEN conference (1989), and *Showboat* (1989), provide instances of black cultural activist activities of the late 1980s and early 1990s where artists demanded that they be allowed to engage in narrating their own stories.

Into the Heart of Africa

When the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) brought up 375 of its African artifacts ‘collected’ by missionaries, Canadian soldiers, and other plunderers of Africa from its basement under the exhibition title, *Into the Heart of Africa* in 1989, black people in Toronto and Ontario were outraged. Individuals and groups from Toronto’s black community engaged in protest against the ROM and the exhibition’s curator, highlighting racism as a cause for concern regarding the premise of the exhibition. It must be noted that a number of other critiques from a range of perspectives were levelled at the museum in relation to its exhibitory role, while others

questioned the exhibition and its pedagogical function.⁴⁰ The premise of the exhibition, as stated by anthropologist and curator Jeanne Cannizzo, was to “give some perspective to Canadian history as it was played in colonial Africa,” struck an extremely uncomfortable chord (Da Breo, 1989/90: 32). Concerns were voiced by members of Toronto’s black education community and by artists over the stereotypical language used in the brochure and didactic materials associated with the exhibition. They also took issue with both the lack of outreach to black communities in the development of the show, as well as their erasure as potential audiences for such an exhibition. One of the black artists interviewed for this study discussed the concern over the exhibition in the following statement:

I think basically prior to the show they did not contact or consult with the community. It was something that they were doing without input from the black community. Some people at the ROM felt they had community members involved, but as far as we were concerned it wasn’t so. After our exclusion was exposed, they had what was called a sounding. They invited some black people like Mr. Eccles to sit on the committee and he came to us at CAN: BAIA and asked if he should really do it. He wanted our support. He couldn’t take it on unless he had the organization and the CAN: BAIA members support behind him. He became involved in their committee and then they asked a few of us to sit on the committee. I sat on the committee and we told them what was wrong with the show. (Black artist interview, 2006)

Questions about who belonged to the nation and who occupied its outer fringes surfaced in the debates about the ROM’s exhibition.

The debates arising out of *Into the Heart of Africa* highlight the central relationship of the museum as a site of knowledge production and reproduction and the role of cultural texts in the

⁴⁰ For more of an in-depth discussion on the ROM exhibit and museum practice see Shelley Bulter’s, *Contested Representation: Re-visiting Into the Heart of Africa* (2008) and Robyn Gillam’s, *Hall of Mirrors: Museums and the Canadian Public* (2001).

making of nation. It also foregrounds lived experiences of racism and the marginalization of black Canadians in relation to the past and present imaginaries of Canada. Nourbese Philip (1992) writes:

The African Canadian demonstrators and other objectors *outside* the museum were, in fact, an integral and indispensable part of the cultural text *inside* the museum that Cannizzo and the ROM expressed interest in reading. In this instance, the cultural text extended beyond the walls of the museum. The ROM argued that this was a part of Canadian life that Canadians did not know about. This immediately begs the question as to which Canadians the ROM had in mind. Europeans or African Canadians? Or was the ROM perhaps defining “Canadian” as someone of European heritage? This exhibition was, however, also about African history *and* African Canadians, some of whom have been here for centuries. (Nourbese Philip, 1992:105)

The notion that blackness is intimately tied to and is constitutive of the making of the Canadian nation were evacuated from articulations of how the exhibition functioned pedagogically. Eva Mackay (1995) describes the debacle at the ROM as “a crisis of representation” that was rooted in the non-reflexive position taken by the elite regarding Canada’s role in the colonial enterprise. This position served to simultaneously erase and marginalize black Canadians. She states; “The exhibit’s mode of address, in its construction of a white community of viewers, marginalized African-Canadians and transformed them into conceptual exiles from Canadian citizenship, or perhaps, more specifically, Canadian identity” (Mackay, 1995: 413).

International 54th PEN World Congress

PEN was founded in England in 1921 to represent "Poets, Essayists and Novelists", the organization’s goals are to: promote intellectual co-operation and understanding among writers;

create a world community of writers that would emphasize the central role of literature in the development of world culture; and, defend literature against the many threats to its survival which the modern world poses.⁴¹ In 1989, a coalition of writers consisting of writers of colour, First Nations writers and their allies, protested outside the PEN gala at Roy Thomson Hall in Toronto against the “lock out” of writers of colour from the main events of the Congress. Issues of exclusion and racism in the publishing industry in Canada were the impetus for the protest.

Issues of racism in the arts and cultural representation had come to the fore a year and a half earlier at the Women’s Press in Toronto and led to the formation of a multi-ethnic and multi-racial advocacy group called Vision 21- Canadian culture in the 21st Century. Nourbese Philip (1989) describes the composition of the multi-ethnic group as comprised of:

An Anglo-Canadian student from a prestigious Toronto high school doing a project on racism and writing; a South African refugee; an Afro-Canadian employee of the Women’s Press; a Chinese Canadian playwright; an Anglo-Canadian adult educator; an Asian Canadian writer; a couple of volunteers from the rape crisis centre; an African Canadian writer and critic; an Irish Canadian writer and myself. (Nourbese Philip, 1989: 17)

The issue of appropriation had been brought to the table years earlier in 1983 by the League of Canadian Poets and De Dub Poets and also at Women and Words Conference in Vancouver.⁴²

The Vision 21 group seized the moment to reveal exclusionary practices in the arts that were based on racism and to further debates on the failure of state mandated multiculturalism at the 54th PEN conference. The group articulated the goal of the protest in the following way:

Our aim was not the change PEN Canada or PEN international. We merely used the ethnic and racial composition of the Canadian contingent as a startling yet predictable example of the official face of racism in the

⁴¹ See PEN Canada’s website: <http://www.pencanada.ca/about/background.php> (accessed March 24, 2010).

⁴² See M. Nourbese-Philip discussion in the article “Expletive Deleted” in FUSE Magazine, Vol. XIII, No. 3

arts in Canada. None of the individuals demonstrating outside Roy Thomson Hall wanted to be invited to participate in the 54th Congress of PEN. What we did want to do, however, was to bring to the attention of all the PEN delegates, both from Canada and abroad, the fact that there is a very real problem with racism here in Canada, which in many instances serve to silence Black writers and writers of colour. (Nourbese Philip, 1989: 17-18)

Writers of colour, however, were not completely absent from the series of events but were relegated to the margins. A series of panels called the “Next Generation,” featuring young writers of colour such as Dionne Brand and Nancy Morejón, was organized by programme coordinator David McIntosh. The panels, nonetheless, were not integrated into the main Congress event that featured primarily white Canadian writers.

Writer Ayanna Black, in her article “Second Thoughts: Next Generation Writers Bring Insight to PEN,” highlights the marginal positioning of the panels by the organizers. She states:

The Next Generation panels and readings provided some of the most exciting moments at the Congress, but were not without controversy – primarily because the programme was not integrated into other PEN events. It was obvious that The Next Generation programme was not planned initially as part of the conference: the programme literature that went out to delegates prior to the Congress did not list it. However, PEN programme coordinator David McIntosh, who developed The Next Generation programme, says “The Next Generation programme was a part of the initial programme [that] was planned, but [it] was not completely developed. When I saw that the programme primarily represented established writers, I put in a special effort to develop ideas [for The Next Generation programme] and applied for funding.” (Black, 1989: 23)

Writers of colour demanded not only that their voices be heard but that they should gain access to grants and accrued financial benefits from their work in the same way that their Anglophone and Francophone colleagues did. One of the artists interviewed for the study recalls:

I think what was beginning to happen was many of us writers were beginning to make certain demands to be heard. We were coming to voice really and wanted to have a stake in the system. We definitely

wanted a financial stake that included having access to grants, having access to publishers and those kinds of things. (Artist interview, 2007)

In the context of the PEN controversy, writers of colour and First Nations writers insisted on the inclusion of the counter-narratives of marginalized writers into articulations and narrations of the Canadian nation. The inclusion of the cultural texts of the nation's 'others' would serve as important critiques of colonial and post-colonial dominance, but more importantly, these texts would serve to decentre Anglophone and Francophone narratives.

Show Boat

Garth Drabinsky and his Livent Production company presented the musical *Show Boat* in Toronto in 1993 amidst protest spearheaded by The Coalition to Stop Show Boat. The play opened at the municipally funded, newly opened North York Center for the Performing Arts. Segments of the black community were disturbed by the negative stereotypes of black people portrayed in the play and were equally disturbed by Drabinsky's refusal to engage in dialogue about the racist nature of the production.

Show Boat's excess baggage was becoming more palpable to Toronto's black community and fears were raised that long-buried racial stereotypes might be resurrected. Requests to review the script were relayed to LivEnt by members of the black community. These requests were immediately rebuffed by LivEnt: "This [request] is considered to be nothing less than an attempt at censorship and an abrogation of the right of free speech" (Live Entertainment Corporation of Canada 1993). (Breon, 1995: 99)

In his coverage of the controversy *New York Times* reporter Clyde H. Farnsworth drew attention to the range of perspectives that existed in the black community regarding the presentation of the play. He writes:

But some prominent blacks in Toronto contend that the show romanticizes a dehumanizing era in black history, reinforcing negative images and stereotypes that are used to undermine black people. And they are critical of its selection as the vehicle for the opening of a publicly supported arts center in a community where blacks are a significant and growing proportion of the population.

Some 350,000 blacks live in Canada, about half of them in Toronto, according to 1991 census figures. The Jewish population was nearly identical, numbering 370,000, and about half of them live in Toronto as well. The population of Canada is 27 million.

“‘Show Boat’ is not a true reflection of black history,” said Jeff Henry, a professor of drama at York University and the founder of black theaters in both Toronto and Montreal. His Fountainhead Theater here closed during the 1990 recession, but his Black Theater Workshop in Montreal is still active. By Whites, for Whites “‘Show Boat,’ ” he said in an interview, was "created by white people for white people at a time when black writers like Langston Hughes of the Harlem Renaissance were trying to define black dreams, hopes and ambitions." (*The NY Times*, May 1, 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/01/theater/blacks-accuse-jews-in-show-boat-revival.html?pagewanted=all> accessed online December 11, 2009)

There were also individuals in Black community who were not opposed to the play. Farnsworth states:

Not all prominent blacks have been critical of the show. "Why boycott it?" asked former Lieut. Gov. Lincoln Alexander of Ontario. "How can I judge something if I don't go and see it?" The Rev. Eustace Meade of the First Baptist Church of Toronto said he would be among the first to watch the show. "I have my own dignity and 'Show Boat' or whatever cannot demean me." (*The NY Times* May 1, 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/01/theater/blacks-accuse-jews-in-show-boat-revival.html?pagewanted=all> accessed online December 11, 2009)

The debate not only impacted the black community but created a chasm between the black and Jewish communities in Toronto. “A leader of the protest, Stephanie Payne, a school trustee in North York, publicly condemned "Show Boat," both the musical and the novel on which it was based, as an example of "hate literature" directed against black people. She also said Jews were

responsible for most of the works that denigrate blacks” (The NY Times May 1, 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/05/01/theater/blacks-accuse-jews-in-show-boat-revival.html?pagewanted=all> accessed online December 11, 2209). Breon writes that “The controversy bitterly divided the black and Jewish communities in Toronto, leaving charges of racism and anti-Semitism in its wake” (Breon, 1995:86).

Another cause for consternation was the fact that artists of colour and black artists in particular, did not have the same opportunities as their white counterparts. Black actors and directors felt that *Show Boat* highlighted the dilemma they faced regarding self-representation; they were once again being represented by others other than themselves. Black artists were type casted into “stereotypical roles such as maids, hookers, dancers, snake charmers, kung-fu fighters, spiritual healers, cooks and showboat singers...” (Lewis, 1993/94: 26) The controversy around *Show Boat* brought questions concerning representation to the attention of the public and public institutions. It also highlighted the complexities of race as expressed in the tensions between blacks and Jews in the context of Canada’s multicultural reality. The question of which artists and audiences benefited from the art being produced in Canada was being posed by artists of colour. Within discussions on appropriation, the politics of art in Canada, practices of production, distribution, and reception were being challenged by racialized artists.

Black artists felt that the Eurocentric composition of the peer assessment jury and categorization of their art as folk art or ‘multicultural’ art served to shut racialized artists out of the sphere of the contemporary:

Well the peer jury system was very difficult because half the time they had no people of colour. There were no people of colour to look at our work. Take for example the visual arts, where in many cases they considered the work we were doing as folk art. (Artist interview, 2006)

The Council's peer assessment jury that was adopted to strategically involve artists in the process of collective decision making⁴³ about Canadian art had at its core an understanding of Canadian art that echoed the Massey Report in the privileging of European disciplines, forms and genres as ideals. The jury system was being critiqued in light of its function as a mechanism for regulating and maintaining the status quo of Canadian art.

Another artist interviewed for the study also highlights the tension that existed between multiculturalism and art as contemporary culture. She states:

People were applying for grants at the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council and to some degree the Toronto Arts Council and for some reason they were not considered to be artists. They weren't getting grants. Juries were unwilling to explore art practices outside of the mainstream that dealt with cultural identity. They were not able to recognize voices from the black community or other Asian communities or South Asian communities. On the film level it was the same thing.

People were concerned that juries were not representative, that the decision makers were not representative of the communities that were applying. That was one key issue. Also another issue was the lack of education about Black aesthetics; what it is and that it was valid. I think that at the time that we really looked to the Black British film makers and how they were able to forge through the film and video workshops, an aesthetic in Black art in Black film and video.

I think the main thing that drove everybody to be so public about it was that we were not being financed for projects funded through the arts council. We wanted to know why that was, why were the white artists getting grants and big grants? (Artist interview: 2006)

⁴³ For more of a discussion on the decision making structures and processes at the Canada Council for the Arts, see Chapter 8, The Collective Noun Model in Clive Robertson's book, *Policy Matters: Administration of art and culture* (2006).

The notion that the works of black or racialized artists that took up issues of identity was contraindicative to art because of its engagement with non-Francophone or Anglophone aesthetic and symbols bracketed the work as folk art and not work that articulated the expressions of Canadian-ness in the register of the aesthetic.

Identity based works by artist of colour disrupted ideas of a universal aesthetic or the timelessness of what is viewed as culture and art. Hobsbawn and Ranger's (1994) understandings of the making and legitimizing of elite tradition come to bear on how peer juries assessed the works of racialized artists. The disquiet articulated by racialized artists about the jury system serves to illuminate that within processes of elite culture and nation-making, tradition is not a fixed entity. Black and racialized artists were seeking to shift the paradigm on which Canadian art was assessed by juries. A shift in the paradigm would require discussions on cultural value, race, participation, hybrid sensibilities and the redistribution of arts funding. In a way, the struggle over access to resources and for participation in systems such as arts council juries, amplifies the ongoing tensions between the national and the global in the process of nation-making and cultural transformations in light of contact and migration.

The events and discussions outlined above serve to illuminate lived contestations and transactions over representation and cultural citizenship in the 1990s. A black cultural producer interviewed for the study explained that issues of race, culture, marginality, representation and appropriation were difficult to place on the agenda of the power brokers of Canadian culture. He states:

What I remember from the late 1980s into the early 1990s was a kind of a real hard struggle because the difficulty was Canadian culture generally,

sees itself in my opinion, as a kind of a underdog culture already marginalized, whether marginalized from colonial history from Britain or more recently in reference to the US and commercial culture and the dominance of that.

Canadian artists and Canadian cultural practitioners generally see themselves as the underdog, the ones who are struggling, the ones who are fighting back, so to introduce race into the equation and to point out to the existing cultural elites in Canada that they are in fact also oppressors in certain ways, whether it be conscious or unconscious but they are excluding other voices. That made it a very difficult conversation to even start at the time because a lot of the existing artists, curators, and other people, the gatekeepers, just could not see themselves in that role. They were so used to being the underdogs. They just couldn't see themselves as the ones who held the power and were excluding others, and were using that power again consciously or not consciously against artists of colour. (Artist interview, 2006)

A number of factors may have informed the resistance to include issues of marginalization and race onto the agenda. Canadian culture as expressed through Anglophone and Francophone cultures was seen as an emergent culture already marginalized vis-à-vis the United States and in relation to Europe. Ideas about Canadian culture were also firmly entrenched in the idealization of "Canadian" as expressed by the elites who were the architects of the Massey Report. The mythology of Canada as a tolerant nation, one that is unique in its management of cultural diversity may have also shaped the resistant stance on issues of oppressive practices in arts institutions.

The artist goes on to point out challenges faced by artists of colour in sustaining conversations about racism in the arts and the thrust behind the formation of groups of artists of colour concerned with self representation:

The hardest part of the conversation was getting people to admit there was a problem and that they were part of the problem. That was what led

to the beginning or the foundation of a number of organizations that sprang up at about the same time, connected and interdependent in a certain way but not happening out of any kind of design. The Black Film and Video Network, Full Screen, and other organizations that arose at about the same time with fairly similar missions, began with just pushing open doors that we thought were closed. (Artist interview, 2006)

Past histories of marginalization came to delineate how white artists spoke about issues of access to state resources and issues of race and racism were subtracted from the conversation. New self-defined organizations and collectives grew and developed within racialized communities.

According to a number of the black women artists involved in this study, their association with white feminist groups and feminism informed their activism and how they understood their exclusion, not only from feminist organization but from the sphere of culture. Feminist spaces provided a provisional space in which issues of race, exclusion and diversity could be raised.

Well, on a personal level, I think my activism happened through a feminist group, because being part of their management team I was able to make suggestions and reinforce ideas about inclusion and how to go about it. I mean I wasn't the person who went out and marched or anything like. You see marching is one way, but I think you must also be inside. This is where I put my energy. I think it is as important to be inside the organization for better understanding it. I think if you don't understand it, there is no way you can change it, so for me it was to focus my energy inside to focus internally rather than externally. (Artist interview, 2006)

Another stated:

My friend introduced me as an artist who asked me to 'make some flyers'. They needed something and so that's how my art became a thing for me to do something with. It's not art for art sake. I can't afford a studio somewhere. Whenever I am called upon to use my art to make something or do something, put my art to use, I did it. I was introduced to feminism, so that's how I became involved in an activist way with my art and I was able to say "let's do something black." (Artist interview, 2007)

A lack of access to state and institutional resources also shaped and informed the taking up of the category of ‘activist’ by black artists.

We defined ourselves as activists instead of artists because we did not have the privilege of someone or institutions supporting us. When I first started I didn’t have the support of a black arts community. I chose to make my work within an activist context. (Black artist interview, 2007)

The black artists interviewed locate the beginning of their engagement with cultural advocacy and activist activities in earlier activisms concerned with social and economic justice. Black artists and artists of colour spoke out against their exclusion from mainstream institutions and placed issues of cultural appropriation, racism, multicultural citizenship and participation at the centre of their discussions and demands. They demanded participation in the sphere of the production of Canadian culture and the ability to construct and speak to specific audiences from the diverse range of ethno-cultural communities that existed in Canada.

Responses to Exclusion /Counter Public Sphere?

By 1994, the Canadian culturescape evolved to include the cultural expressions of ‘other’ Canadians. Over the next five years there was an explosion of ethno-cultural organizations, publications and art festivals across the country such as Racy Sexy, Asian Film Festival, Celafi, South Asian Visual Arts Collective, Reel Asian Film Festival, Writing Thru Race, Canadian Black Artists in Action, Black Film and Video Network, Race to the Screen, Desh Pradesh, Herland Film Festival, InVisible Colours and Compagnie Danse Nyata Nyata, to name a few.

The period marks a significant shift in what types of cultural products and expressions constituted contemporary Canadian art and who produced these products. Racialized artists were engaged in the act of ‘making themselves visible’.⁴⁴



Figure 1

Artists of colour and black artists harnessed the energies of the 1980s and a number of organizations and multidisciplinary arts festivals emerged in major Canadian cities in the late 1980s to mid 1990s. Black artists and organizations placed emphasis on creating conditions conducive for self-representation, celebration and dialogue. In Toronto the Canadian Artists

⁴⁴ See Keith Piper's essay, "Wait, Did I Miss something?" in *Shades of Black: Assembling Black Arts in 1980s Britain*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005

Network Black Artist in Action (CAN:BAIA), “a group of Toronto’s black artists, art historians, art entrepreneurs and other cultural workers came together to develop their creative forces and to collectively improve the position of black artists in Canada,” created an infrastructure of support for artists of African descent and the first contemporary pan-African multidisciplinary arts festival called “Celafi” (Celebrating African Identity) in Toronto in 1989 (Black, 1989: 12). CAN:BAIA’s goal was to provide a space in which black Canadian artists could empower themselves through professional development opportunities, engage in practices of self-representation, and dialogue with international black artists. The organization developed a national membership and went on to host two additional *Celafi* festivals in 1991 and 1997.

The *Celafi* festival program was funded by municipal, provincial, and federal funders but securing funding from the Canada Council was a challenge due to the multidisciplinary nature of the event. The festival was first funded through the Explorations Program as individual disciplines were funded through discipline specific departments of the Canada Council and multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary works posed difficulties with regards to the interpretation and assessment of the works proposed. The works produced by racialized artists were syncretic in form and content.

I felt that we were new but, we needed to access funds for our artist for development, for our artists in the community, so I wasn’t afraid to set up meetings with people from the funding agencies. We had nothing to lose. The one agency that stands out is the Canada Council because the Toronto Arts Council was very much involved. The Ontario Arts Canada Council was also involved, as a matter of fact they gave us the first little bit of money, to do what you call the organizational development. The Canada Council was one of the hardest things. That’s where we got less money than we needed. So I think why the Canada council was important to lobby was because of their individual artists and organizational funds. The artist can apply individually and the organization can apply. It is important to understand their function, but for us if we dealt with it

through the organization, than we figured well, the artist would benefit in the long run. Every year we decided we would meet with the Canada Council and every year we would set up our meetings with them. This was one of the ways we were able to push through some of our ideas and talk about their structure and talk about their jury system and talk about their literature, their literature wasn't doing what they said it was meant to do. (Interview, 2006)

The multi-site festival of contemporary visual art, media arts, music, dance, theatre also featured workshops, seminars, panel discussion, catalogues, and networking opportunities. The events of the three festivals took over the city and beyond with performances, reading, and exhibitions taking place at locations such as Harbourfront, A Space Gallery, the Women's Art Resource Centre, The Powerplant, the Art Gallery of Ontario, and the National Gallery of Canada. A catalogue of the 1997 event was co-produced with the French magazine, *Revue Noir* called *African Canada*.

Access to exhibition venues was of high priority for black artists. Work was being produced but artists had little opportunity to present them to a public. The first national touring exhibition of black Canadian women's contemporary art work called *Black Wimmin When and Where* was coordinated by the Diasporic African Women's Art Collective (DAWA) took place in 1989.⁴⁵

It started out because we were constantly complaining that there were no venues to show our work and so we decided that we were going to do a show together. We decided to open it up and bring more people into the show so that's how *Black Wimmin When and Where* got started.

The exhibition was openly received and was reviewed in the *Globe and Mail*, as well as in the *Canadian Women's Studies Journal*.

⁴⁵ The artists in the exhibition were Buseje Bailey, Clair Carew, Grace Channer, Dzian, Foluke Olubajo, Marie - Avrille Jordon, Khadeja, Kim McNeilly, Barbara Prezaeu, Suli Williams and Winsom

A Space Gallery, the artist run center in Toronto was mentioned by many of the black artists as being somewhat friendly to artists of colour. A Space's openness was not benevolent but came with struggle over who could participate in the organization.

I had to be convinced to join A Space because of my experiences of the art world in the early 1980s. I had to be convinced that it was not the same atmosphere, that it was artist run, and that the artists were creating community. When I got there I don't remember that there was anyone black. I stuck around and got lots of help from the folks who worked there. They helped me and taught me much of the basics and after a while I met Grace Channer and a few other people and came to realize that there were some political tug o war going on within A Space. Grace and I began to do some work because we realized that even though this artist run centre was open it still had its problems. We also had our problem of digging people out of the woodwork and getting people to come out and feel like they belonged. (Interview, 2006)

Another artist remarked:

I worked at the Black History Society and brought that exhibition to A Space through the Community Arts Committee. Then I co-curated, it's called a ground-breaking film program at A Space in Toronto entitled, "Black Perspectives on Film". Also at A Space we curated a show featuring the work of Nova Scotia artist Donna James.

A Space was instrumental in providing a site and institution in which black artist/curators could present their first projects.

I remember getting involved with A Space and I was the only black person around that I did see then. The people there were quite generous. They would encourage me. I remember in 1986 or 1987 I put together a flea market-like show because I didn't make the credentials to curate a show but I really wanted to do an art show and I got help from the gallery to do a show called, *Weapons of Culture* (1988) and black artists came out of the woodwork.

Other curated series of contemporary black visual arts emerged in major cities. One such exhibition was David George's "Building Bridges Untitled Number One" (BBUNO) at the Pitt Gallery in Vancouver in 1992.

BBUNO created the opportunity for a diverse section of the black population – some of whom may have been unaware that the artist run centre movement even exists and who may hold fairly consumerist and conservative notions of the substance and function of contemporary art – not only to view work, but participate in its production. (Hudson, 1996/7; 55)

The concern over self-representation, access to production and dissemination, as well as the construction of the conditions for the reception of black art works were also voiced by groups such the Black Film and Video Network, a national network of film and video artist. It should be noted that the activities of racialized artist produced an explosion of collective self articulations of identities and the emergence of art works that were shaped by other histories and cultural signs.

All of the black artists I interviewed highlighted the fact that it was *FUSE Magazine* that provided a venue in which they could practice the craft of critical writing in the areas of arts and politics in Canada. The role of this publication in creating critical consciousness around racial inequality in the arts is also remarked upon by many of the Canada Council respondents in the study. Black writing exploded on to the scene as a mode of self-expression much like the explosion of black film and video practice. Writing became a tool for reflecting on the intersections between the personal and the political, centring black experiences and subjectivities, creating visibility and challenging stereotypes. One of the respondent, states:

The thing about *FUSE Magazine* that I recall is that it was more explicitly about the politics of culture where as other publications might have tried to underplay that and make aesthetics come first or to deny the significance that politics plays in culture. *Fuse* is all about politics. It sought out and took on political debates because that was its mandate and people who were involved with *FUSE* – the writers and the editors – were all interested in stirring up trouble. They felt that that was needed for change to come about. That was what interested me in *FUSE* magazine. I can't remember how I came to write an article for *FUSE*. It was probably

through people I knew but once I started writing they started seeking me out as well because they wanted new voices. I was fairly young at the time. I was just out of school, they wanted new voices, they wanted people of colour and they were looking for writers who had ideas, articulations about these struggles that were just starting up and beginning to come to the fore. These struggles had been happening for many, many years but they began to move to the centre of debate certainly in Toronto. (Interview, 2006)

Other artists in the study talked about the significance of feminist publications such as *Tiger Lily: Journal by Women of Colour, our lives*, and *Fireweed* in providing access to publishing opportunities that allowed the voices of racialized women to be disseminated.

In all of the activities connected to the activist struggles outlined above; issues pertaining to citizenship, human rights, ‘culture’ and education played key roles in mobilizing action and support. All the respondents in the study highlight the importance of alternate media and publications such as *FUSE*, *Fireweed*, *our lives*, and *Tiger Lily* in providing a space within the public sphere in which their voices could be heard. Artist-run centres served as fertile environments that provided access not only to production and dissemination possibilities, but also facilitated the development of competences needed to exploit the Canadian art system.

Managing Racialized Others: Outreach and Cultural Policy

In this section I explore the ‘why’, ‘who’ and ‘how’ of racial equity policy formation at the Canada Council between 1989 and 1999, in light of the eruption of activist activities organized by racialized artists and the emergence of new organizations producing and disseminating works by racialized artists. Staff at Canada Council was well aware of the issues through direct contact

with these artists and by debates taking place in the alternative cultural press. A past director of the Canada Council remembers that period as one in which Council staff was in touch with communities of artists and knew the issues affecting artists and organizations. She states:

I wasn't unaware of the issues around diversity because I read *FUSE* magazine that dealt with these issues from the perspective of communities who did not feel that the Canada Council was serving them well. One of the first things I did when I got there was to hold a meeting and it was an open meeting of all officers and heads of section and one of the questions I asked them was "what did they consider to be the crucial issues that needed to be dealt with". Many of them or a number of them – these are people who are out in the field dealing with large organizations on a regular basis- spoke to the problem of other organizations and individuals who would have liked to be served by the Canada Council but could not gain access to it because of program regulations. (Interview, 2006)

The quote above identifies a number of issues related to the culture of the Council and the distribution of funding to large cultural institutions such as operas and dance companies. The allocation of the bulk of Council funding to large organizations was detrimental to small, emerging and emergent organizations. Barriers also existed that hindered the ability of individual applicants such as emerging and racialized artists to gain access. Based on the experiences in the Explorations Program, the then head of the Program recommended to Joyce Zemans that cultural diversity and interdisciplinary were crucial issues that needed to be addressed by Council. The Council's narrow definition of the professional artist and arts disciplines served as exclusionary regulatory screens for racialized artists who were working in multi- and interdisciplinary practices and emergent forms. The definition of the professional artist was also a contentious one as "it required artist's to have had a number of curated exhibitions in public art institutions. This proved to be a difficult criterion to fill for emerging artists or the mural artist. Both Council staff

and the community strongly pushed for funding for interdisciplinary art” (Interview with Explorations Section Head: 2006).

Another respondent stated that the discontent in communities of racialized artists found its way into Council because of the emergence of a plethora of events, organizations, and publications that addressed issues of race and representation at that time. She states:

There started to be programs at film and video festivals dedicated to the works of people of colour or from different cultural backgrounds. There were panel discussions and questions of race and representations would come forward both as aesthetics questions within the practice and as political questions in terms of how artists got funding, what kinds of work got made, what was included in the canon, what was excluded. In publications that discourse was happening, at conferences and symposia, at seminars and it had been happening since the mid 80s. For us, it was part of our work. I came from a particular tradition and so was Edythe Goodridge so a lot of my thinking was informed by Edythe and Dennis Tourbin. We came from a very artist centred tradition and we believed we were there to primarily serve the artists and the arts community and the better you did that, the better you would serve audiences and the culture as a whole. Our approach was more driven from the bottom. If you were there and that's what the artists were talking about, that became what you were talking about. (Interview, 2006)

In an attempt to better understand the issue - what was at stake for the Canada Council, and devise a response to communities of racialized artists - the director of Canada Council, Joyce Zemans hired Chris Creighton-Kelly (Vancouver artist, activist and cultural administrator, also former Canada Council Exploration officer) in 1989. Creighton-Kelly's role was to “assist the Council in developing policies and strategies relating to cultural diversity and aboriginal art” (Robertson 2006, 53). He was familiar with the programs and structures at Council and had dealt with the issue of race in the context of the Explorations Program. Creighton-Kelly states:

Issues of race were not really taken up by the Canada Council at all except for in Explorations. It was the place where all the stuff many things not just issues of race – interdisciplinary work, collaborative work,

community based work, all these kinds of practices were from people of other cultures of the world besides European. They wound up in Explorations because they didn't fit anywhere else. So Explorations naturally became the spokes unit, spokes section, for people of colour. It must be said that the head of this section, Helen Eriks, was very committed to these issues, and kept foregrounding them in her conversations with the other heads and so on. (Interview, 2006)

We were “doing what they called multicultural work at the time in the Explorations Program” recalls Creighton-Kelly (Interview, 2007). In a sense, the genesis of work directly concerned with cultural diversity occurred in the Explorations Program.

Issues of race, access and equity were not taken up on a Council-wide basis until 1992 when the first Racial Equity officer was hired. The ‘unofficial’ nature of the practices of equity employed at the Council is described by a past Section Head. When asked about policies or initiatives on equity that existed at Council prior to 1991, she stated: “I don't remember there being any policy at all. We were coming to terms with it ourselves, I don't remember policy. There weren't special outreach programs, there weren't hiring quotas, there weren't dedicated programs for artists of colour” (Interview with ex-Canada Council Section Head, 2006). She goes on to discuss the strategies she employed for attending to racial inequities in funding in her Section when she arrived at Council in 1990. She states:

When I got to Council it was more a question of taking my political thinking and what I knew and enacting it in a different institution, one that I thought was more important because it was feeding money at the grassroots level. I had to take apart everything - how the programs were administered, what outreach activities were carried out, the composition of the juries and that one is huge. There was hard research that Joyce had commissioned on women that was very useful to use when I had to talk to reactionary people in the community - mostly white, male experimental filmmakers.

I started to look at the programs and how we administered through that knowledge framework. I realized in my own section there were fundamental problems and they were across the board. They were in how the descriptions of the programs were written. They did not tend to welcome documentary. There were arguments being made by many film theorists, first by feminist theorists and later by gay theorists and I had a sensibility that the same arguments would be made by black artists or First Nations artists. When people first get access to film equipment they often make a certain kind of documentary - testimonial documentary, documenting the important people in the community, the histories of the communities which might have been where a lot of white women started but in a ten year gap they might have moved on to other places. If you don't make sure the criteria is opened to practices of all kinds then when people move from a marginalized position to an empowered position the door can be shut on them. (Interview, 2006)

Although there were no formal policies at the Council, the staff in the Media Arts Section in particular was privy to much of the discussion and disgruntlement in the community as many of the racialized artists and organizations utilized video film as the medium to tell their stories. Video as a medium had become more accessible in terms of cost and portability hence it was employed by marginalized artists who had few resources at their disposal. The medium also presented a more expansive range of dissemination possibilities compared to other forms of art. Its audiences did not require the structure and organization of the 'art gallery' for its reception.

During this period, Creighton-Kelly requested that two Advisory committees – the First Peoples Advisory committee and the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality (ACREA) - be struck to assist him in carrying out his job. The first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality (1990)⁴⁶ was made up of established artists of colour and a First Nations artist. Senior artists from a range of artistic disciplines were invited to sit on the Advisory Committee for Racial

⁴⁶ The Committee members included: Henry Bishop (Dartmouth, NS), Richard Fung (Toronto, ON), Leopoldo Gutierrez (Montreal, QC), Janes Hewes (Edmonton, AB), Margo Kane (Vancouver, BC), Leslie Komori (Vancouver, BC), Pamela Rebello (Winnipeg, MB), Itah Sadu (Toronto, ON) and Lamberto Tassinari (Montreal, QC). The original committee included Marlene Nourbese Philip (Toronto, ON) who resigned in November 1990.

Equality which was based on his knowledge of the national community of artists and on the recommendations of experts within specific ethno-cultural communities.

They were all very experienced people in their fields, they all worked in their communities, many of them were pioneers having been the first who did this and one of them was a woman named Pamela Rebello the first person in 1981, who was appointed to an arts board, the first person in Canada of colour. (Interview, 2006)

All of the individuals invited to sit on the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality were involved in advocacy and activist activities pertaining to racial equity in the arts in their respective communities.

Consultant Creighton-Kelly sought representation from artists who belonged to a broad spectrum of ethno-cultural communities but the committee lacked black francophone representation due to Creighton-Kelly's ignorance of that community. He addresses the exclusion of members from that community in the following interview excerpt:

I didn't know people in the Haitian community which was the primary community that was lobbying at that time, so it's a mistake I made and I wish I had done something about it. Ultimately it got fixed, because I talked openly about it and the next person who took my place fixed it. But anyway, it's one of those oversights that I regret although I did have Francophones on the committee, or no, they weren't Francophones they were people who spoke French as a second language so there was French being spoken. But the whole question of Francophone of colour or a Francophone immigrant, I would do that if I was to start again today. (Interview, 2006)

Although Creighton-Kelly saw the members of the committee as 'experienced people in their fields', the Committee members were reticent to position themselves as community leaders.

They stated: "That they were not community leaders and did not necessarily represent a certain

group of people”.⁴⁷ According to the consultant, the members all had one stipulation regarding their involvement on the committee and it was that they be granted ‘real’ powers. The committee’s concern about being rendered impotent was echoed in their concern about the role of the Canada Council’s board in the process of transformation. The concern was voiced in the minutes of the May 1990 meeting as; “The committee doubted that the Board would prepare its own agenda than give the impression of change” (Minutes of the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, 1990: 4). This demand for ‘real’ power reflects the development of new forms of relationships between the state and its racialized citizenry. Racialized subjects were demanding to be included within the structures of society as full participating citizens.

A number of committee meetings were held in Ottawa over the first year of the committee’s inception. The committee met amongst themselves as well as with Section heads from Media Arts, Music and Opera, The Art Bank, Theatre, Dance, Explorations, Art Awards and other staff from the Council as part of the research and recommendation drafting process. Staff sensitization sessions were held and resource materials on multiculturalism and equity were circulated to staff. Members of the committee engaged in discussions on the terms of multiculturalism and the importance of incorporating an anti-racist framework into the work of the committee. Some of the members of the committee wanted to approach the discourse of equality as a discourse of justice as espoused by feminist scholar Nancy Fraser, in the article, “Recognition without Ethics” (2001). Such a starting point would question the values upon which the culture of the Canada Council operates and centrally position racism and the redistribution of resources into the discussion. It would also necessitate a broadening of the focus of analysis to include status.

⁴⁷ Minutes of Advisory Committee on Racial Equality, May 24-25, 1990, p.4

The committee also began the work of preparing recommendations in the following areas: communication; staff sensitization; eligibility; assessment and related issues specifically the issue of appropriation. The committee felt that Canada Council's documents and workshops geared toward racialized artists should be multilingual and that the Council needed to be proactive about their outreach activities to artists from diverse ethno-cultural communities. The categories of 'professional artist', the Council's emphasis on 'excellence', as well as the composition of juries were critiqued for contributing to the marginalization of artists of colour.

By late 1990 fissures began to develop within the committee over the analytic frame to be used to interrogate and ameliorate practices of exclusion at the Canada Council. The November 26, 1990 minutes of the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts outline the frustration felt by both the committee members and the consultant about the operationalization of the Multicultural Act, the lack of clarity about the mandate of the Racial Equality Advisory Committee, and the ways in which the Canada Council engaged in 'multicultural work'. Frustration and rising conflict were signalled by the committee's rejection of the Council's multicultural framework but also by one of the committee member's resignation from the Committee over practical and philosophical issues. The first Report on Racial Equality at the Canada Council (1991) articulates the committee's discomfort with the use of the term, multiculturalism because of its inference to a feel good form of pluralism. The report states:

Discussing these issues often causes people and institutions to react with fear and denial. Even when this can be acknowledged, sometimes the reaction is performed with guilt – multiculturalism is a “clean air” issue – good for you; good for all of us. Because of this fuzzy approach, the fundamental issues of power (who has and who doesn't have it) and power sharing (what will have to change if it is going to happen) go unacknowledged. These questions are

central to any discussion of greater access and participation in the programs and policies of the Canada Council. (*Report on Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council 1991: 5*)

Questions were also being posed by certain committee members about assumptions of intra-ethnic/racial equality that pluralism implies, the existence of racial hierarchies amongst people of colour and how this affects the representational politics of cultural policy making.

The committee member wanted to see the committee place race and its impact on artists of colour at the center of their work at the Council. The Minutes state:

The minutes of the May meeting were discussed as well as Marlene's letter and her concerns. Pamela Rebello summed up the discussion that had taken place at the last meeting about racism. She said that members discussed differences between personal or individual racism and institutional racism and how they wanted to focus on systemic racism in the Canada Council. They also spoke from personal experiences about different levels of discrimination, some based upon race, others on language, others on ethnicity. The framework to work under is dignity of persons, principle, freedom, respect, sharing. (Minutes of the Meeting of the first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, 1990:3)

The committee members also felt that the name of the Advisory Committee should reflect the fact that an acknowledgement of the issue of racism and its effects were central to the work of the committee and the consultant. They were also displeased with Joyce Zeman's move that evacuated the term racism from the committee's report to the Canada Council Board for political reasons and her refusal to change the name of the Committee. The elision of racism from the language used in the report elided discussions about the roots of racial inequity at the Council and maintained liberal notions of equality, individual and group rights.

The minutes of the March, 1990 Advisory Committee for Racial Equality makes evident the contention over race at the institutional level, as well as the strategies employed by the director to convince the board of the Council to take up the issues of equity. The Minutes state:

Chris, on behalf of the committee, asked if Council admitted systemic racism. Joyce answered that any institution that is white is a product of systemic racism. The word racism is like a dagger – it is important how it is used – question of language – confrontation versus positive effort of change. We don't want to lose by being tied up in language. (Minutes of the Meeting of the first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, 1990:7-8)

The director goes on to say in the Minutes that: “We have to understand that this is a political issue” and “admitted that anti-racism was a problem word. Her concern is not to slow the process. Joyce said again that systemic racism was easier to take than anti-racism.”⁴⁸ The term racism was a contentious one at the Council as it opened up the door for the personal to become blatantly enmeshed with the political and institutional. The committee members disagreed with the director's stance regarding race and one of the members pointed out the slipperiness of the term ‘multicultural’ when it is evacuated of discussions of race. She states, “the word multiculturalism is a semantic confusion.” In an interview for this study, Zemans' further elaborates on the internal administrative strategies she employed to *push* the agenda for racial equity at the Canada Council. She states:

This was an agenda item that was not on the agenda before I got there and it was something I took ownership of. I really believe that it had to be addressed and I think I would have done it today even with the new structure which is that there is an Arts Division. I did two things, one, when I got there the sections heads met with the Associate Director, I changed that and said that I wanted all the Section Heads to report directly to me and I wanted to meet regularly both formally and informally, which we did. I felt that the principal business of the Arts Council was support of the arts and therefore it was the role of the Director to be fully aware of the issues. I didn't micro manage or run the

⁴⁸ Minutes of the Meeting of the first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, 1990, p. 7

Arts Section but I had that direct reporting relationship. If you go to a business manual they would state that you shouldn't have more than x number of people reporting to any individual. I did not feel that that was satisfactory and I did feel I had to know what was happening on the ground in the Arts Division.

I didn't have someone responsible as there is now- a Head of the Arts Division. I flattened that and worked directly with Arts Sections and this was my principal mandate. I felt that the issue of diversity and diversification had to be internal to the Council operation. It had to work at all level as the report ultimately said. I had to work with my Board, I had to work with my staff to convince them that it was worth setting up a committee, and I worked with Chris on a daily basis often late at night trying to work through these issues. We worked at all levels. I worked with the Prime Minister's Office around appointments to the Canada Council Board. We did racial equity training for staff and Board members; we looked at all our processes within the context of the Racial Equality report. (Interview, 2006)

The above quote highlights the two key issues affecting the implementation of racial equity at the Council. First, the tenets of diversity required buy-in at all levels of the Council hence the need for multiple modes of articulating the issue to the range of stakeholders involved because cultural diversity at Council was not without its internal detractors. One of the study's respondents stated that, "The Visual Arts Section was most resistant to new and emerging artists and viewed cultural diversity as supporting folksy, ethnic art. Disciplinary sections also feared that if there was inclusive funding, each section would lose a percentage of their own funding" (Canada Council ex-staff: interview). The Canada Council's precarious position with regard to government allocation of funding to its agencies filtered down to individual arts discipline sections creating a climate of vulnerability and fear over cuts to the Council and in turn the sections. The second issue concerns the diversification of the culture or ways of doing things at the Council including staffing, structure, governance and jury composition.

What becomes clear from the minutes of the Racial Equality Committee and my interviews with ex-Council staff is the fact that the vision for racial equity at the Canada Council emerged at a time when there were changing demands on Council's resources with a director who had a personal and political desire to ameliorate conditions of access to those resources. The vision that was sold to all levels of the organization and to the government appointed board members attempted to bracket the many narratives about race and power that informed discussions within the Racial Equity Committee.

Competing discourses on *what* constituted good art and *who* produced it found expression in discussions taking place in both racialized and white communities regarding appropriation, excellence and representation. Creighton-Kelly states:

There was a certain confluence of events that happened at that particular moment. I was there, Helen was there, and we had a new director Joyce Zemans who decided that this was important. Most importantly, community pressure had risen to certain point where publicly the Canada Council was being called racist, in the press and so on and so, that combination created something to make something happen. (Interview, 2006)

The demand for racial equity in arts funding at the Canada Council began in the community while discourses on diversity generated in a range of discursive formations – government agencies, legislation, activist communities - informed how the issue was talked about by both racialized artists and Council staff. Zemans' vision for institutional change at the Council assisted in moving the Council ahead in this area.

The first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality (1990-1993) made 23 recommendations⁴⁹ to the Board of the Canada Council including the creation of an Equity Office. It is important to note that the birth of the Equity Office as a limited term project was a result of adopting of the Advisory Committee's recommendation titled, "Continuing Commitment". The Recommendation states:

At least one racial equality staff person from the Aboriginal, African or Asian arts community and a secretarial assistant be hired full-time for at least two years to research, develop, supervise and administer the process. This would lend credibility, consistency, and accountability to the general arts public and to the racial minority arts communities. (Recommendations to the Canada Council for Racial Equality in the Arts and the Response of the Canada Council, 1992: 7).

Based on the committee's adoption of the recommendations, Koko Amateifio, the first Racial Equality Coordinator was hired in 1991 "with the mandate of facilitating access of Canadian artists of all racial and cultural backgrounds to Council programs, working under the direct supervision of the Head of Strategic Initiative" (Equity Office Canada Council for the Arts, 2004: Appendix A). The title of the position was changed to Equity Officer just prior to Amateifio's resignation in 1992.

Not all of the Advisory Committee's recommendations were accepted by the board of the Canada Council. A number of recommendations including one that addressed systemic racism in Canadian institutions were questioned or not given priority. Some of the Advisory Committee members felt a certain level of hostility from the government appointed conservative board.

⁴⁹ Recommendations to the Canada Council for Racial Equality in the Arts and the Response of the Canada Council, January 1992.

See Cameron Bailey's article, *Fright the Power* (1992) - "The 23, very focussed recommendations come listed under 12 headings: Communications, Human Resources, Juries and Advisory Committees, Board Appointments, Organizational Review, Designated Funding in Sections, Definition of Professionalism, Voluntary ID and Database, Continuing Commitment, Accountability, National Conferences and Press Release." p. 24

Regarding the committee's recommendation of an organizational review of the Council, grounded on the notion that systemic racism is pervasive in all Canadian institutions and anti-racist work was a necessary component in implementation of new practices, the Board responded:

The Council, while sensitive to the issue raised by the committee, cannot endorse this general statement regarding Canadian institutions. The Council intends to commission an organizational review in the coming months as part of its response to employment equity issues to endeavour to ensure that its policies, programs and practices reflect the reality of the cultural diversity of its clientele, Canada's artistic community. (Recommendations to the Canada Council for Racial Equality in the Arts and the Response of the Canada Council, 1992: 7).

The issue of race and racism is alluded to in the above quote. An acknowledgement of systemic racism in Canadian institutions as a factor contributing to inequities would suggest that power relations and issues of redistribution would have to be addressed. When asked about the issue of racism and the responses of the Board member's, Zemans states, "What I remember specifically in two cases is: "members of the Board asking why we need this because we're not racially biased." She goes on to state:

Of course it is a question of systemic racism and not a question of individual bias and it is about allowing for the possibility of change and inclusion. We had to get around that and make people comfortable with the fact that this was about systemic change. (Interview, 2006)

Cameron Bailey argues that then Council director Joyce Zemans made "motions of change but was unwilling to go the full distance" (Bailey 1992: 23). Bailey is referring to the fact that anti-racism was removed from the official lexicon of racial equality in the Racial Equality Committee's recommendations presented to the Board. Going the distance would involve the

public recognition of the role race and racism plays at the individual and institutional levels in the funding of Canadian culture.

The recommendation that the “Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts be continued, changing some members if necessary, till 1999” was not taken up by the Board. It responded that the Racial Equality Committee “was not constituted as a permanent committee”. This response signals that the Board saw racial equity as a short-term concern and not part of an on-going long-term project.

The Committee’s discussion on appropriation in its recommendations were met by public backlash that was framed in terms of censorship and as the right of the artist to represent the other. Bailey writes, “the ridiculous white artists’ furor that greeted the report’s release zeroed in on and simplified one issue in one recommendation – cultural appropriation – without recognizing the real value of the committee’s work” (Bailey, 1992: 24). The backlash was around censorship and came from primarily established, male Ontario writers⁵⁰ including Neil Bissoondath. Newspaper articles such as “Canada Council asks whose voice is it anyway” by Stephen Godfrey appeared in the *Globe and Mail* newspaper. Godfrey writes: “When a writer writes about a culture which is not his own, should he have to collaborate at some level with those he is writing about? Increasingly, according to the Canada Council, the answer is yes” (Godfrey, 1992: C1). He goes on to state:

Questions like this keep cropping up around issues known as ‘cultural appropriation,’ which can be defined as the depiction of minorities or

⁵⁰ Eleven letters appeared in the *Globe and Mail* condemning the Canada Council’s position on cultural appropriation. Letters from Timothy Findley, Richard Outron, Heather Robertson, Bill Driedger, Patrick MFadden, Joy Anne Jacoby, Robert Cishecki, Bogdan Pospelovsky, Wellner Gagnier and Alberto Manguel, were published under the heading “Frightening attack on the imagination” on March 28, 1992.

cultures other than one's own, either in fiction or non-fiction. Following a report from its Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts, the Canada Council stated earlier this year that "cultural appropriation is a serious issue."

According to Joyce Zemans, director of the council, it is moving slowly toward a position that collaboration with minority groups must be increasingly recognized if those voices are to be effectively used. And in that, she says, the Canada Council is merely reflecting a significant change in society at large. (Godfrey, 1992: C1)

The historical and present day inequities of those funded to produce cultural texts was not addressed by the dissenters who questioned the logic of the arguments presented on cultural appropriation by the Advisory Committee on Racial Equality at the Canada Council or by communities of marginalized artists of colour.

In an attempt to calm public opinion on the Canada Council's position on cultural appropriation and racial equity, Zemans wrote a letter to *the Globe and Mail* newspaper stating, she was misinterpreted by Godfrey and that the "council's policy... remains the same as it has always been: an artist is completely free to determine the project for which he or she requests council support and that proposal will be evaluated by the jury on its merit" (Zemans, 1992).

In the letter, Zemans validates the work and recommendations of the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality at the Council and clearly states that the board and peer jurors were still in charge at Council because the board did not accept all of the committee's recommendations, specifically the one "that council develop guidelines on cultural appropriation, to be used by juries" (Zemans, 1992). She concluded the letter reaffirming Council's commitment to anti-censorship principles as well as to the constituent of artists of colour. She wrote, "Just as it would have been unacceptable for the Council to stifle the new perspectives those jurors brought to the

deliberations, it is equally unacceptable that it stifle, or predetermine, the debate about the representation of cultural and racial minorities” (Zemans, 1992).

The issue of cultural appropriation, as articulated by the Advisory Committee for Racial Equity at the Canada Council and debates about whose voices were being funded with state resources, set off a series of conservative responses from primarily white writers and artists who feared that their right to speak in the ‘other’s’ voice was being policed by the Council. A number of letters to this effect were published in the *Globe and Mail* on March 28, 1992. The following are a few excerpts from those letters:

For the past 35 years I have been writing and have published poems in the appropriated voices of men, women, dogs, cats, rats, bats, angels, God, Gods, Infants, mermaids, elephants, saints, prophets, Satan, salamanders, scholars, martyrs and even, so help me, readers. To name a few. The list is not endless; to date I have not attempted to write in the voice of a Canada Council bureaucrat. But some day I may. And then the very last thing that I will seek is any manner of consultation or permission. In common with every writer worthy of his or her vocation, I refuse absolutely to entertain any argument demanding that I do so, or that I am to be in any way restricted in my choice of subject matter, I will not in short submit to such censorship, before or after the fact. (Bill Dreiedger, 1992: letter to the editor)

Another letter to the editor states:

I wish to express my concern regarding the subject of appropriation of voice (*Canada Council Asks Whose Voice is it Anyway?*) – March 21
Given the Canada Council’s position as expressed in Stephen Godfrey’s article- that application for council support will henceforth be weighed in the light of this question – I am interested to know what might happen if I were to request support for a novel written in a woman’s voice. A child’s voice. The voices of men and women and children who lived before my time. A black voice. A Jew’s voice. A fascist’s voice. A cat’s voice...

Put it this way. I imagine – therefore I am. The rest – believe me – is silence. (Timothy Findley, 1992: *Globe and Mail* letter to the editor)

In the same batch of letters to the editor, Robert Cischecki asserts:

I was frightened by the Canada Council's apparent desire to sanitize artistic output from a open dialogue on an artist's perceptions about his or her surroundings to a censored, politically correct form of expression. Bureaucrats and interest groups will never learn that the more a viewpoint or statement of any expression is hidden or submerged it will fester and grow into an uncontrollable monster while will finally raise its head to annihilate the very system and individuals that tried to silence it. (Robert Cischecki 1992: *Globe and Mail* letter to the editor)

The key issue in the above sentiments is the way in which representation and recognition are posed in opposition to artistic freedom and merit. The focus on the issue of appropriation in the mainstream press overshadowed the issue of access and racial equity.

Paule Leduc took up leadership of the Canada Council in 1992 at a time when the organization's government appropriation was severely cut back. The implementation of the recommendations of the first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality took place at a time of government cutbacks to institutions and structural changes at the Canada Council in which a merger with the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) was being undertaken. The merger of both Councils was instigated by the introduction of Bill C93 (1992) to Parliament which sought to eliminate or merge government agencies. The Bill was later defeated, closing the door on the amalgamation of Council and SSHRC. In her 1992-1993 Director's Report, Leduc writes:

Within the space of less than a year, however, the course of events changed dramatically; the government announced an \$8.7 million budget reduction in December 1992, and the merger legislation was defeated in the Senate several months later in June. While these two events altered the course of my mission at the Council they did not alter my fundamental commitment to ensuring the Council's ability to provide efficient and flexible services to Canada's art community. (Leduc, 1993: 10)

The environment at Canada Council in the early nineties was characterized by artists and Council staff alike as academic and corporate. Their feeling was that art and culture had taken a backseat to the rationalization of the Council's systems.

Leduc instituted a hierarchical administrative reporting system that contrasted with what Zemans had left behind: while discipline heads and the Equity Officer had reported directly to the director during Zemans' tenure, a new position of Head of Arts Division was now put in place:

Things changed dramatically when Paula Leduc came in. She did keep the programs going and it would appear that she was supportive of some of them in certain ways but I knew fundamentally she wasn't there because of equity. She also changed the structure and created a position called the Head of Arts Division so we no longer reported directly to the Director. (Interview; 2006)

The structure of the Council was undergoing transformation guided by a philosophy of corporate rationalizations. It is within this climate of cut-backs that Angela Lee, the former coordinator of CAN: BAIA, was hired to fill the role of Racial Equality Coordinator. A First Nations Coordinator was hired soon after. The diversification of the culture of Council was taking shape. According to the Council's organizational chart the Equity Office was to report to the Head of Strategic Initiatives, senior manager in the organization. However, Lee recalls that her position and reporting mechanisms in Council were ill-defined so she went directly to the director as much as possible. Lee recounts:

The position and role as Equity Officer was a bit amorphous. There were three interns when I got there and the administration of the Canada Council had just changed and they became more academic than arts. I didn't have a job description per se. It was unclear who I reported to and that was a bone of contention. I worked with all the disciplines at the Council to ensure there was cultural and racial equity. I was also in

touch with the community to make sure they were aware of Council's programs and that they knew how to proceed through the system. (Interview, 2006)

Under Leduc's directorship, job cuts and worries about job security created tensions and low morale amongst the staff at Council. Racial equity became less of a concern. An interviewee remembers that "the visual arts section was most distant from what was happening in the field concerning race and culture. First Nations artists were making gains in that area but it was not true for people of colour artists, African-Canadian artists, or other new immigrant artists" (Interview, 2006). The following three and a half years under the directorship of Roch Carrier (1993-.1997) saw the Council "downsizing its staff by 30%, and restructuring the organization – among other things, freezing activities at the Art Bank, eliminating the Explorations Program and incorporating support for individual artists and development into the sections" (Executive Summary of the *Report and Recommendations of the Second Advisory Committee on Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council*). The Explorations Program had played an important role in providing access to Council funds to artists of colour, emerging artists, multidisciplinary practitioners and new arts organizations.

Lee worked with the second Advisory Committee (1994 - 1996)⁵¹ to gather statistical data, develop systemic policies, conduct programmatic analysis, and to table recommendations around the operational and systemic guidelines and policies at Council. The Committee's June 1995 meeting minutes highlights changes to the mandate of the Second Advisory committee for Racial Equality (1993-1996). The committee's role grew to include concerns "focused on race, gender, art practice, culture, able or disabled artists, rather than just of 'cultural diversity'"

⁵¹ Committees members consisted on Chris Creighton-Kelly (Vancouver, BC), Patrice Foucher (Montreal, QC), Sylvia Hamilton (Halifax, NS), Hugo Torres (Winnipeg, MB), and Jean Yoon (Toronto, ON)

(Minutes of the Second Advisory committee for Racial Equality, 1995). Emphasis was placed on operationalizing the recommendations of the first Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, taking into consideration, outreach; knowledge sharing in communities; gathering statistical information; grant writing workshops; rephrasing the language of application forms; project and program descriptions; and internal staff workshops.

Experts in the field of equity and anti-racist institutional work, academics, and artists were brought in to facilitate staff workshops. Numerous community forums or ‘sounding’ sessions were held in communities with invited artists of colour from all across the country to discuss racial equity at the Canada Council. Many of the artists interviewed for the study remember that a key shift took place in their relationship to Council and the documents produced by Council. Individuals found the experience of communicating with Council staff less intimidating and Council documents easier to interpret. The Council’s knowledge of racialized communities grew as it acquired and collected information gathered through ‘sounding’ sessions and other forms of consultations. Black artists in turn benefited from participating in the processes through which knowledge was being produced about them.

Although the Council was present in community discussions on racial equity, the Second Advisory Committee on Racial Equality was unsure of Council’s status and the status of racial equity at Council. These two items as well as a budget for the Equity Office, were high on the committee’s agenda in 1994. The Minutes of the meeting of The Second Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts states:

Considerable time was spent in outlining the current internal and external dynamics of Council over the past year. This included mention

of low morale of Council staff, the current eight member Board, the lack of an Executive Director appointment over the past five months, the implementation of Multi-Year Funding (and its implications for Equity and Access), the organizational review scheduled for next year (involving the arts communities) after the large administrative cuts and the downsizing which is currently underway. Change was said to be the only constant. Stress was made on the fact that Equity may or may not be a priority on the new Executive Director, that the current hierarchy may be restructured and/or removed and that the discourse and recommendations of this Committee must factor in this mercurial state of affairs. (Minutes Second Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts, 1994)

The tenuousness of Council's funding from the government and threats of major cutbacks placed the equity portfolio on the backburner as disciplinary sections were concerned with protecting their slice of the diminishing pie. Lee remembers a hostile climate at the Council.

A year later, the Council released its Strategic Plan, "The Canada Council: A Design for the Future," in which Council outlines its commitment to 'culturally diverse communities'. The strategic plan states:

- 1) The Council will continue to make its programs responsive and accessible to artists from culturally diverse communities and accessible to artists from culturally diverse communities.
- 2) The Council will improve communications with artists from culturally diverse communities to increase knowledge and awareness of Council programs.
- 3) The Council will try to ensure that the perspectives of artists from culturally diverse backgrounds is better reflected in the Canada Council by such means as jury and advisory committee representation, Council staff representation, program guidelines and criteria.
- 4) The Council will continue to work with other appropriate departments, agencies and organizations to these ends. (*The Canada Council: A Design for the Future*, 1995: 16-17)

Although the Strategic Plan publicly articulates principles of ‘cultural diversity’ in the Council’s work on racial equity, it masks the kinds of discussions on race, racism, and multiculturalism taking place at the levels of the Advisory Committees on Racial Equality and staff. At the Advisory Committee level, issues of race, power and cultural diversity in light of Canada’s multicultural reality cropped up as new eastern European immigrant artists began to make claims of marginality vis-à-vis Anglophone and Francophone artists. They, too, felt that they were facing problems similar to black artists regarding access to the Canada Council and its resources. According to an ex-Equity Officer:

New immigrant artists did not know the systems or terminology of the practice and that became a barrier. Some of them were self-taught and would speak to discipline officers who would assume that because they did not use of certain language, they did not know what they were doing.

The multicultural paradigm of diversity and plurality started to vie for priority over an anti-racist paradigm that pays attention not only to access to cultural resources but also to the work of race in determining access to the Canada Council and other cultural institutions.

The Report and Recommendations of the Second Advisory Committee on Racial Equality (1996) focused on “key issues with the Canada Council which still present significant barriers to artists and arts organizations in their interactions with the Council” (*The Report and Recommendations of the Second Advisory Committee on Racial Equality*, 1996: 10). In total, 26 recommendations were presented the Board under the categories of institutional accountability, board appointments, senior management, Equity Office, human resources management, peer assessment, communications and program management and delivery, and professional development. The committee members also recommended that that the Council adopt cultural and racial equity as the third operating principle of Council, extend the operation of the Equity

Office to three years, create a seamless reporting system, and formulate a human resource plan that included racial equity. For the most part, the committee and the Equity Coordinator focused their work on ensuring continued buy-in on the principle and practices of racial equity at the Council, with the goal that the Equity Office and its work would become institutionalized. The work of the Equity Office within and outside of Council centred on re-shaping or re-constituting the boundaries of art while simultaneously creating the structures and processes in which the ‘other’ could participate in defining some of the rules that govern her. Sharon Fernandez was hired as the third Equity Coordinator in 1996 under the directorship of Shirley Thomson. A third Advisory Committee on Racial Equality⁵² was installed. This time the committee was an integrated one that included representation from Canada Council board and staff. Anti-racist principles continued to inform the committee’s analysis of racial equity. However, it should be noted that ‘cultural diversity’ became the term used by the Equity Office, the Third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality (1996- 2000) and through the rest of the Council in discussions and texts pertaining to racial equity. In a Canada Council background paper on cultural diversity, the term is discussed as a *strategy* for inclusion undertaken by Council.

Let me outline the current rationale behind Council’s specifically focused understanding of *cultural diversity*, which in and of itself is an encompassing term that permits holistic vision and describes the *ideal* and lived ‘nature’ of the Canadian landscape. This ‘nature’ is a history of different cultures living together and dialectically creating evolving repertoires of meaning through interaction, expression and tension. (Fernandez, no date)

Cultural diversity as described above signified communities of racialized others and to a lesser extent to the Francophone and Anglophone framework upon which it sat without implicating the

⁵² Lillian Allen, Roy Miki, Hugo Torres, Riki Turofsky, Francoise Colbert, Silvie Bernier and Roger Gaudet.

violence of race. The shift to the language of cultural diversity may well have signalled a desire to move the discussion away from creating hierarchies of oppression yet race is conflated in the issue. As discussed in an earlier chapter, post-colonial theorists (Hesse, Gilroy, Bannerji, Hall, and Walcott) caution that terms such as multicultural and cultural diversity are not benign terms but come to signify the other, racialized understanding of the social and the superiority of western culture and cultural expressions.

Fernandez came from a background of grassroots feminist organizing against Mike Harris' cuts to government spending in Ontario and this informed her philosophy and strategy relating to equity at Council. She states:

My model is a very feminist, holistic approach which is about embedding the issues and responsibilities in people. It's a people based model and the underpinning of that model is about relationships and dialogue. It's not about diversity training or antiracism 101, or any of those things. To me that doesn't bring about real change. That's hitting the surface and its superficial in certain ways. Some of it is very important work, don't get me wrong, but I think the best sensitivity and understanding happens in dialogue and that's when real relationships are built. It shifts the fragmentation. What I did when I got to the Canada Council was, I said to them, "if you think that the Equity portfolio is my portfolio and that I am responsible for it. I would like to see \$120 million put into my budget because while each of you sit with \$20 million budgets in your own discipline you are as responsible for this issue as I am. (Interview, 2006)

Fernandez's statement on her philosophies and accomplishments at Council illustrates O'Malley et al's (1997) notion of that governable subjects are produced through the incorporation of counter-discourses like feminism and anti-racism into cultural policies.

Fernandez arrived at Council when the organization was again in downsizing mode. The disciplining authority of the state had moved to enforce neo-liberal economic imperatives on

state institutions. Governments themselves divested from the sphere of the social and private resources were supposed to substitute for state responsibility (Brodie, 1997).

From 1994 to 1997, the Council responded to federal government's deficit-cutting Program Review Exercises 1 and 2, which reduced the Council's parliamentary appropriation by 10.4%, by protecting its grants budget and reducing its overhead and administrative costs. This had deep impact on staff members, who were reduced by almost 50% (from 268 to 132), and on the way they work. The number of programs was reduced from over 100 to 54 (although numbers have risen somewhat with new funds) and one annual deadline for most programs was implemented. (42nd Report, The Canada Council for the Arts, 1999:11)

The government allocated new funds of \$25 million per year to Council in 1997 to cover the period from 1997 up to 2002.⁵³ Fernandez describes the external political environment that existed when she arrived at Council as one in which there was a form of malaise and smugness on the part of governments and institutions regarding issues of equity. She states:

By the time you get to 1996, all these conversations had taken place and what you have then in kind of a fatigue around issues of equity because there is a sense that we've dealt with these issues, we've gone through the fights, we've made some progress and that things have evolved so, let's get on with something else. As you know, life happens and there are a lot of shifting priorities and especially in the context where you have funding that is being retrenched. I think that was the beginning of when Mike Harris came to power in Ontario, where there was also a huge amount of entrenchment for example the Employment Equity law that we had with the NDP that was then thrown out after Mike Harris came into power along with the Ontario Anti-racism Secretariat. (Interview, 2006)

Equity was not high on the Canada Council's agenda but a number of conditions existed at the Council that enabled the taking up of issues of equity and the development of new programs such as the Capacity Building program targeted at ethno-cultural organizations. The Capacity Building Program was instituted to encourage more diverse organizations to develop in communities. Funding was provided to these organizations to enable them to develop their

⁵³ 42nd Report, The Canada Council for the Arts, 1999

administrative and financial capacities as these organizations were relatively young in their evolution.

Previous commitments relating to racial equity hiring at the Council were honoured by senior management during this period of the rationalization and corporatization of the organization. The result of this was the hiring of four staff members from the Aboriginal and visible minority communities. The coup in the hiring of staff from under-represented communities occurred in part due to the work carried out by the two previous Advisory Committees for Racial Equality that focussed on staff sensitization training and the development of a discourse at Council that considered the role of race in practices of representation.

Fernandez states:

The reason I was able to hold on to these positions was because the officers and the staff in the Arts Division were quite connected to the broader communities out there, to artists. They were themselves artists and very committed and very passionate about independent thought, about creativity, about openness and curiosity to difference. Because they had been part of the discussion over the last few years here at Council and knew the community debate. Because they sit on juries that have different artists at the table, they were the ones who supported me face-to-face with the union that was coming in to say, "we want to hold on to these positions" because at that time the Canada Council had visible minority representation of about three percent so the staff that were part of the negotiating group of the union insisted that even though we were downsizing we would still hold on to these four targeted positions. (Interview, 2006)

She continues:

I don't think employment equity had much to do with it. You can have as much policy and law and guidelines in place and still nothing will change. I think those things are fundamental tools but it is who is using the tool and why they are using the tool, and what is the motivation for using the tool that matters. I can tell you it wasn't about employment equity, it was more about me being able to leverage the intellectual

knowledge already within the Canada Council around these issues and the work that had been done by the two prior Equity Coordinators who had left recommendations for me to implement. (Interview, 2006)

On a more pragmatic level, Fernandez saw the turmoil at the Council and the hiring of new staff as a way to seize an uncharted moment in which the project of equity at the Council could be moved ahead. She states: “Coming in then, I seized a lot of that turmoil and created the opportunity to create some kinds of radical change. That radical change related to representation at the staff level and representation in terms of peer committees. That was the first step” (Interview, 2006). The Internship program, the hiring of an Aboriginal Coordinator, staff buy-in and alliances at the ground level were important ingredients in transforming the racial composition and knowledge base of Council staff in the mid 1990s. The Report from the Third Advisory Committee’s Report states: “The interim collapse of the hierarchy and program structures created fertile ground for change at the Canada Council and ultimately benefited the work of the Committee” (*The Report and Recommendations of the Third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council*, 1999: 5).

Shifts also occurred in the relationship between the Equity Office, the board and the Director which aided in shifting staff and board perspectives on the role of the Equity Office. With the departure of Roch Carrier, and the arrival of Shirley Thomson, the position now reported directly to the Director.

Shirley Thomson came in and she revised my position to reporting directly to her because she was a strong supporter of this portfolio. So then, I had another layer of support. I was so well positioned in terms of authority so that it allowed me to manoeuvre across the board. (Interview, 2006)

The third Equity Coordinator had direct contact with the director, Council staff and board members in addition to the expertise of its community members. This configuration of power brokers gave the Equity Office and its Coordinator a level of authority the office had not previously enjoyed.

It had Board members, it had staff, and it had artists from the community. That was one of the strong levers in terms of my positioning at The Canada Council because immediately what that did was it positioned me with Board members who are political appointees and had huge clout at the Canada Council in the mid 1990s. Then, everybody was excited about the Equity Committee and everybody wanted to come and talk to the Equity Committee because it had Board members on it. It gave me a kind of clout that nobody else had. That privileged me in moving ahead with the work because all of a sudden I had the support. (Interview, 2006)

The close working relationship of the equity office with the power brokers at Council enabled a more organic taking up of practices of equity. In 1997, new money as was allocated to the Equity Office for the development of new programs and special events. The Council's 1999 Annual Report states:

To encourage the creative expression of artists from culturally diverse communities, the Council increased support to core programs across all disciplines and invested in special initiatives and multidisciplinary opportunities. Among the most memorable special events of the year were the Showcase for Culturally Diverse and First Nations Peoples Music Artists in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal in 1998. The Showcases brought artists from these communities together with presenters from across the country, and many of the participating artists obtained performing engagements as a result, which will further their careers significantly in Canada. (42nd Report, *The Canada Council for the Arts*, 1999:14)

Programs such as the Quest program for “a new generation of emerging professional artists who have never received a grant from the Council”; a pilot program for multi-disciplinary arts festival that made funding available to culturally diverse artists and organizations; the Capacity Building

program for ethno-cultural organizations; and the curators of diverse cultural backgrounds program were developed to specifically deal with gaps in representation. The infusion of new money, in addition to the coming together of power brokers and marginalized artists of colour on the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, signalled a shift in the flow and circulation of power as it related to equity at Council. In a Foucauldian sense, the shift in how power was harnessed by the Equity Office highlights the diffuse and shifting sense of power, as well as its embodiment in individuals located within the category of the marginalized or excluded.

The development of targeted programs to rectify historical and current racial exclusions was a point of discussion and contention at the level of the Advisory Committee. Some members felt that these types of programs were needed while the Officer felt strongly that an integrated approach was a more effective strategy. The Quest program's focus on all youth was strongly questioned by committee members.

My committee of artists wanted me to create an artist of colour program and I said no because I did not want to fragment the community that was already fragmented. I said to them, can you point to one young person out there who is not marginalized. Youth on the whole are marginalized. What I will do is put a significant amount of energy into outreach to artists of colour communities to make sure they are aware of the program and to make sure that they apply to the program and when I set up the peer process I'm going to make sure that there is 60% people of colour because that I know that will have a very significant impact on young artists of colour. I'm not designing a program that repeats the fragmentation at the level of youth. (Interview, 2006)

The work of the Office focused on Council wide changes such as new policies on peer assessment juries and their composition.

The Equity Coordinator and members of the Advisory Committee saw peer representation and the jury system as embodying principles of equity and democracy. With the elimination of

the Explorations program they realized that peer representation that reflected the range of applicants needed to be instituted if racialized artists were to succeed at securing funding from Council.

Also we had a peer policy that did not allow for artists to sit more than once within a 2 year period. That meant that you had to work very hard to find peers who could come and sit on those peer committees. You couldn't just reuse the same people all the time. It was a very aerated process that brought a lot of the community into the Canada Council over a period of 4 - 5 years. That also then shaped policy and shaped understanding. That was representation at the peer level. (Interview, 2006)

Communications and outreach activities expanded in order to further develop relationships with culturally diverse clients and Council staff. Canada Council officers were frequently called upon the expertise of the Equity Office in the process of jury formation and the “Equity Coordinator sat in, as an observer, on numerous peer assessment and advisory committee meetings to evaluate how cultural equity issues are being integrated into the assessment process” (*The Report and Recommendations of the Third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council*, 1999: 7). Over the tenure of the Third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council, the Equity Office increased in visibility both inside the Council and in the community.

The Third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council submitted its report and recommendations to the board in June 1999. The report outlined the work the committee and Equity Coordinator had engaged in over the past three years. According to the report, the committee’s work was threefold and consisted of:

- the implementation of institutional changes, including those recommended by past advisory committees, that addresses system barriers to access;
- the development of new initiatives and programs that responded to differences in context, art practices and organizational models; and

- Council- wide education and consciousness-building.
(The Report and Recommendations of the Third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality in the Arts at the Canada Council, 1999: 5)

Significant change took place at the level of the Board under the tenure of the third Advisory Committee for Racial Equality and Fernandez's direction. Through an alliance between politics and culture, Fernandez was able to engineer the transformation of the ethno-cultural make-up of the Board with the assistance of board member, Jean Augustine. She recounts:

When I walked into the Canada Council in 1996 there were no Board members of colour. There was an Aboriginal board member. On that seven person board what I was able to do in 4 years with the help and support of Jean Augustine who sat on the board - then Parliamentary Secretary to Jean Chrétien and then Minister of Multiculturalism - was transform the Board and bring in three people of colour. This was a very difficult thing to do particularly at my level. We had three people of colour, one Aboriginal on a seven person Board. That was a very huge for a portfolio agency. If you were to look at the other portfolio agencies today you will see how huge that is. But the fact is a lot of that work is being eroded. Today at the Canada Council what you have is one Aboriginal Board member. All that is to say that these things go ten steps forward and they can go five steps backward or they can get totally thrown out like with Mike Harris. (Interview, 2006)

The mode of delivery of the internal educational activities organized by the Equity Coordinator for staff also shifted to one in which artists of colour and their works functioned as a form of embodied pedagogy. Much like the transformation of the board, artists of colour from the community were brought in to Council to infuse 'other' knowledges into the Council. Artists of colour familiarized and educated staff on what was being produced in communities, by whom, and the new practices that were emerging.

I brought community in once per month to do lunch time talks on their work. I would program about twelve artists per year. Instead of doing anti-racism training I got artists to come in and talk about their work. They had real impact and were popular. It was a pizza lunch I used to organize. The rooms were packed; it was easy to do and was cost effective. (Interview, 2006)

The strategies employed to engage both Council and communities of artists of colour in racial equity transformations at Council developed by the third Equity Coordinator were radically different from those of the previous two Coordinators. The previous Coordinators and Advisory Committees set the groundwork on changes that could be made that rendered visible the impact of equity on Council's programs and governance structures.

Even though important work on racial equity had been underway at the Council for the past nine years, the Third Advisory Committee made twelve recommendations to the board to further facilitate the institutionalization of cultural equity policies. These recommendations fell under the headings of institutional accountability; human resource management, communications, program management and delivery, and leadership. As in all the previous Advisory Committee Reports and Recommendations for Racial Equality at the Canada Council, the committee prioritized the institutionalization of equity as an essential operating principle of the Council as a key recommendation. The report calls for the Board of the Canada Council to adopt a *Cultural Equity Policy* that would govern its institutional operations. An equity policy would also mean funding and staff resources for the Equity Office so that it could to operate for another three years. Even with the increased activities of the Equity Office and the Advisory Committee's recommendation for the continued support of the Council's equity portfolio and Office, equity at the Canada Council faced the threat of closure in 2000 based on the recommendation of senior management. Support for the Equity Office's continued existence was not forthcoming from the director which led to Fernandez's departure from the Canada Council.

Conclusion

In the section above, I discussed the emergence of racial equity policies at the Canada Council over the ten year period spanning 1989 to 1999. My interest is in understanding the who, why, and how of policy formation at that institution. The early processes of racial equity policy development at Council came about because of pressure from outside the organization, as well as pressure from within. Discussions and activism on racial equity in the arts and racial equity policy formation was directed by artists of colour in the community and well as by their work and input within the institutional setting of the Council. Within that setting the project of racial equity formation was led by senior racialized artists, along with the Equity Coordinator and other staff at the Canada Council. The involvement of artists of colour from the grassroots at the level of policy formation at the Council the institution sheds light on dynamic exchange between the community and the Council and how agents of social movements can be called up to exist within state organizations to engage in processes of management and merely not as the institution's other.

The process of racial equity policy formation was not without conflict. Conflict arose between members of the Advisory Committee for Racial Equality, the members and the Council staff especially in relation to the Council's official articulation of its vision for equity. Community members were concerned to express a strong anti-racist framework while Council staff chose the paradigm of diversity. Although committee activities over the ten years of this study were grounded in anti-racist principles, the official statements and documents circulated by The Council on cultural diversity diminish this fact. There was a disjuncture between the committee's expression of the work they did on racial equity and the organization's official

language of cultural diversity. The ‘discourse of diversity’ or multiculturalism usurped an anti-racist framework of equity at the Council, allowing claims to be made for equity/diversity resources from Council by white, new immigrants from non-western European backgrounds.

The work of the Equity Office, its Coordinator, and Advisory Committee was impacted by changes in the external political environment at the federal level. It was also affected by the politics and commitment to equity that each of the Council’s directors and board members brought with them. In a sense, the Council’s refusal to adopt racial and cultural equity as essential principles of the institution’s operation led to the precarious positioning of equity and the subsequent work of the Equity Office at the Canada Council for the Arts.

Conclusion

In the preceding chapters, I have outlined a number of intersecting histories and events that shaped and continue to circumscribe current discussions on racial equity in the arts. My overarching concern is to understand the emergence and circulation of discourses on race, culture and art, and to analyze the articulation of the issues that led to the formation of racial equity policies at the Canada Council for the Art between 1989 and 1999. The questions that focus my discussions are: what constitutes art and who produces art within the context of multicultural Canada? The concepts of culture, art, governmentality and nation-making guide my discussion. The thesis has illustrated the operationalization of racialized governmentality as it played out in the implementation of racial equity policies at the Canada Council for Arts over the years spanning 1989 to 1999. Racial equity policies emerged at the Canada Council for the Arts in the early 1990s as a result of lobbying activities generated in the community by artists of colour and First Nations artists, as well as internal discussions on access that were taking place concurrently at the Council. The late 1980s can be viewed as a conjectural moment in which shifts in the understanding of what art is and who produced it took place in the community and institutional spheres. Although significant transformations have occurred at the Canada Council for the Arts that have led to increased funding and visibility for racialized artists, black artists remain almost invisible in Canada's culturescape of today.

Racial Equity in a Formal Cultural Context

Racial equity policy formation at the Canada Council for the Arts began one year after the passing of the Multicultural Act (1988). The issue of race was addressed in an ad hoc fashion at the Council since the early 80s because racialized artists made claims for resources to produce contemporary art. Prior to the implementation of policies at the Council, artists secured funds from federal state departments such as the Secretary of State for Multiculturalism whose mandate for funding ‘other’ cultural activities was directly linked to recommendations of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The types of categories of cultural products supported through funding from the Department of Secretary of State defined culture from an anthropological perspective or as ‘way of life’/tradition. This way of categorizing culture did not adequately serve the needs of racialized contemporary artists whose works were inflected with narratives and symbols from other places yet were rooted in western aesthetic forms and expressive of experiences of Canada. Stuart Hall conjectures that the distinction between culture as folksy performances and as aesthetic may be generational and epistemological. He attributes the shift to a loss of confidence in modernism by black artists of 80s and 90s. Hall states:

The growing awareness of the ‘dark side’ of Enlightenment and the ways its universalistic promise has been particularistically appropriated by the West , the searching exposures of Eurocentrism and Orientalism, and the critique of modernism’s celebration of ”primitivism” which simultaneously opened Western art to non-Western knowledge and appropriated the latter as exoticized, subordinate support. (Hall, 2005: 7-8)

This troubling of the epistemology upon which art and culture registered signalled a temporal shift from the anti-colonial to the post-colonial. According to the Equity Officers, the Equity Coordinators, Canada Council staff, minutes and reports of the first two Advisory Committees

for Racial Equality at the Canada Council; an anti-racist agenda was the driving force behind the early transformations at Council. However, by 1999 the tenets of an ‘anti-racist’ paradigm were abandoned for a version of ‘cultural diversity.’ In her discussion on Canadian multiculturalism Bannerji (2000) asserts that the term ‘cultural diversity’ appears to be a neutral and banal term, yet it works paradoxically in two ways. She states:

On one hand, the use of such a concept with a reference to simple multiplicity allows the reading of all social and cultural forms of differences in terms of descriptive plurality. On the other, in its relationship to description it introduces the need to put in or retain a concrete, particular content for each of these seemingly neutral differences. The social relations of power of power that create the difference implied in sexist-racism, for example, just drop out of sight, and social being becomes a matter of cultural essence. This is its paradox – that the concept of diversity simultaneously allows for the emptying out of actual social relations and suggests concreteness of cultural description, and through this process obscures any understanding of difference as a construction of power. (Bannerji, 2000: 37)

The Canada Council’s further move to a discourse of ‘cultural diversity’ created a space in which artists of European descent from non-Anglophone and Non-Francophone communities could make claims on resources targeted at equity initiatives.

The problem of managing Canada’s ‘other’ at the level of the Canada Council necessitated the identification and engagement of experts both at the level of the Canada Council and from within grassroots communities to facilitate an institutional ‘knowing’ of who the subjects of management were and the issues facing them, in order to ameliorate the situation. The Canada Council’s hiring of a Racial Equity Consultant in 1989 provided the Council with access to information about relatively unknown communities of racialized artists in the country. Representatives from these communities were then called upon to participate in creating the

systems that would come to manage the ways in they came to be known by the state bureaucracy and the conditions under which they produced art.

A number of competing discourses on culture, art, multiculturalism and citizenship were called up by racialized artists and cultural producers, Canada Council officers and senior administrative officers in the policy formation process. The tension between culture as a marker of difference, multiculturalism and liberal ideas of universality come to light in negotiations between the Canada Council staff, the Racial Equity Committee, the Board and communities of racialized artists. State multiculturalism as a paradigm was interrogated by the first Racial Equality Committee because of the lack of interrogation of what the term signified vis-à-vis Canada's Anglophone and Francophone settler history. Much of the work of racialized artists, Racial Equity Committees and Racial Equity Officers centred on unmasking the hierarchies inherent in the term multiculturalism and art.

The question of power and its relation to race and multiculturalism surfaced in the Committee's posing of an anti-racist framework upon which to approach racial equity at the Council. The framework was rejected by the board of the Canada Council, a rejection that signalled a lack of acknowledgement of the existence of institutional racism. However, the anti-racist framework being offered up by the Racial Equality Committee to counter Council's somewhat pluralistic understanding of Canada's multi-cultured condition had certain limitations. The race-only focus engaged power relationships between racialized individuals and whites, while negating the multiple identities that a subject embodies, as well as other types of allegiances such as class that are formed based on those identities. The issue of racial hierarchies

amongst people of colour was mentioned in several instances in relation to the First Advisory Committee for Racial Equality at the Canada Council for the Arts. The issue also arose in my conversations with black artists regarding multi-racial activist formations in the communities. Individuals who took the time to share their experiences with me for this study felt that colonial and post-colonial processes and practices of racialization led to contestations over the appropriateness of responses and strategies to effectively deal with racial inequality and cultural funding. Their understanding of multiculturalism and its inflection of race resonates with post-colonial scholar Barnor Hesse's assertion that that colonial "constructions of 'race' and ethnicity and contestation seems to be integral to the configuration of multiculturalism in the West" and racism is constitutive of colonial and post-colonialism formations (Hesse 2000: 4). The issues of how people spoke and what was allowable within the context of the Advisory Committee begs that we ask questions about the differentials in powers relations amongst particular actors within struggles or contestations over policy outcomes. A number of black activists/artists have paid an astronomical price for vociferously highlighting the differentials in power that exist amongst racialized people and have seen their careers become null and void in a social climate that thrives on notions of respectability.

Neo-liberal Context

Critical theorist Janine Brodie (2002) argues that the economy and social policies are deeply implicated in the production of the citizen, ideas of who belongs to the nation, as well as political solidarity. The political, global and national economic conditions of the 80s and 90s had an impacted on robustness of black cultural activism and on the activities of the Canada Council. Economic recession of the early 90s and concomitant cuts to budgets of government

departments and social programs and neo-liberal state legislation like the proposed Bill C 93 (1992) that dictated that bureaucratic rationalization all created a climate of vulnerability at the Council. A neo-liberal agenda shifted the responsibility of care for citizenry away from government to the individual and back to communities. The notion of culture as resource was emphasized and market forces shaped the production and consumption of art and culture. What this meant for activism in general, and black activism in particular, was that collective organizing dissipated and tropes of the artist as auteur, divorced from the political and social realities re-emerged. Racialized and non-racialized artists alike became concerned with their own livelihoods.⁵⁴ A global market-place called the 'biennale' developed for art and this has become the site in which art is exchanged and serves the function distinguishing between nations.

The conditions, processes, and players that shaped the Council's policies were very much dependent upon the will of individual directors of Council because to a large extent because equity principles were not enshrined in the organization's essential operating principles. This left the Equity Office and its work to the whims of the Council's directors and senior management staff.

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, the Council's early understanding of art was based on universalist principles. The Canada Council defined art in European terms and these definitions became barriers to racialized artists. Ideas about discipline specific art, professionalism and excellence served to regulate who had access to Council funding. Artists of colour and cultural

⁵⁴ For more of a discussion on malaise and ethno-cultural activism, see the article "Bring It Back: Thinking the Ethno-Politics of Identity Again" by Andrea Fatona, Aruna Srivastava and Rinaldo Walcott, *FUSE Magazine*, Vol.30, #4.

producers made significant strides in the mid 1990s and gained visibility in the areas of exhibition and career development. However, conversations about racism in the arts have re-emerged and have become one of the last frontiers of contestation. The notions of excellence and professionalism have resurfaced in current discussions in part because of comments made by the Director of the National Gallery of Canada about the Gallery's lack of acquisition and presentation of art produced by artists of colour and First Nations artist in a CBC program called *DiasporART* (February 2, 2010). The CBC program featured the exhibition *DiasporART* which was comprised of works by racialized artists purchased by the Canada Council Art Bank. In the interview, the Director stated that the National Gallery is not concerned with cultural diversity, it is only concerned with 'excellence'. The Director's comment may seem retrogressive because, as this thesis has illustrated, the notion of excellence and its registers in western European art was a core issue that was contested in the 1980s and 1990s by First Nations artists and artists of colour. At the heart of this new debate on excellence are questions about who produces art in Canada and what constitutes art. The concept of excellence has been deployed as a benchmark of 'good' art and invokes the register of European /western art as an exclusionary device. What becomes clear from the CBC report is that mainstream cultural institutions such as the National Gallery of Canada remained relatively untouched by the racial equity activities and transformations of the 80s and 90s at the Canada Council. I think the issue raised in this study about the Explorations Program being the place that new types of practices, new media, new art forms and non white artists were referred to is an interesting link between traditional categories of art and what the Council came to recognize as art. The Council led the way for the opening up to 'other' art forms and 'other' communities which later was incorporated into other programs and initiatives enabling racialized artists to

produce work yet mainstream sites of presentation and reception continue to evaluate 'excellent' art on western notions of what art is. This raises the issue of institutional racism and gate-keeping. In hindsight, if the Canada Council had taken a leadership role and publicly acknowledged the effects of institutional racism, other mainstream institutions may have engaged in critical reflection about their practices.

The problem of the multicultural is being strongly debated in the current moment and has implications for the continued understanding of racial equity in the arts. Based on the histories of Canadian settlement I would suggest that we need to view Canada as a country of many centres and margins which in turn produces a diverse range of cultural expressions with specific geographical or regional spaces. This way of viewing the Canadian nation would unhinge the notion that a unified Canadian art can be produced allowing specificities of art and culture to take shape in a more robust form. In a way, I am advocating for a form of regionalism that is shaped by Canada's growing cosmopolitan sensibilities. Extending Nancy Fraser's (2001) argument on resource redistribution to racial equity in the arts, the notion of equality and justice is at the core of an understanding of Canadian culture as diffuse and in transformation.

To conclude, this thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach drawn from the disciplines of sociology, anthropology and critical cultural studies to allow the complex relationships between activities of the Canadian state, racial equity policy making at the Canada Council, and grass roots social activism to emerge. I argue that state practices of management are elastic and that racial equity policies at the Canada Council emerged out of a confluence of transformational activities simultaneously taking place at the state/institutional and grassroots levels

Appendix I

MULTICULTURALISM POLICY OF CANADA

Multiculturalism policy

3. (1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to

a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;

b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;

c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation;

(d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;

(e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;

(f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;

(g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;

(h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;

(i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and

(j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

Appendix II

Description of the study

“Where Outreach meets Outrage”: Racial Equity at the Canada Council for the Arts (1989 - 1999)

A study conducted by Andrea Fatona
Department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor St. West, Toronto M5S 1V6

This research study examines the formation of The Canada Council for the Arts’ Racial Equity Office and the implementation of racial equity policies geared toward diversity in cultural representation over a period spanning the late 1980s to late 1990s. The study also examines black cultural activism and the experiences of Black artists as they negotiated the terrain of Canada Council for the Arts funding.

In order to ascertain *why* and *how* Racial Equity policies at the Canada Council emerged, the study will examine how policy makers, managers and artists saw themselves and their communities of interests in relation to racial equity policies. The study is also concerned with understanding the impact of the Canada Council’s policies on Black artists, Black art organizations and on the Canada Council itself.

Interested participants will be interviewed between the months of February 2006 and April 2006. I would like to conduct one interview of approximately one hour in length. Participation in this study is voluntary.

The results from the research will be used for my Ph.D. dissertation as well as disseminated to academic and professional audiences.

Letter of invitation – Racial Equity Committee Member

March 26, 2006

Dear ,

I would like to invite you to take part in research that I am doing for my Doctoral degree in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – University of Toronto. My research study examines the formation of The Canada Council for the Arts' Racial Equity Office and the implementation of racial equity policies geared toward diversity in cultural representation over a period spanning the late 1980s to late 1990s. The study also examines the experiences of Black artists as they negotiated the terrain of Canada Council for the Arts funding.

In order to ascertain *why* and *how* Racial Equity policies at the Canada Council emerged, the study will examine how Canada Council policy makers, officers, black cultural producers, and artists saw themselves and their communities of interests in relation to racial equity policies of the late 1980s and 1990s. The study is also concerned with understanding the impact of the Canada Council's policies on Black artists, Black art organizations and on the Canada Council itself.

As part of the study, I will interview six past members of the Canada Council's Racial Equity Committee. You will be asked to take part in one interview that will be of approximately one hour in duration. Interviews will be scheduled between April 2006 and August 2006.

The interview you take part in will be audio taped, and transcribed. I will provide you with access to segments of your specific interview transcripts so that you may clarify or change the information you provided in the interviews. All of the information that you provide to me in the interviews will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. You also have the right to withdraw from this study at any point during the period of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. To ensure your anonymity, your name and those of the other participants will not be used in my thesis. The study's findings will contribute to the current literature on cultural policy formation, and cultural equity in the arts.

Please feel free to telephone me at (705) 741-6424, or email me at afatona@oise.utoronto.ca should you have any questions or concerns. My thesis supervisor Dr. Rinaldo Walcott can also be reached at (416) 923-6641 ext. 2271, fax: 416-926-4751 or email: rwalcott@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fatona

Letter of invitation - Black artists and cultural producers

March 22, 2006

Dear,

I would like to invite you to take part in research that I am doing for my Doctoral degree in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – University of Toronto. My research study examines the formation of The Canada Council for the Arts' Racial Equity Office and the implementation of racial equity policies geared toward diversity in cultural representation over a period spanning the late 1980s to late 1990s. The study also examines the experiences of Black artists as they negotiated the terrain of Canada Council for the Arts funding.

In order to ascertain *why* and *how* Racial Equity policies at the Canada Council emerged, the study will examine how policy makers, managers and artists saw themselves and their communities of interests in relation to racial equity policies. The study is also concerned with understanding the impact of the Canada Council's policies on Black artists, Black art organizations and on the Canada Council itself.

As part of the study, I will interview ten black artists and cultural producers who were involved in activist activities related to racial equity in the arts between the years of 1989 to 1999. You will be asked to take part in one interview that will be of approximately one hour in duration. Interviews will be scheduled between March 2006 and May 2006.

The interview you take part in will be audio taped, and transcribed. I will provide you with access to segments of your specific interview transcripts so that you may clarify or change the information you provided in the interviews. All of the information that you provide to me in the interviews will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. You also have the right to withdraw from this study at any point during the period of the study.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. To ensure your anonymity, your name and those of the other participants will not be used in my thesis. The study's findings will contribute to the current literature on cultural policy formation, and cultural equity in the arts.

Please feel free to telephone me at (705) 741-6424, or email me at afatona@oise.utoronto.ca should you have any questions or concerns. My thesis supervisor Dr. Rinaldo Walcott can also be reached at (416) 923-6641 ext. 2271, fax: 416-926-4751 or email: rwalcott@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fatona

Letter of Invitation – Canada Council Staff

March 20, 2006

Dear ,

I would like to invite you to take part in research that I am doing for my Doctoral degree in the department of Sociology and Equity Studies in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – University of Toronto. My research study examines the formation of The Canada Council for the Arts' Racial Equity Office and the implementation of racial equity policies geared toward diversity in cultural representation over a period spanning the late 1980s to late 1990s. The study also examines the experiences of Black artists as they negotiated the terrain of Canada Council for the Arts funding.

In order to ascertain *why* and *how* Racial Equity policies at the Canada Council emerged, the study will examine how Canada Council policy makers, officers, black cultural producers and artists saw themselves and their communities of interests in relation to racial equity policies of the late 1980s and 1990s. The study is also concerned with understanding the impact of the Canada Council's policies on Black artists, Black art organizations and on the Canada Council itself.

As part of the study, I will interview Canada Council directors and officers who were involved in racial equity policy formation and implementation activities at the Council between the years of 1989 to 1999. You will be asked to take part in one interview that will be of approximately one hour in duration. Interviews will be scheduled between April 2006 and June 2006.

The interview you take part in will be audio taped, and transcribed. I will provide you with access to segments of your specific interview transcripts so that you may clarify or change the information you provided in the interviews. All of the information that you provide to me in the interviews will be securely stored in a locked filing cabinet and will be destroyed five years after the completion of the study. You also have the right to withdraw from this study at any point

Your participation in this study is voluntary. To ensure your anonymity, your name and those of the other participants will not be used in my thesis. The study's findings will contribute to the current literature on cultural policy formation, and cultural equity in the arts.

Please feel free to telephone me at (705) 741-6424, or email me at afatona@oise.utoronto.ca should you have any questions or concerns. My thesis supervisor Dr. Rinaldo Walcott can also be reached at (416) 923-6641 ext. 2271, fax: 416-926-4751 or email: rwalcott@oise.utoronto.ca.

Sincerely,

Andrea Fatona

Appendix III**Consent Form A*****Where Outreach meets Outrage: Racial Equity at the Canada Council for the Arts
(1989 - 1999)***

By signing below, you have indicated that you have read and understood the terms of your participation as outlined in the letter of invitation dated _____/06, and have consented to take part in the study. To ensure your anonymity, your name will not be used in my thesis or made public in any other manner. You also understand that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point after signing this consent form

Date: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Consent Form B***Where Outreach meets Outrage: Racial Equity at the Canada Council for the Arts******(1989 - 1999)***

By signing below, you have indicated that you have read and understood the terms of your participation as outlined in the letter of invitation dated _____/06, and have consented to take part in the study. To ensure a certain degree of anonymity, your name will not be used in my thesis or made public in any other manner. However, because you have held a public office I can not fully guarantee that your identity remains undisclosed. You also understand that you have the right to withdraw from the study at any point after signing this consent form

Date: _____

Name of Participant: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Appendix IV**Racial Equity Committee Members**

1. What is your background: what type of work do you do within the sphere of the arts/cultural production?
2. How did you become a member of the Racial Equity Committee?
3. Were there events, issues or concerns that informed the formation of the Racial Equity Committee?
4. Can you describe the work of the committee? What role or responsibility did you have on the committee?
5. Were there Canada Council staff assigned or appointed to the committee?
6. How did the committee survey or map the field of the arts in relation to race and ethnicity?
7. In drawing up policy recommendations -what kinds of individuals were spoken to, from what fields or aspects of the arts?
8. How were the recommendations to the Canada Council generated?
9. Was the process of formulating recommendations divisive or consensus driven?
10. Were all the recommendations acted upon?
11. What were your reactions and the reactions of other members to the adoption of recommendations?
12. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences in relation to the Canada Council racial equity initiatives?

Canada Council Equity Officers

1. What was your position at the Canada Council?
2. Describe your position and the work you did?
3. What types of racial equity policies and programs existed at the Council or in your section prior to your arrival at the Council?
4. Did any internal and external events, concerns, issues inform the work of the Equity Office in the early 1990s? If so, can you describe them?
5. What were the processes and mechanisms by which racial equity consultants and committee members were chosen?
6. How were recommendations generated by the Committee? Can you describe the types of the process?
7. Which levels of the Canada Council structure were involved in the development and ongoing implementation of racial equity policies?
8. Were there any conflicts that arose between the various stakeholders at the Council? If, yes....what were they and how were they resolved?
9. How were the recommendations of the Racial Equity Committee taken up by the council as a whole and by individual sections?
10. Is there anything else you would like to address that has not been covered in my questions?

Canada Council Officers

1. What was your position at the Canada Council?
2. Describe your position and the work you did?
3. What types of racial equity policies and programs existed at the Council or in your section prior to the formation and implementation of Racial Equity policies?
4. Did any internal and external events, concerns, issues inform the formation of the Racial Equity Committee of the early 1990s? If so, can you describe them?
5. What were the processes and mechanisms by which racial equity consultants and committee members were chosen?
6. Which levels of the Canada Council structure were involved in the development and ongoing implementation of racial equity policies?
7. Were there any conflicts that arose between the various stakeholders at the Council? If, yes....what were they and how were they resolved?
8. How were the recommendations of the Racial Equity Committee taken up by the council as a whole and by individual sections?
9. Is there anything else you would like to address that has not been covered in my questions?

Canada Council Officers

10. What was your position at the Canada Council?
11. Describe your position and the work you did?
12. What types of racial equity policies and programs existed at the Council or in your section prior to the formation and implementation of Racial Equity policies?
13. Did any internal and external events, concerns, issues inform the formation of the Racial Equity Committee of the early 1990s? If so, can you describe them?
14. What were the processes and mechanisms by which racial equity consultants and committee members were chosen?
15. Which levels of the Canada Council structure were involved in the development and ongoing implementation of racial equity policies?
16. Were there any conflicts that arose between the various stakeholders at the Council? If, yes....what were they and how were they resolved?
17. How were the recommendations of the Racial Equity Committee taken up by the council as a whole and by individual sections?
18. Is there anything else you would like to address that has not been covered in my questions?

Black artists and cultural producers

1. Could you describe your art practice?
2. What types of activist/advocacy work have you been involved in regarding racial diversity and/ equity in the arts?
3. What years were you involved? Are you still in involved?
4. Can you tell me the names of organizations you were involved with?
5. What were some of the reasons that led you to become involved in activism in the arts?
6. Describe your ‘involvement’ or ‘advocacy’ work? What did you do?
7. Did you achieve anything?
8. How would you define “black community” in relation to the arts?
9. Have you ever produced events or exhibited art works in a public gallery, festival, or community space?

If yes, When, where and what types of works?
10. Have you ever applied for funding from the Canada Council for the Arts to produce events, art works or for exhibition purposes? Did you receive funding?
If yes: When?
What program at The Canada Council did you apply to?
For what type of event, artwork or exhibition?

If you applied and did not receive funding:
Did you receive feedback as to why you were unsuccessful?
Were you happy with the feedback you received?
11. Did you self identify as a Black artist/cultural producer on your application?
12. What were your experiences of applying for funding?
13. Were you aware of the Racial Equity Office at the Canada Council at the time?
14. If yes, do you understand the work this office is engaged in at the Canada Council?
15. Is there anything else you would like to say about your experiences in relation to the Canada Council racial equity initiatives and/or your experiences of activism in the arts community?

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