THE MAKING OF CANADIANS: AN ANALYSIS OF MULTICULTURAL
AND HETERONORMATIVE DISCOURSES IN IMMIGRANT SETTLEMENT
TEXTS

By

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# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... 3  
Introduction .................................................................................................................................... 4  
Celebratory Multicultural Discourses .......................................................................................... 6  
Heteronormative Discourses ........................................................................................................... 8  
The Connection between Texts and Social Structure ................................................................. 14  
The Data ........................................................................................................................................... 16  
The Authorial Self and the Racial Other ....................................................................................... 17  
Constructing a Multicultural Wonderland ....................................................................................... 22  
Portraying A Nation Devoid of Power ............................................................................................ 25  
Constructing a Diversity Devoid of Difference ............................................................................. 26  
Difference Operating in the Language of Sameness ..................................................................... 28  
Constituting Certain Genders and Sexes as Normal ..................................................................... 29  
Normalizing and Universalizing Heterosexuality ......................................................................... 35  
Conclusion: The Making of Canadians ......................................................................................... 38  
References ....................................................................................................................................... 40
Abstract

Literacy in English and Canadian culture is a necessary skill for newcomers to Canada. Programs and textbooks used for teaching literacy to newcomers may serve as channels for national and linguistic ideologies. This article critically analyzes a canonical curricular textbook used in immigrant settlement programs such as ELSA (English Language Services for Adults). It explores how discourses embedded in the textbook construct the Canadian identity. The research discovers that the textbook employs celebratory multicultural and heteronormative discourses that ignore heterogeneity, which effectively interpolates newcomers into a singular Canadian identity that is dominantly Anglo-European and heteronormative. The analysis provides insights for better understanding the process of enculturation and socialization of newcomers.
Introduction

In “Canadian Identity and Curriculum Theory: An Ecological, Postmodern Perspective” Sumara, Davis and Laidlaw (2001) assert that Canada’s “continued success in maintaining a nation state has been Canadians embracing of the idea that nations are made of collections of minority groups and interests, whose identities are continually shaped by the overlapping of history, geography, memory and language” (p. 151). The authors believe that the Canadian identity is predicated on the inclusion of a diverse range of minority groups, and not through exclusionary practices. Furthermore, the authors assert that Canadians have never fallen into the error of defining Canada as an ethnic nationalist state, nor have Canadians attempted to project an image of a singular nation. Because Canadians do not place a heavy emphasis on singularity, the nation derives its unity from common principles rather than common origin. The authors close by arguing that curricula throughout Canada reflect this diversity and plurality.

The unit last month in my class was ‘Steps to Citizenship’. I devoted fifteen lessons to teaching this topic to newcomers to Canada. As a supplementary text, I used *A Beginning Look at Canada* (2003). The text describes itself as good for presenting fundamental facts of Canada's geography, history, people, and government in an easy-to-understand and sequenced format (Kaskens, 2003). The description is quite accurate; the text does present fundamental facts, such as the fact that there are approximately 33 million people in Canada, or the fact that there are ten provinces and three territories. The text also informs students of the fact that Canada’s head of state is Queen Elizabeth, and of the fact that the Canadian Charter recognizes and protects – two, and only two, official languages. Mysteriously, however, the book fails to provide an easy-to-understand explanation of why there are only two official languages in Canada to the exclusion
of the various Aboriginal languages, and it fails to provide a historical account of the often violent and staggering events that led to the Queen being the head of state.

This book and texts similar to it are canonical texts in the curricula of immigrant settlement programs which teach English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship and settlement skills to adult newcomers to Canada. A quick comparison of Sumara, Davis and Laidlaw’s theory of Canadian identity to the actual texts employed in programs that portray and discuss the Canadian identity brings forth a glaring contradiction. While the authors praise Canadian curricula for reflecting plurality and inclusivity, the texts that actually touch-down into the daily educational experiences of adult newcomers to this country preach the very opposite; they preach exclusivity and singularity.

This glaring contradiction has moved me to examine how the Canadian identity is constructed in the textbooks of immigrant settlement programs. Perhaps the Canadian identity is not predicated on the inclusion and acceptance of plurality that Sumara, Davis and Laidlaw assert. Instead, perhaps the Canadian identity is fundamentally predicated on the exclusion of racial and sexual diversity, and discourses in the textbooks of immigrant settlement programs not only reflect this singularity, but also produce it.

My area of interest is not, by any means, a new topic. Much research has been dedicated to exploring how discourses in curricular textbooks portray and construct the Canadian identity as exclusionary and singular; that is, much research has been conducted on how systems of thoughts found in the texts of educational curricula are composed of ideas, attitudes, beliefs and practices which systematically construct subjects and the social worlds of which they speak (Foucault, 1972).
Celebratory Multicultural Discourses

In particular, many researchers have examined how discourses of celebratory multiculturalism found in various curricula across the nation depict and create the Canadian identity as exclusionary. In other words, an ample amount of research has been dedicated to unearthing how celebratory multicultural discourses in texts fail to name and address racism and other discrimination (Lund, 2006). Instead these discourses implicitly support the production of passive consciousness of cultural differences (Solomon, 1997). They implicitly support the construction of singularity.

Schugurensky (2006), for example, has looked closely at how discourses of celebratory multiculturalism found in the curricula of adult citizenship education create the Canadian identity in this way. She states that, despite the official policy of multiculturalism, immigrant settlement programs continue to be oriented towards assimilation. Multicultural representations that appear in the curricular texts of immigrant settlement programs usually take the form of celebratory knowledge about other groups that coexist in the same territory, and the representations tend to take an uncritical approach focusing solely on only dance, dress and diet.

McDonald (2006) agrees. In her analysis of the British Columbia K-12 social studies curriculum, she states that celebratory multicultural discourses ignore racial tension, and they erase racial inequalities. She states that the British Columbian curriculum erases conquests, wars, marginalization and exclusionary acts of symbolic and material violence that have been central to nation-making, and it presents history, government and law as devoid of conflict. Thus, celebratory multicultural education emphasizes a reductive striving for cultural simplicity.

Rezai-Rashtia and McCarthy (2008) discovered in their research analysis of a popular textbook used in Ontario’s K-12 curriculum that its celebratory multicultural discourses not only
avoided discussions of complex and controversial issues, but presented race, multiculturalism and anti-racism within a language of universality.

Thus, celebratory discourses of multiculturalism merely present and instill uncritical knowledge about other groups that coexist in the same territory as they rarely move beyond tourist curricula. In their investigation, Dei, James and James-Wilson (2000) argue that multicultural education rarely moves beyond a tourist snapshot because any meaningful discussion of racial difference may challenge discourses which construct a Canadian identity as fundamentally Anglo-European. Similarly, Mohanram (1995) argues that including and integrating racial difference in any meaningful way visually weakens the metanarrative of a unitary nation.

Because discourses of celebratory multiculturalism outright avoid discussion of racial tension, Schick and St. Denis (2005) argue that these celebratory discourses easily make their way into classrooms. The authors state that “through celebration and song, and with no need to mention racial differences, discourses of multiculturalism make their way into acceptable curricular practice” (p. 304).

Furthermore, Hammet and Bainbridge (2009) discover in their study of Canadian pre-service teachers that “in regard to schools and educational practice, multicultural education is often seen as an add-on to curriculum planning and pedagogy” (p. 159). An add-on approach separates and marks difference, which constructs the Canadian identity as singular.

Depledge (1996) agrees. She states that Canadian curricula are shaped by a multicultural policy which “is a significant feature of the Canadian metanarratives of nation” (p. 43). However, she argues that although official multiculturalism has forced curricula to be more inclusive, discourses of celebratory multiculturalism do not create a plurality. They create a
binary. Discourses of celebratory multiculturalism create ethnicity as they define who and what is the racial Other. The marking of the negative racial Other is necessary to create the positive invisible Self. The Self is invisible because, according to Depledge (1996), the notion of a singular Canadian identity appears in a mysterious way as having no ethnicity, and it is set against the Other which embodies all racial difference. She asserts that, to create the appearance of the Self as having no ethnicity, curriculums focus on official knowledge (such as history, geography or government). Thus, when textbooks offer ethnic stories, they are always set against official knowledge or the “standard of the Great Tradition, reconfirming a binary logic, the positive pole of which is a certain... Englishness” (p. 44).

Thus, it is clear that significant research has been dedicated to unearthing how curricula exclude racial difference to construct a singular Canadian identity that is fundamentally Anglocentric. Critical analyses of multicultural education in Canada have shown, through averting any meaningful discussion on race, curriculums offer narratives of nation in which an Anglo-European identity is universalized and made synonymous with the Canadian identity to the exclusion of the racial Other.

**Heteronormative Discourses**

Anderson (1983) defines any nation as an ‘imagined political community’ because members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, “yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). Warner (1993) argues that heteronormative practices are foundational to any community, whether it is a village or an imagined political community such as Canada. He asserts that heteronormativity consists of “the normalizing processes which support heterosexuality as the elemental form of human
association, as the very model of inter-gender relations, as the indivisible basis of all community, and as the means of reproduction without which society wouldn’t exist’’ (p. xxi). Other researchers (Mohanram, 1995) have even asserted that heteronormative discourses inform the myth of a stable nation while queerness is constructed as the unstable underside.

Curriculums are very much a part of the normalizing narratives that inform the imagined community of nation. In their analysis, Blackburn and Buckley (2005) argue that most curriculums either largely ignore or reject the connection between queers and literature. Curricula are not, in other words, “queer inclusive” (p. 202).

In fact, curricula across the country are largely heteronormative; that is, most curriculums hold the perception that people fall into distinct and complementary genders and that heterosexuality is the normal sexual orientation. Heteronormative discourses align biological sex, gender identity and gender roles (Leap, 2006). Foucault (1978) writes that heteronormative discourses in pedagogical institutions is hardly a new phenomenon, but in fact deeply imbedded in Anglo-European cultures. Beginning in the eighteenth century, there was an explosion of discourses around sex, which caused a centrifugal movement. Although heterosexuality remained the internal standard for these discourses, it began to be spoken of less and less, and little was demanded of heterosexuality other than to define itself from day to day. This sexuality began to function as the norm, while, on the other hand, “what came under scrutiny was the sexuality of those who did not like the opposite sex” (p. 38). These people, scarcely noticed before this time, were brought forward to speak and confess. They were listened to, but, nevertheless, were condemned and set apart as the unnatural.

Many scholars have addressed various ways to interrupt discourses that continually (re)produce heteronormativity in the classroom (Loutzenheiser, 1996; Smith, 1998; Sumara &
Davis, 1999). However, MacIntosh (2007) argues that the result of these critical interrogations is a move towards curricula that focus largely on anti-homophobia education. The philosophy behind an anti-homophobia approach is that, by introducing students who align to heteronormative discourses to queer narratives, these students may increase their knowledge about queers, and, thus, they will display more empathy and tolerance (Rothing, 2008).

Although the philosophy behind this education is not inherently obstructive, MacIntosh (2007) asserts that this educational approach does not foster a framework for engaging with systemic change nor does it elicit critical interrogations of local or institutional contexts. This educational approach stops short of questioning the need for anti-homophobia initiatives in the first place. The discourses of this approach continue to construct heteronormativity.

In other words, as Britzman (1995) convincingly argues in her foundational work in this area, anti-homophobia curriculums do not foster a framework for change as they aim only for tolerance and thus do little to challenge heteronormativity and prevailing inequities. Other researchers agree and similarly argue that the problem of this educational approach is that it is much like celebratory multicultural education; it is inherently an add-on approach (Winans, 2006; Buston & Hart, 2001). The approach almost always takes the form of a special event or guest speaker, and it is rarely integrated into the curriculum (Britzman, 1995; Mayo, 2008). Essentially, an add-on approach leaves a heteronormative curriculum unmarked “and as synonymous with the everyday” (Britzman, 1995, p. 159). Similarly, as MacIntosh and Loutzenheiser (2004) argue, anti-homophobia curriculums do not attempt to deconstruct how heteronormativity serves to exclude, erase, or silence queer students and teachers within educational institutions. The discourses of this approach continue to mask heteronormative
practices, and continue to render anyone that deviates from heteronormative discourses as abnormal.

Heterosexuality itself is normalized because, when sexual orientation is directly addressed in such approaches as anti-homophobia education, it is typically other sexualities, not heterosexuality, that are identified as an explicit category, thereby masking heterosexuality. Epstein and Johnston (1994) agree. They state that when sexuality is talked about in the classroom, heterosexuality is the silent term, unspoken of and unremarked. As previously discussed, this parallels the way celebratory multicultural discourses mask the ‘Englishness’ of Canada through identifying other ethnicities as explicit categories.

Not only does this approach normalize heterosexuality, but anti-homophobia education requires a necessary identifying of queers in order to teach about them. Furthermore, this approach not only marks queers, but it also groups them together into a singular category. Thus, not only is it an uncritical add-on approach, but the inclusive tactics of an anti-homophobia education often reduces curricular representations of queers down to relatively few forms and, thus, cannot possibly provide correct information about this group (Britzman, 1995). The result is an approach that walks the dangerous line of essentializing queers through limited representations, which, as a consequence, reinforces binaries of Self and Other.

Britzman (1995) asserts that through marking queers, the discourses of anti-homophobia curriculums only ask students that align to heteronormative discourses to be tolerant. She asks how equality can be achieved “if one is only required to tolerate and thereby confirm one’s self as generous” (p. 159). She asserts that curriculums that purport to be anti-homophobic through offering inclusive narratives may actually produce more exclusion because the only subject positions offered are the tolerant normal and the tolerated queer. Essentially, they are
curriculums that only ask students who align to heteronormative discourses to be tolerant. This educational approach only frames the problem as personal, and it only reinforces heteronormativity and privileges those people who align to it (Ellis & High, 2004).

In her research, Rothing (2008) found that anti-homophobia discourses mark queers while masking the heteronormative Self in various ways.

For example, she found that in almost all cases, in activities pertaining to sexuality, heterosexuality was taken for granted as the underlying framework except for when activities were specifically geared towards homosexuality. The author states that heterosexuality was consistently a taken-for-granted point of reference for discussions about contraceptives, abortion and sexually transmittable diseases. Rothing (2008) states that, in the activities, heterosexuality did not seem to be a subject or a ‘theme’ possible to analyze, criticise or express any attitudes about. Heterosexuality was everywhere, yet appeared to be invisible. Furthermore, the heterocentric activities failed to see the subjects of contraception and sexually transmitted diseases as very relevant and important issues for gay men.

Furthermore, the author found that another way anti-homophobia education (re)produces heteronormativity is by (re)creating a hierarchy that organises heterosexuality above other sexualities. She found that self-identified heterosexual students were given the privilege to define what ‘the problems’ were in relation to queers and what can and cannot be tolerated. Rothing (2008) provides the example of a worksheet on which both homosexuality and abortion were presented as case studies to be discussed. Since the cases about homosexual experiences were presented on the same sheet as abortion, she argues that it was very likely that the students interpreted both of these cases as moral dilemmas. The discussion of homosexuality became geared towards a moral dilemma to be approached in the same way as a discussion on abortion.
would be approached, which effectively disregards the notion that homosexuality is not a topic of morals or ethics but a matter of human rights.

Another example makes this even clearer. One of the cases referred to a lesbian couple that was thinking of having a baby. The implicit dilemma in the activity required students to discuss the merit of lesbians getting access to assisted pregnancies on equal premises to heterosexual women. The heteronormative Self was, in other words, implicitly given the right to discuss, define, shape and solve the problems of queers. This activity completely disregarded the fact that it ignored the dignity, self-determination and voices of this group.

In summary, anti-homophobia discourses communicate that queers are in need of tolerance. They communicate that those people who align to heteronormative discourses are in a privileged position and have the right to tolerate. These discourses communicate that those people who do not align to heteronormative discourses do not have the right to be tolerated, that some queers may be at risk of not being worthy of tolerance, and, last but not least, that the privileged, heteronormative Self has the right to draw the line for what is being worthy of toleration.

Thus, when all this research is taken together, it becomes apparent that curriculums are very much a part of the processes which produce heteronormativity as the indivisible basis of community, whether real or imagined. Through exclusionary discourses which avert any critique of Anglocentrism and heteronormativity, Canada’s curriculums work towards a metanarrative of nation that is fundamentally and singularly Anglocentric and composed of bodies that align to heteronormative discourses. Through a double act of containment of sexual and the racial Other, sexual “and racial panic is avoided within the discourses of nationalism” (Mohanram, 1995, p. 127). The Canadian national identity is portrayed as singular and coherent.
The Connection between Texts and Social Structure

How are celebratory multicultural and heteronormative discourses in curricular texts linked to social practices, to social institutions and to the operation of social power? Stated another way, how do these discourses contribute to constructing a nation that is dominantly Anglocentric and heteronormative?

The creation and dissemination of discourses are deeply implicated in the creation of regimes of truth. Realities are constructed through these discourses, made factual and justified, and they bring about effects (Lessa, 2006). In other words, celebratory multicultural and heteronormative discourses employed in immigrant settlement textbooks contribute to enacting and manifesting larger social structures (Van Dijk, 2009). Newcomers do not only listen, speak, read and write as students, but also as women, fathers, engineers, church members or company owners. Their actions, “including their discursive actions, realize larger social acts and process” (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 82).

The processes are often within social, economic, political and cultural frameworks such as families, schools, corporations or bureaucracies. Thus, there is an interface between discourses in textbooks and larger social structures. These discourses have social effects only when they, in turn, contribute to the formation or confirmation of social attitudes and ideologies. Anglocentrism and heteronormativity as social structures can only be implemented when people employ the discourses that create them. Thus, Anglocentrism and heteronormativity are not merely abstract systems of social inequality and dominance, but they actually reach “down in the forms of everyday life” (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 82).
In other words, there is process of constant reciprocity. Social structures determine the discourses in textbooks, but, at the same time, discourses in textbooks contribute to creating those very social structures. Thus, what people write, “do, think or say as humans is always affected by larger questions of social power and to a certain extent reproduces those same relations, which then re-affect what [people] do, think or say” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 120).

This notion gives insight into “the ways in which discourse and subjectivity reciprocally reproduce and change each other” (Pennycook, 2001, p. 120). This approach sheds light on why particular discourses in textbooks, with their specific words, arrangements of sentences, choices of topics may have major effects (Pennycook, 2001).

The avoidance of discussion on sexual and racial difference in settlement textbooks is achieved by the embedding of discourses that actively discourage discussion of the topics, notably celebratory multicultural and heteronormative discourses. This avoidance contributes to the ideology that the Canadian identity is dominantly Anglo-European and heteronormative. According to Meyer (2002), ideologies expressed in texts need to be linked to societal groups, organizations, structures and relationships of power. These texts are just one of the myriad of discursive actions of an Anglocentric and heterosexual nation in its power struggle with competing ethnicities and sexualities. It is “only at the highest level of societal analysis that we are able to understand this text, its structures and functions” (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 83). An Anglocentric and heteronormative culture creates the texts that, in turn, create Anglocentrism and heteronormativity. This top-down and bottom-up approach runs both ways. An Anglocentric and heteronormative culture provides “the overall constraints on local actions and discourses” (Van Dijk, 2009, p. 83). These constraints affect texts of immigrant settlement programs.
Conversely, these texts may be interpreted as actions that are instances or components of such very structural systems such as Anglocentrism and heteronormativity.

Although previous theory and research in this area offers tremendous insight into how curriculums construe and perpetuate the Canadian identity, an investigation of if and how curricular texts in immigrant settlement programs, such as ELSA (English Language Services for Adults) construct a Canadian identity in this way has apparently not been undertaken. The present research represents an attempt to fill this gap. I examine how discourses in ELSA textbooks construct the Canadian national identity.

The Data

The Canadian Concepts series is composed of six textbooks, and each book is divided into ten thematic units of study. Each thematic unit introduces new vocabulary through a main article, various activities, and through topics for discussion. Themes are taken from the familiar environment of learners and speak to their everyday experiences while mixing presumed unfamiliar concepts, such as government, geography, currency, and cultural norms of Canada.

The purpose of the Canadian Concepts series, according to the authors, is to help “newcomers feel at home and integrate into the community” (Berish & Thibaudeau, 1998, p. ix). Book 1 accommodates the needs of post-literacy learners, while books 2 through 5 increasingly offer a richer and more abstract field of vocabulary and a greater degree of challenge. The series moves from concrete nouns and tangible topics in the lower-level books to more “abstract, thought provoking themes” in the higher-level books. Through teaching adult learners to read and write in a national language, the series aims to move newcomers gradually to participate fully in Canadian society and its institutions.
Wodak and Meyer (2002) state that many analyses “mostly deal with only small corpora which are usually regarded as being typical of certain discourses” (p. 25). Similarly, Tonkiss (2004) purports that analyses are usually limited to “relatively small data sets emerging from specific social settings” (p. 381). Because the series is written by the same authors, and because each book is written in the same style and format and has been written and published over a small time frame, the following analysis focuses predominantly on one textbook as *Canadian Concepts 5* (1998) is representative of discourses in the series.

**The Authorial Self and the Racial Other**

A primary question in analyzing texts is the authorial authority, which asks whose voice is heard and what identities are put forth for those involved in the interaction (Schely-Newman, 201; McGregor, 2003).

Through the use of point-of-view and the careful positioning of pronouns and nouns, an obvious Self/Other dichotomy is constructed in this textbook in much the same way as Depledge (1996) found; *Canadian Concepts 5* constructs a binary in which the Anglo-European Self is rendered as largely invisible or as lacking ethnicity and in which the racial Other is constantly marked.

The rendering of the racial identity of the Self as invisible is achieved by the rare use of first-person pronouns such as *I*, *we* and *our* in the textbook. When first-person pronouns appear, they usually refer to no particular noun. For example, the first-person pronouns *our* and *we* appear for one of the first times in the second unit in an article about the growing variety of food in Canadian supermarkets:
“In part, this is attributed to the strong ethnic influence both from our immigrant populations and from well-travelled cooks. Not only do we want to eat couscous in Morocco, but we want to cook it when we’re back home, and have it ready in less than 10 minutes.” (p. 21)

The passage renders the racial identity of the Self as unmarked; it masks its voice through an interesting positioning of pronouns. In this article, the pronouns “our” and “we” have no nouns in close proximity in which to refer back. In other words, the pronouns in the passage above are unclear or ambiguous because they are too far from their antecedents. This peculiar use of pronouns is consistently employed throughout the textbook; first-person pronouns in the textbook do not generally have any antecedents, or, when first-person pronouns appear, they are ambiguous. The disconnection of pronouns such as “our” and “we” from their antecedents successfully masks the racial identity of the Self.

In addition to masking the racial identity of the authorial Self, this passage clearly marks the racial Other to construct a binary, and subordinates it as something to be possessed. The pronoun “our” possesses “immigrant populations” which are from places like “Morocco”, and this possession effectively instantiates a particular social relation. Weedon (1997) states that the identification by the individual with a particular subject position within discourse has dramatic effects. When repeated, identification by the individual with a particular subject position constitutes and realizes that very position in the social world.

Although overall ambiguous, there are certain passages in the textbook which reveal the racial identity of the Self. One passage occurs in unit 3:
“The population is getting taller. Larger European and German sizing reflects that. Manufacturers are adjusting their sizes so we don’t end up wearing a Size 90.” (p. 40)

“European and German sizing” can be interpreted as a mirror reflecting the image of “the population”, which reveals the racial Self as “European”. If perceived this way, the identity of “we” is not ambiguous; it is clearly European.

Furthermore, the authorial Self distinguishes itself from the racial Other through a saturation of second-person pronouns. This technique only reinforces the constructed binary. Pronouns such as you and yourself surround all of the main articles in every unit of the textbook. The activities and discussion prompts constantly remind learners that we are distinct from you.

Immediately following the main article of unit 1, which is about the “average” Canadian, a discussion prompt asks learners the following question... “How close are you to the average Canadian?” (p. 6). The construction of this discussion prompt makes clear that “average Canadian” and “you” are distinct as the word “close” connotes being near in space and time, but always at some distance.

The discussion prompt that follows reinforces the separation... “In what ways are you different?” (p. 6). This discussion prompt forces learners to discuss and compare differences instead of similarities, which only reinforces the separation. As there are no questions asking learners to discuss similarities, learners are directed to talk about only differences.

This binary is especially pronounced in unit 8. The textbook presents an illustration depicting “pictures of Canadians” (p.107) participating in ceremonies such as a traditional
Western white wedding, in which the bride is wearing a white wedding dress and veil. A discussion prompt immediately follows the illustration:

“Discuss some ceremonies that are particular to your culture. Explain the customs that surround them to your group.” (p.107, emphasis original)

In this discussion starter, the adjective “particular” encourages learners to focus again on distinctions, which only reinforces the binary. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the pronoun “your” is bolded, and, thus, clearly marked; “your” culture is separate from “our” culture.

Although the textbook clearly constructs and maintains a binary, there are specific moments when the textbook collapses the binary. There are moments when the authorial Self employs first-person pronouns to conflate the Anglo-European Self with learners. According to Schely-Newman (2010), assuming the voice of learners allows the Anglo-European nation-state to disseminate messages of what it “expects from its adult citizens” (p. 202). Discourses, as realized in institutional practices such as schools, constitute the meaning of the physical body, psychic energy, emotions and desire as well as conscious subjectivity. They define individual subjectivity (Weedon, 1997). Discourses in Canadian Concepts 5 not only define the Canadian identity, but they also interpolate newcomers into this identity, and this interpolation is achieved partially through inclusive first-person pronouns. These pronouns appear in unit 1… “there are some generalities that apply to a greater or lesser extent to most of us and most of our neighbours” (p. 5). The passage continues by discussing these generalities. We eat “a typical breakfast of toast or cereal and coffee” (p. 5), “choose to marry at some point” (p. 5), “attach
some importance to the idea of exercising and staying physically fit” (p.6), “feel a sense of civic responsibility” (p. 6), and “vote in both local and federal elections and follow political issues on the radio and television and in the papers” (p. 6). This technique also appears again in a passage in unit 7… “Most of us would like to think that Western medical practice is based on an unvarying scientific standard” (p. 92), and again in unit 9 in an article on marketing… “Buying things is a way of coping. They offer compensations for the deficiencies we feel in ourselves” (p. 122), while “we enjoy watching [corporations’] gloriously sophisticated competition for our favours” (p. 122).

In these excerpts, first-person pronouns do not separate the racial Other from the authorial Self, but are inclusive in order to interpolate learners into being good citizens, defined as being democratic, as being rational and upholding scientific understandings of the world and as being passive consumers.

Meanwhile, all of these articles are surrounded with discussion prompts such as those that ask learners to “list three kinds of toothpaste” (p. 127), “three fashion magazines” (p. 127) and “which country is a good place to live” (p. 13). Thus, when the content of a textbook offers discourses which continually position learners in separated, subordinate or passive subject positions, and when it denies learners the opportunity to talk about conflict and inequality in the discussion prompts, then the textbook limits the possibilities for discussing and grappling with marginalization, conflict and inequality that exists within the nation. Freire (1970) contends that, if learners at the oppressive end of inequality remain unaware of or unable to analyze the causes of their inequality, they may fatalistically accept their exploitation, and they are “apt to react in a passive and alienated manner when confronted with the necessity to struggle for their freedom and self-affirmation” (p. 64). Similarly, Weedon argues that, if learners come to perceive
inequality as natural, then “the possibility of effecting social change is removed from the realm of language” (1997, p. 91).

**Constructing a Multicultural Wonderland**

The textbook additionally removes the possibility of effecting social change through its celebratory multicultural discourse. This discourse constructs the nation as ethnically diverse while, at the same time, it evades discussions of complex and controversial issues. Thus, even though learners from marginalized groups in society appear to be included in the textbook, racial and cultural inequities are not addressed in the content and pedagogical tasks, and the consequence is continued marginalization. Learners come to participate through a narrow lens that reflects the dominant ideological discourses of society. They fail to learn to view events, concepts, and facts through various lenses, perspectives, and interpretations (Sensoy et al., 2010, p. 6).

The failure to address inequality while, at the same time, constructing the nation as diverse appears in the opening unit of the textbook, which (presumably) discusses annual immigration trends:

“Until the 1970s, most immigrants to Canada came from Britain. About 26,490 people came from Britain, which was slightly more than the 24,323 people who came from the United States. Large numbers of immigrants came from Portugal (7,902 people), Greece (6,345 people), and India (5,649 people). In the 1980s, immigrants arrived from many places. Vietnam provided 25,541 people, Britain 18,245 people,
and the United States 9926. Hong Kong was next in line, with 6309 immigrants, slightly ahead of Laos, the source of 5041 immigrants.” (p. 9, emphasis original)

This excerpt successfully constructs the nation of Canada as diverse and consisting of people from all over the world. The bold numbering emphasizes this diversity. The following paragraph continues the construction:

In the early 1990s, Hong Kong led the way with 28,825 immigrants to Canada. Poland ranked second, with 16,492 immigrants, followed by Lebanon with 12,407. During this period, 11,950 people arrived from the Philippines, and 10,570 from India. Vietnam followed with 9048 immigrants. The number of immigrants from Portugal was about 7906; from China 7848; and from the United States 5906. There were 3752 immigrants from El Salvador.” (p. 9, emphasis original)

Although these paragraphs construct the nation as diverse, the preposition “until” in the first excerpt suggests Britain as a timeless source of immigration when, in fact, people were emigrating from many places prior to 1970s. In conjunction, and perhaps more importantly, the excerpt frames history to omit the time period in which large numbers of British immigrants began forcibly displacing Aboriginal (and French) peoples from the land. Also excluded is the reason why, until the 1970s, most immigrants came from Britain; there is no disclosure of the racist immigration policies which continued until well into the 1960s, which favoured this group of people. Any mention of historical conflict and inequality is omitted in this passage.
Even the language of the text avoids any mention of conflict. The activity employs the phrasal verbs “came to”, “arrived from” instead of “fled from” or “escaped from”. All newcomers are signified with the noun “immigrants”, when, in actuality, many people have been refugees escaping from often violent civil wars such as the war in El Salvador, which forced thousands of refugees to flee to Canada during the 1980s. The result is a passage that constructs the nation as a multicultural utopia free of historical conflict and racial inequality. The result is a textbook that neglects an “understanding of the competing linguistic, cultural, and ethnic interests and related material inequities among people” (McDonald, 2006, p. 304).

Furthermore, as with the passage on immigration above, expository genre constitutes the majority of the core articles in the textbook. They provide basic explanations of concepts related to social issues, Canadian citizenship, media, health, occupations and consumer service. These expository articles are usually no longer than one page and they generally follow with comprehension questions which are always focused on and limited to gaining the general idea or understanding of the reading. Discussion prompts may follow the main articles to encourage learners to discuss their own experiences, but learners are never encouraged to question or critically analyze the information being presented.

Thus, although newcomers learn to read, write, and understand, they are not encouraged to negotiate, argue or analyze texts they encounter in everyday life. As a result, “students may accept ideologies embedded in the texts as authoritative as the linguistic rules prescribed” (Schely-Newman, 2010, p. 208). For the adult newcomer, according to Schely-Newman (2010), grappling with a new language in order to adjust to a new society, it may be more important to acquire language competence than question the content of the texts studied. Thus, Canadian Concepts 5 initiates the adult learner into a specific social order, and into an “acceptance of a
scale of values over and above those which the [literacy] tasks themselves entail” (Schely-Newman, 2010, p. 208).

Because either learners may avoid questioning or because the textbook does not address or encourage the posing of fundamental questions about the nature Canadian social reality, “social inequality is not discussed as a central part of curricula” (Wotherspoon, 2004, p. 113). One consequence, according to Wotherspoon (2004), is that prevailing patterns of “dominance and subordination come to be understood and experienced as natural and inevitable rather than as something to be questioned” (p. 113).

**Portraying A Nation Devoid of Power**

Power is a relationship (Weedon, 1997, p. 110). Power is exercised within discourses in the way in which the discourses construct and govern individual subjects. According to Kress (1989), power is exercised in the way specific sentences, phrases and word combinations create social relations. By establishing reading positions, texts interpolate learners, situating and positioning them in identifiable relations of power and agency in relation to texts.

The celebratory multicultural discourse of Canadian Concepts 5 does not challenge the racial hierarchy of the nation which continues to place the Anglo-European racial identity at the top, and, thus, it continues the interpolation of learners into this power relationship. However, in order to conceal this uneven power relationship, the discourse simply omits the agent of power to present the nation as free of any racial hierarchy. This is done through the passive voice.

“Both Canada and the United States are countries that are populated by many people who were born in different countries. The United States is known as a
melting pot. This means that immigrants are expected to assimilate into American culture and take on the values and language of the new country as quickly as possible. Canada, on the other hand, is known as a cultural mosaic. This means that the various cultural groups that make up the population are encouraged to maintain their own customs and languages while joining in with the society around them.”

(p. 8)

The passage employs the passive voice to leave it agentless. In Canada, an ambiguous agent encourages immigrants to join in “with the society around them”. Although the passive verb “are encouraged” is less forceful than “are expected”, which is used to describe the United States, both verbs position the agent in a dominant position or as the actor. What is omitted in this passage is that the actor is English, who encourages immigrants to maintain “their own” foreign customs and languages while still “joining in” with the actor’s “society”, which surrounds them. Finally, the term “joining in” evades any suggestion of conflict. It makes participation seem voluntary and on equal terms, as if partaking in the actor’s society does not fully demand the learning of English or the adoption of English customs and worldviews, and the consequent shift towards an English subjectivity.

**Constructing a Diversity Devoid of Difference**

Furthermore, in line with what McDonald (2006) argues, the multicultural discourse in the textbook is limited to emphasizing the celebratory contributions of the different ethnic groups to Canada, and it limits representations of cultural diversity to diet and dress.
The main article of unit 2, for example, focuses on the growing variety of foods that can be found in Canadian supermarkets. It attributes this “bewildering variety” to a “strong ethnic influence” (p. 20). The article follows with trivia questions on the food customs of “other cultures” (p. 25), an article on the differences between Italian pizza and American pizza (p. 29), and a dialogue between a couple “getting ready to entertain their friends” (p. 31) with a dinner party.

The main article of unit 3 focuses on the “face of future fashion” (p. 40), and unit 6 focuses on the “superstitions in different cultures” (p. 85). Unit 8 follows with an article discussing traditions that “vary from one culture to another” (p. 105). Overall, the units are overwhelmed with activities and discussion prompts that fall largely in line with the discourse of celebratory multiculturalism; they merely encourage inconsequential discussion, and they instill reductive knowledge of different groups that exist within the boundaries of the nation.

According to Sensoy et al. (2010), the celebratory attempt at including different cultures is detrimental to culturally diverse learners. This approach “trivializes the overall experiences, contributions, struggles, and voices of non-dominant group members” (Sensoy et al., 2010, p.6). In this way, the textbook fails to validate the different cultural identities of learners and does not challenge hegemonic ideologies. Rather, this approach may serve to spotlight learners, “objectifying them and positioning them in a role of a native informant about their culture” (Sensoy et al., 2010, p.6).

Thus, overwhelmingly, this textbook, through its content and pedagogical tasks, implicitly supports the production of a passive consciousness of cultural differences that exist within Canada. The celebratory multicultural discourse in this book neglects “students’ different histories and relations to nation-making projects and diasporic migrations” (McDonald, 2006, p.
304). The result is a textbook that equates diversity education to learning about costumes, food, music and other fixed cultural items while furthering little meaningful knowledge of difference. This learning happens while the center remains largely untransformed or even recognized as the center, and the result is the reinforcement of Anglo-European norms and perspectives (Sensoy et al., 2010). The result is that all bodies, no matter how ethnically diverse, are moved towards a singular norm and perspective.

**Difference Operating in the Language of Sameness**

Not only does the celebratory multicultural discourse further little meaningful knowledge of difference, but it also discusses difference within a language of universality. Despite the rhetoric of difference, this discourse only has a fringe awareness of difference while continuing “to operate within a presumption of sameness” (Solomon, 1999, p. 129).

> “With 250, 000 newcomers entering Canada every year, immigrants and first-generation Canadians now outnumber Canadians whose families have been here for generations. Whatever their origins, however, Canadians share the same basic concerns: having a decent job, access to education, and raising children in a happy and healthy environment.” (p. 6)

Nouns, such as “newcomers” and “immigrants”, in the first sentence in this passage construct the nation as diverse, but, through the interjection “whatever”, this diversity is quickly dismissed. This dismissal is reinforced with the adverb “however”, used to indicate indifference to the state of diversity. Underlying all very real differences in Canada, such as deep religious
differences, sexual differences, geographic differences, racial differences, political differences or class differences, Canadians are basically the same, and this commonality is reinforced with the verb “share”.

“Rites of passage are shared with family and friends and generally involve special ways of dressing, solemn ceremonies, and sharing the festive meals. The particular customs and ceremonies will vary from one occasion to another and from one culture to another. But the underlying idea is the same – the right of passage signals the entry into a new role of the celebrant. One of the most widespread customs is the celebration reaching adulthood, but other passages are also common to many cultures.” (p. 107)

In much the same way as the previous passage, this passage first constructs the nation as diverse through the adjective “particular” and the verb “vary”, and then dismisses all difference with the conjunction “but”. This dismissal follows with adjectives such as “underlying”, “same” and “common” which constructs a culture of sameness. Thus, as previously stated, through this discourse of sameness, all bodies, no matter how different, are moved towards a singular vision; they are interpolated into a singular Canadian identity.

**Constituting Certain Genders and Sexes as Normal**

The discourses, or collections of statements that compose the textbook, produce a particular representation and a particular kind of knowledge about sex, gender and sexuality. In other words, these discourses make certain things about sex, gender and sexuality sayable,
thinkable and doable but other things not. Thus, these discourses contribute to learners’ identity, they constitute the minds and bodies as they describe what characteristics are possible for learners. This determination of identity is a closing-off of possibilities and, hence, is an exercise of power. This power is exercised by institutions. In other words, although not left unchallenged, the most powerful or dominant discourses in our society have a firm institutional bases such as in educational institutions (Weedon, 1997, p. 105).

Through canonical textbooks, such as Canadian Concepts 5, education systems disseminate dominant discourses that (re)produce heteronormativity; that is, dominant discourses in the textbook reinforce a “grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized” (Butler, 1990, p. 208). At the same time, while the collections of statements work together to (re)produce heteronormativity, they also exclude other constructions of sex, gender and sexuality; they close off possibilities of constructing gender and sexual identity differently. Thus, by closing off possibilities, heteronormativity exacts conformity through its discourses. Through repeated positioning of subject positions in its discourses, and identification of those positions by subjects, all bodies are funnelled closer to the standard or norm (Filax, 2006).

One noticeable discourse that streams through this textbook, which contributes to (re)constructing heteronormativity, holds the “conviction that there are but two acceptable ways to display gender and that these reflect that there are but two sexes” (Filax, 2006, p. 3). In other words, this particular discourse of gender dictates what it is - and what it is not - to be a man or a woman. This discourse of gender, which is dominant in Canada (Filax, 2006; Weedon, 1997), disregards alternative displays of gender and puts forward essential notions of sex and gender.
“Fashion is always changing. One year women wear short skirts and high heels and men have long hair. The next year women wear long skirts and flat shoes, and men have shaved heads and earrings. People have dyed their hair every colour of the rainbow, and have cut, curled, and straightened it into every style imaginable.” (p. 35)

Although “men” wearing “earrings” alludes to the notion of gender being open to multiple interpretations, the dominant discourse dismisses it; there are no other displays of men wearing earrings in any of the texts or illustrations of the textbook. Furthermore, through its description of “women” always wearing “short skirts” and “long skirts”, the text constructs women as always covering from “one year” to the “next year” while men are not. What are women covering? Orthodox psychoanalytic theory and its discursive formation would answer that the women are covering their lack. The women are masking the fact that they are not really the phallus in order to create the illusion of an identity, or to appear to be the phallus (Weedon, 1997).

The phallus guarantees, according to this discursive formation, particular versions of masculinity and femininity. Psychoanalytic theory suggests that gender is governed by a general principle beyond time and space. In sum, the political implications are that this modernist discourse fixes certain norms of femininity and masculinity as natural and not open to change (Weedon, 1997, 89), and language is merely a reflection of this naturalness. This view of language, the view that language expresses pre-given meaning, relies on a modernist understanding of the individual and of subjectivity. This understanding of language, in which it is a passive tool of communication that merely expresses nature, rejects the notion that
experience is constituted in language. Language offers a “range of ways of interpreting our lives which imply different versions of experience” (Weedon, 1997, p. 82). Thus, it rejects the notion that gender and sex is heavily constituted by language.

This rejection also constitutes the limits to this modernist discourse. Because this discourse constructs these alignments as natural and sees language as merely an expression of this naturalness, it cannot bear to know genders and sexes differently. The result is the virtual absence of alternative genders in the textbook. Males are always paired with the masculine gender and females are aligned to the feminine gender.

“As I looked at her, I realized that even though she was OK this time, I was getting my first glimpse of the future that we will inevitably share, no doubt in hospitals just like this. Once it was I who turned to her, frightened and needy, hoping she would guide me into adulthood. Now it was my chance to return the favour. But how? Where am I guiding my mother? Certainly no place that I have been before.” (p. 113)

This passage shows how the alignments of sex and gender in this textbook always stay within the limits of this particular discursive field. This passage, which is the main idea of the core reading for unit 8, aligns the female sex with the feminine gender, which is constructed as nurturing and dependent. This construction is achieved through the noun “hospitals”, which provides the nurturing setting, and through the adjectives “frightened and needy”, which depicts both females as dependent.
Furthermore, not only does the passage align the female sex to the feminine, which has the qualities of nurturance and dependency, it constructs the alignment as natural and timeless. This construction is made obvious through the narrator’s “glimpse of the future that [she] will inevitably share” with her mother. The adverb “inevitably” suggests the impossibility of avoiding a future of offering guidance and nurturance. Through the generations, from mother to daughter, women’s roles are set. Nagle (1998) suggests that, in narratives of nation, it is often the case that women’s roles are aligned to nurturing and mothering roles.

The passage also subordinates the alignment to something less than an adult. This subordination is achieved through the continuous verb “hoping” and the modal verb “would”. Both verbs suggest possibility, but not reality, and, consequently, the construction implies that, although clearly in her middle ages, the narrator has not yet reached “adulthood”. The reader knows that the narrator never made it to adulthood because it is “certainly no place [she] has been before”.

The textbook rarely breaks this construction; women are rendered as dependent, helpless or nurturing. The core article of unit 5, for example, constructs a female character as helpless; she falls victim to “what police call a true-name crime or account-takeover fraud” (p. 65). She spends “ten hours a week trying to contain the problem” (p. 66) until the day a male detective calls to tell her that he nabbed the identity thief, effectively saving her from her helpless condition.

An illustration in unit 8 (p. 114) also constructs the feminine gender in a similar way. In this illustration, a mother is holding her baby. She is rendered to be at the same eye level and wearing the same pattern as her child, which suggests that, although clearly a mother, she is something less than an adult. The heading above the illustration reads “Becoming an Adult” (p.
114). The continuous verb “becoming” reinforces the notion that the character is still in the process of reaching adulthood.

This construction is contrasted to the making of the masculine gender as dynamic, courageous, independent and aligned with the abstract. Weedon (1997) states that modernist discourse typically constructs the masculine gender this way. This construction is apparent in the core reading of the closing unit, which focuses on working.

By the end of his journey, Coyne developed an affinity for the night time. He found that people were friendlier. They had a healthy disdain for authority and a “willingness to endure adversity.” People who work at nights, he says “tend to think deeper,” because there are fewer distractions. “They have more room and space and freedom to think.” (p. 136)

In this passage “Coyne”, the male protagonist, has reached the “end of his journey”. The noun “journey” can be read as a passage through space and as a transformation. Unlike the females in the previous passages and illustration, who have never achieved adulthood and remain needy, frightened and thus dependent, the male character of this article endured “adversity” and completed his journey to independence. This place of independence is in the solitude of “night” where people have “a healthy disdain for authority”. This place at the end of the protagonist’s journey has people who “tend to think deeper” and offers him the “room and space and freedom to think”. Thus, the male sex is affixed to masculinity, which is constructed as being courageous, independent and abstract, and belonging in the industrious world of work.
Consequently, the discourse forms a solid binary. The male sex is anchored to the masculine gender, which is constructed as independent and abstract. This construction is set against the female alignment to the feminine gender, which is constituted as dependent and childlike. This alignment is construed as natural and timeless.

At the same time, constructions of alternative displays of gender are swept aside; no construction goes beyond the discursive limits of this dominant discourse. There are few constructions of gender in the textbook that challenge the fixed alignments. The textbook clearly constructs the relationship between language, subjectivity and sexual difference as either natural or a “universal structural feature of the symbolic order and the human psyche” (Weedon, 1997, p. 97).

**Normalizing and Universalizing Heterosexuality**

Another discourse weaving through *Canadian Concepts 5* not only constructs a binary and an essentialist notion of sex and gender, but it also produces these bodies to be complementary: “bodies of one type not only manifest behaviours associated with that body type but they also desire and engage in sexual relations with other bodies that are thought to complement them sexually and behaviourally” (Filax, 2006, p. 3).

At the end of the day, Canadian adults come home to their families. The average family has two children, but the burden of caring for them is not shared equally by men and women.” (p. 5)
In the passage above, “average”, or normalcy, is defined as a family that is headed by two opposite-sex parents. Britzman (1995) constitutes normalcy as a “conceptual order that refuses to imagine the very possibility of the Other precisely because the production of otherness as the outside is central to its own self-recognition” (p. 157). Heteronormativity, with its insistence on only heterosexuality, refutes the possibility of other sexualities because the production of multiple sexualities as outside of itself is central to its own identity; heteronormativity must deny multiple sexualities a possibility. It defines its self as normal by both producing other sexualities as abnormal and expelling them.

For example, an illustration in unit 1 (p. 4) depicts a nuclear family (led by heterosexual parents) sitting at a dinner table. The heading directly above the illustration reads “The Average Canadian” (p. 4). Thus, through this illustration and its heading, this textbook defines nuclear families that are headed by heterosexual parents as normal. Because this discourse must construct limits and expel other sexualities beyond them in order to constitute itself, this depiction contrasts the complete absence of illustrations in the textbook depicting families with queers configurations.

The result is a textbook that constructs a binary; heterosexuality is rendered normal and synonymous with the Canadian identity. Queerness, on the other hand, is constructed as an Other and is excluded from constructions of the nation. Thus, amid the abundant questions such as those questions asking learners to determine what problem Lana has “when she dates men from the city” (p. 105), or “what attracted Diane to Jim” (p. 106), there are no displays of gay relationships or articles on lesbian families. This discussion parallels what Britzman (1990) puts forward: heteronormativity creates binaries between people “who transgress the normal and those whose labor is to be recognized as normal” (Britzman, 1995, p. 157).
Not only does the discourse construct a binary and normalize heterosexuality, but it also universalizes the orientation. It offers only narratives that present heterosexuality as universal in experience. For example, the question prompt paired with a group of eight illustrations asks learners to discuss age (p. 103). Gullette (2002) discusses narratives of aging in detail. She questions how the subjects of a particular culture come up with narratives of aging - comprehensible stories about moving through all the given ages of life. The eight illustrations, when taken together, can be read as a narrative of aging.

The viewer only has to read the group of illustrations from left to right in order to gain a clean, linear and progressive account of cultural events which constitute a dominant narrative of aging in this nation. An illustration at the top left depicts an adolescent heterosexual couple dating. Two illustrations at the center depict their heterosexual marriage and their young family. An illustration to the right depicts the heterosexual couple in their middle ages. The final illustration, at the bottom right corner, depicts the couple in their senior years holding a grandchild. This grand narrative of aging illustrated above assumes that Canadians share the same life course that is centered on heterosexual reproduction and progress. However, like all grand narratives, this story ignores heterogeneity or variety of experience. The group of illustrations above is clearly the story of heterosexual bodies being aged by a heterocentric culture (or a culture that assumes heterosexuality as a given instead of being one of many possibilities), passing through many of its institutions such as heterosexual marriage and the nuclear family.

Weedon (1997) states that “when a narrative is constructed, something is left out” (p. 177). This narrative disregards the life stories of the many sexual minorities whose lives are not centered on heterosexual reproduction. More importantly, it disregards those bodies of sexual
minorities whose lives do not follow a nice linear progression as a result of rampant discrimination in education institutions (Filax, 2006; Ellis and High, 2004), legal institutions (MacDougall, 2000; Morgan, 2003) and workplaces (Badgett, 2007; Carpenter, 2008; Elmslie & Tebaldi, 2007). Thus, this story of sameness not only excludes narratives of sexual minority experiences, but presents the process of aging within the nation as unaffected by issues related to sex, sexuality and gender. Through constant repetition of narratives showing only the life courses of heterosexual bodies, combined with the complete absence of illustrations that portray the life-experiences of queers, this unit constructs heterosexuality as universal in experience, or as the only sexual orientation within the nation. The result is much as the same as with the celebratory multicultural discourse in the textbook. In this discourse of sameness, in which discourse constitutes subjectivity, all bodies, no matter how diverse in gender, sex and orientation, no matter how unique, are hauled closer into a specific and singular Canadian identity.

**Conclusion: The Making of Canadians**

*Canadian Concepts 5* makes clear that the teaching of English, citizenship and settlement skills to immigrants is not simply limited to teaching basic concepts of Canada to newcomers, but is a method for national-ideological socialization. The discourses employed in the textbook interpolate newcomers into a specific identity. While the textbook introduces learners to the state of Canada, its institutions, population(s), and culture, this analysis reveals that the discourses in the textbook also offer learners limited linguistic skills and a particular view of Canadian society that limits the possibilities for discussing and grappling with marginalization, conflict and inequality that exists within the nation. In other words, the textbook does not recognize the relationship between language and social power. As a result, the simplified language taught
offers newcomers a censored view of Canada, producing uncritical citizens that will not challenge the privileged position enjoyed by those bodies that identify as Anglo-European and that are aligned to heteronormative discourses.

Furthermore, the discourse of celebratory multiculturalism embedded within the textbooks only gives the appearance of inclusivity as it does not question or seriously critique hegemonic ideologies. It implicitly supports the production of passive consciousness of cultural differences. The celebratory multicultural and heteronormative discourses combine to ignore all heterogeneity or variety of experience, which effectively interpolates newcomers into a singular Canadian identity that is dominantly Anglo-European and heteronormative.

If the creation and dissemination of discourses are deeply implicated in the creation of regimes of truth, then perhaps *Canadian Concepts 5* is contributing and enacting larger Anglocentric and heteronormative social structures. This raises questions. What are the implications of a textbook for newcomers that constructs the Canadian identity in an exclusionary way or as dominantly Anglocentric and heteronormative? Do newcomers who learn from and read these textbooks, carry the Anglocentric and heteronormative discourses learnt into other social spheres such as families, universities, corporations or bureaucracies?

For newcomers to Canada, the *Canadian Concepts* series is a window that opens onto the nation they are joining, its history, institutions and ideologies. However, this window also frames their perspective, blocking potential views and obscuring other possibilities. Taught a simplified language of sameness that is free of conflict and inequality, the vision of a diverse and equitable nation quickly fades from view.
References


